

Remembering Paweł Adamowicz

by Gaetano Armao

*Vice-president and Councillor for Economy of the Sicilian Region
Member of the European Committee of the Regions (EPP)
President of the Interregional Group for Insularity.*



Commemorating the Mayor of Gdansk, Paweł Adamowicz (1965-2019), makes a tribute to freedom and solidarity. Paweł, who also belonged to the Group of the European People's Party, was a colleague of the European Committee of the Regions and we were sitting close together in the Plenary Assembly.

As a young high school student, Paweł joined *Solidarność* being involved in the battles for freedom against the Communist regime. After completing his law studies and starting his university career at the University of Gdańsk, he devoted himself to political and administrative commitment to his city, first as a city councillor and then as mayor, since 1998. Until the day in which a murderous hand stabbed him in the heart, extinguishing his still young life in front of his fellow citizens while he was participating in a charity initiative of volunteers.

Mayor Adamowicz was the face of Poland open to the Baltic and to the world, the Poland that fought for freedom and that does not intend to give up that freedom. He defended minorities, fought xenophobia and anti-Semitism and worked for the values of tolerance in Gdansk, a city that played an extraordinary role in the Liberation from the violence of the communist dictatorship.

After his cowardly assassination we remembered him two years ago, in Palermo, my City, during the session held by the SEDEC Commission of the European Committee of the Regions on the themes of digital transformation.

On that occasion I asked the Mayor of Palermo, Leoluca Orlando, to name a street in our city after Paweł Adamowicz, as a testimony of the values of freedom and solidarity that inspire his political and civil commitment and his fight against intolerance. By next summer this path will be completed and will link in his name two European cities geographically far, but - as "ports open to the world" - close for the clear adhesion to the principles of freedom and tolerance.

We should be aware that Europe's wealth lies in its heterogeneity and multifaceted nature. The Committee of the Regions, in view of the imminent opening of the "*Conference on the Future of Europe*", can play a significant role by advocating the values of civilisation, solidarity and cohesion on which Paweł Adamowicz's political commitment was founded and by promoting the regeneration of the European institutions.