



**COMMUNE DI PERGINE
VALDARNO
PROVINCIA DI AREZZO**



**opening 07 - 04 - 2002
Cultural Village of Pergine Valdarno**

Dear Colleagues, Authorities guests, citizens,

Pergine Valdarno has been named European Village of Culture 2002. The events want to show people about the small european community: its history and culture, its local products and economic activities, places of interest for tourists. During 2002 Pergine, the Valdarno region and the Province of Arezzo will be visited by delegations of citizens and young people from ten European States: Holland, France, Germany, England, Denmark, Spain, Greece, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Hungary.

The European Cultural Village project is important for us, because it means that people who live in small european villages can meet and exchange experiences in the spirit of peace and solidarity. This year all of us Europeans have started to use the same currency, the Euro. Our intention is to restate the values of the small community, where people still live in human dimensions. It is important for us that the history, the local traditions, the agriculture, the local products, the land and the culture in general of a small village is not lost but is valued and passed on to younger generations. We believe in this european project. For us in the Valdarno region, a representatives for Italy, this project means an increase in tourism, an increase in agriculture and appreciation of the countryside.

Dear european Colleagues,

firstly it is important for me to thank you for participating at this meeting of Pergine Valdarno, for the Opening Conference of the Cultural Village of Europe.

I hope that you will enjoy your stay and that you will take away happy memories of the Village and of Tuscany. We are ready to start in this important year of the Cultural Village of Europe and we would simply like to say to you and to your citizens:

"We are waiting for you."

We are going to try to make your stay as comfortable as possible. We are doing this because the project of the Cultural Village of Europe is very important for us. We would like to thank Bert Kisjes, the President of the Fondation of the Villages, who has chosen us representatives of our Country , and who has permitted us to enter into this important european project. The small communities and villages are important and this morning we are going to talk about them and the important relationship they have with the metropolitan cities.

We who live in the small community appreciate the value of our lifestyle, the tranquillity, the clean air, and the fact that everybody knows each other. But I believe that we have to be able to confront the city, with its bigger population, with all its public services, with its high schools and universities, with its many job opportunities for its young people and its workers, all of which the small village does not have.

Now, we need to maintain the small community, with its history, its traditions, with its way of living, with human dimensions. We need the national and local authorities to come up with concrete proposals for laws and special funding which will help the people who live in a small community. In Italy this is being discussed as we speak but it is an European question.

I would like to close by declaring the 2002 Cultural Village of Pergine Valdarno open.
Thank you everybody.

Massimo Palazzeschi
Mayor of Pergine Valdarno

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