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Dr. Giuseppe Aiello
Mayor, City of Vico Equense

25 June 2023

Dear Dr. Aiello:

I am writing today to express my full support to the City of Vico Equense's candidacy in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a City of Gastronomy.

As Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology at West Chester University of Pennsylvania; a scholar of sustainable foodways, tourism and cultural heritage preservation; and Director of West Chester University's Ethnographic Field School on Sustainable Food and Cultural Heritage in Perugia, Italy, I am a firm believer that addressing sustainability holistically—environmental, economic and socio-cultural—is key to driving equitable development and to both valorize and preserve Vico Equense's cultural heritage. These factors serve as catalysts for progress and align with the UN SDGs outlined in Agenda 2030. I believe that Vico Equense's initiatives in creatively and sustainably preserving and transmitting its gastronomic heritage makes it an excellent candidate for the Creative Cities Network.

I have been quite impressed not only with the diverse heritage of Vico Equense's foodways, but also the numerous creativity-based initiatives that the city hosts. In particular, the growing attention to training and educational courses for students and professionals who want to start a career in sustainable food and gastronomy is quite impressive. To remain viable, cultural heritage such as Vico Equense's foodways must be transmitted to new generations, who are empowered through creativity to continue the city's long and celebrated gastronomic tradition of culinary innovation.

As the other excellent Italian gastronomic cities hail from Northern Italy, I believe Vico Equense would very well complement the strong Italian network, as it would be the first Southern Italian City of Gastronomy, with very different cuisine and culture yet a similar solid program of creative innovation, education and high-level gastronomy. I see many venues for synergic exchanges at both the national level and, of course, international level.

Finally, I am also pleased to collaborate with the National Research Council (IMAA) and the local administration for the development of capacity building pathways and international mobility exchanges in gastronomy, food and cultural heritage fields. I am available for any assistance you may need and look forward to collaborating with you.

Once again, I am pleased to fully support the City of Vico Equense for the candidacy in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network – Gastronomy 2023, and I remain at your disposal to collaborate on these initiatives.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael A. Di Giovine'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Michael A. Di Giovine, Ph.D.
Professor of Anthropology
Director, Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology
Director, Ethnographic Field School on Sustainable Food and Cultural Heritage
West Chester University of Pennsylvania (USA)