



FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ASSEMBLY

*in Italy*

# Freedom of expression

- Freedom of expression is one of the fundamental principles of democratic systems. It can also be defined as a **free expression of thought** or **freedom of opinion**, it establishes the right of every citizen to freely express his convictions and ideas, both **individually** and **collectively**.
- To guarantee this right is the **Constitution of the Italian Republic** in **art. 21** which reads "*Everyone has the right to freely manifest their thoughts with the word, the written and any other means of dissemination.*"

# Freedom of assembly

This fundamental human right is recognized by several documents, including:

- the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- the European Convention on Human Rights,
- the American Convention on Human Rights,
- the African Charter of Peoples ' Rights and
- most national constitutions around the world.



It consists of the authority to arrange a meet, temporarily and voluntarily, in a given place, following a prior agreement or at the invitation of the promoters, in order to satisfy a specific common interest that can be of different nature: political, cultural, religious, sports etc.

Freedom of Assembly is an individual freedom to exercise collectively and is guaranteed to citizens only by Article 17 of the Constitution: it represents a collective instrumental freedom to protect the "sociality of the person" and the right to exchange knowledge and opinions.

Constitution: *"No previous notice is required for meetings, even when held in places open to the public."*



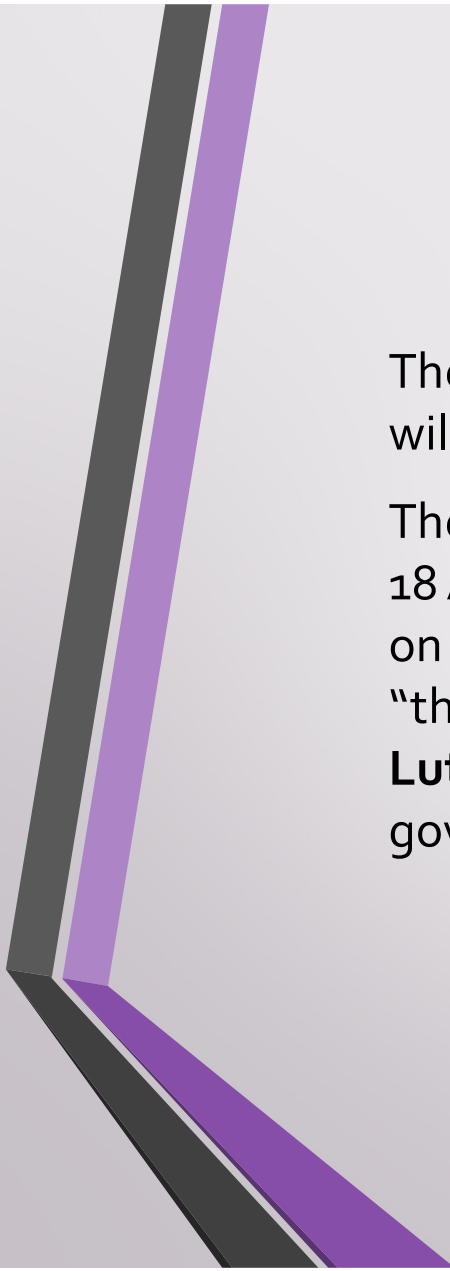
# *The situation in Italy regarding Freedom of expression*

Our country ranks 77<sup>th</sup> in the European Union, followed by Cyprus and Bulgaria. Moldova, Nicaragua, Armenia and Lesotho are in a better position.

Italian journalists are at risk, particularly those who investigate organized crime (mafia) and corruption, for example:

**Roberto Saviano** (author of various books: "Gomorra" and "Una vita sotto scorta") who has been living under guard for over 10 years for denouncing the underworld. In the last interview referring to the mafia he states : "you did not win. I'm still alive!"





There have been cases of journalists who were removed from national Tv, by the will of the government, for their opinions: it is the case of the **Bulgarian edict**.

The term is used in the Italian political debate to refer to a statement released on 18 April 2002 by ex Prime Minister **Silvio Berlusconi**, during a press conference on the occasion of an official visit to Sofia. The declaration was later renamed “the Bulgarian diktat” by the journalist Simon Collin. It involved three journalists: **Luttazzi, Santoro** and **Biagi**, whose political opinion differed from the government.

# The situation in Italy regarding Freedom of assembly

One of the positive cases that we are currently experiencing with regard to the right of Assembly is that of the sardine movement, officially called 6000 sardines, an Italian political activism movement.

The movement was born in Bologna in November 2019 during the election campaign for the regional elections in Emilia-Romagna on 26 January 2020, declaring itself in opposition to the populism and sovereignty that characterize some parties of the Italian right, at this time in opposition in Parliament.

The analogy with sardine comes from the phrase "tight as sardines", meaning the need to fill the squares as much as possible, but it also refers to the tendency of these small and defenseless fish to move in groups with force.

