



**Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, a marathon of reading *ars narrandi, ars vivendi*  
YOUNG PEOPLE OF ECONOMY OF FRANCESCO BESIDE  
IRANIAN AND AFGHAN WOMEN**

On January 28th, the young men and women of EoF are launching a reading marathon all over the world in support of Iranian and Afghan women. After the live streaming marathon, which last December 7, 2022, saw 28 young people connected from as many countries of the world in a reading relay, EoF is organizing a new meeting to continue to express solidarity with the young men and women who, in Iran and Afghanistan, protest against the violence, crimes and abuses that are affecting women most especially.

On the one hand, in Iran, where protests began over the death of Mahsa Amini – stopped and arrested last September because she was not wearing the hijab correctly. Women were the first to take to the streets: *woman, life, freedom!* was their slogan. They were then also followed and supported by men, and, above all, young university students began to demonstrate. Despite the regime's harsh repression (524 people were killed and over 19 thousand were imprisoned – among them many boys and girls), the protests have progressively garnered wider support. On the other hand, in Afghanistan, where women are prohibited from accessing gyms, public parks, attending universities and working in NGOs. "The lives of women and young girls in Afghanistan are devastated by the repression of their human rights by the Taliban" – so denounces the Amnesty International 2022 report, which also reports the arrests, imprisonment, torture and enforced disappearances of women who take part in the protests against oppressive norms.

On January 28, the young men and women of EoF will demonstrate in support of Afghan and Iranian women by proposing a reading marathon of the oriental tales "*The Thousand and One Nights*". The beginning of the famous collection tells of King Shahriyar who, betrayed by his wife, marries a woman every night and has her killed the following morning. Until Shahrazad, daughter of the vizier, imagines a solution: she will entertain the king every night by telling him a new story and postponing the end of the story until the next night. The trick works, and at the end of the "thousand and one" tales, the king also forgets his hatred for women. So, Shahrazad saved the women of the town and also saved herself, managing to find a new story to tell every night.

The invitation, then, is to organize a reading of some of the stories of "*The Thousand and One Nights*" in one's own city, followed by a public discussion on what is happening in Iran and Afghanistan. Many cities have already joined from all over the world, involving associations, movements, individual citizens: Cologne in Germany, Oslo, Pacos in Portugal, as well as Chile and Spain. There are also many initiatives in Italy, including Arezzo, Rome, Capua, Ascoli Piceno, Milan and Turin with an event at the Sermig Arsenal of Peace. Matera is also participating by proposing a reading marathon in a residence for the elderly. A great adherence is registered in the scholastic world, where students are already organizing themselves in Parma, Lecco, Reggio Calabria.

"Economy of Francesco is doing what the people to whom the event is dedicated have asked: *make our voice heard, do not forget us,*" says one of the young people of EoF. "Today every social and

political issue is removed just a few days after its media explosion. This is why we need to be vigilant, like sentinels to watch over a problem for which there is (perhaps) no immediate solution, but with respect to which one cannot turn away.” The organizers continue: “We feel the duty to place ourselves next to the Iranian and Afghan women who are fighting for their freedom and next to all the young people who are trying to build a better future. And we will do it using *words*. The narrative device of “*The Thousand and One Nights*” reminds us that narration is also a place to go to try to defeat death: a sign to celebrate and defend the value of words and their generative capacity for salvation, the fundamental right to express oneself, to protest, to defend and fight for life, rights and freedom. May it be women and young people who generate the necessary first words of the new world that needs to be born.”

It is still possible to organize an EoF Reading Marathon on January 28th. For information on how to organize it or to join an initiative among those already planned, visit the website [www.francescoeconomy.org](http://www.francescoeconomy.org).

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