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EDITORIAL

The scope of our options

«In the tension between State control over territories and the empowerment of contemporary societies, cities are the front line of resistance. A key factor in determining who wins and who loses will be the capacity of the large metropolises to equip themselves with the tools with which to defend their independence and manage their potential and resources.»¹

It is at the local, day-to-day, city level that citizens suffer their problems and where their solutions lay. It is still surprising to think that, in general, and to a relatively satisfactory extent, water and electricity are delivered to our homes, our rubbish and waste water are removed from our houses and streets, food stores have stock to sell, and citizens travel to and from their places of activity. Even in cities in manifestly inoperative and failed states. And it is still surprising that this happens in megacities or sprawling conurbations with higher populations than many sovereign states, and often as not with scarce and insufficient material means.

It is in the use we make of the city that citizens are born; in interactions with others, necessarily different and inevitably diverse; in exercising our rights and fulfilling our obligations. We learn in the praxis, and amplify our learning if we organically combine the varied instances of our lives.

In this line, the Charter of Educating Cities, which motivates the monographic Àgora section of this edition of *kultur*, incorporates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); the World Declaration on Education for All (1990), and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) in establishing the principles of equality, solidarity and inclusion —among others— that through democratic participation make a socially just city possible.

Our perception of the city changes as a result of the changes that occur in our knowledge, and both enable a new conceptualization of what we want the city to be; a new vision of a new world; a new dawn necessarily different from the past. The recognition that, by definition, the city constitutes an open system forces us to be equally open in defining our objectives, that is, by enabling their repeated redefinition in accordance with the new elements that arise during their development and execution.

As the twentieth principle of the abovementioned Charter states, “The educating city must offer all its inhabitants, as a necessary, growing objective for the community, education in the values and practices of a democratic citizenry: respect, tolerance, participation, responsibility and interest in things public, its programmes, heritage and services”.

Sufficiently precise and clear, and provocatively open.

Castelló, July 2019.

1. MARTÍ FONT J. M. (2017): *La España de las ciudades. El estado frente a la sociedad urbana*. *EDlibros*. Barcelona. Pág. 12, our translation.

