**World Environment Day 2021**

**Comparing visions: Olivier François and Stefano Boeri,**

**in conversation to rewrite the future of cities**

* **How are mobility and architecture working to create the cities of the future? Stefano Boeri – an architect, urban planner, and the founder of Stefano Boeri Architetti – and Olivier Francois, Fiat CEO and Stellantis CMO, came together with Milan's Vertical Forest as a backdrop in an attempt to answer this question**
* **The Boeri-designed Vertical Forests served as inspiration for the utopian city put forward in the launch advert for the New 500**
* **The web talk can be viewed online** [**here**](https://youtu.be/yEyGNtYOc9Q) **and will soon be uploaded as a podcast.**

**Olivier François**, CEO of the Fiat brand and CMO at Stellantis, and the architect **Stefano Boeri**, whose firm is engaged in urban forestation projects all over the world, featured in a conversation for World Environment Day 2021 on the cities of the future. They addressed the themes of urban mobility and sustainable architecture to make cities healthier and more livable, by improving air quality and therefore quality of life. A sharing of values that began over a year ago: in its vision of a utopian city, crossed by Leonardo DiCaprio in the launch advert for the New 500, Fiat drew inspiration from the green architecture created by Boeri in several locations around the world.

At their meeting, François and Boeri analysed the opportunities for a “New Renaissance”: from photographs of the current situation in cities to the ongoing changes, to societal trends and the increasing interest in environmental issues, they discussed the urgency of taking action, and the major opportunity of inspiring change.

That inspiration must be rooted in engagement, in beauty, in the certainty of the need to improve the quality of the air we breathe and to reduce pollution levels in the cities we live in. The combination of architecture like Boeri's Vertical Forest – its 27,000 plants and millions of leaves contributing to clean the air by absorbing CO2 – and cars like the New 500 offering zero-emissions mobility can no doubt contribute to improving air quality in our cities.

In the words of Olivier François, Fiat CEO and Stellantis CMO: “The decision to launch the New 500 – electric and electric alone – was actually taken before Covid-19. Even then, we were already aware that the world could not take any more “compromises”. In fact, lockdown was only the latest of the warnings we have received. At that time, we witnessed situations that would have been unimaginable until then, for example wild animals roaming the cities, proving nature was taking back what was rightfully hers. Plus, as if it had still been necessary, we were reminded of the urgency of taking action, of doing something for the planet Earth. We have an icon, the 500. An icon always has its cause and the 500 is no exception: in the 1950s, it opened access to mobility for all. Nowadays, in this new scenario, it has a new mission – our mission – to create sustainable mobility for all. It is our duty to bring to market electric cars that cost no more than vehicles with an internal combustion engine, as soon as we can in line with the falling costs of their batteries. We are exploring the territory of sustainable mobility for all: this is our greatest project. Between 2025 and 2030, our product line-up will gradually become electric-only. This will be a radical change for Fiat. Meanwhile, in the near future, only a few months from now, I am proud that we will see the conversion of the legendary track on the roof of the former Lingotto factory in Turin into the largest hanging gardens in Europe, hosting over 28,000 plants. A major, meaningful – and once again sustainable – project, due to revitalize the city of Turin, our home.”

Stefano Boeri, architect, urban planner and founder of the Stefano Boeri Architetti practice states: "If we consider that cities are responsible not only for the emission of over 70% of CO2, a phenomenon at the origin of global warming, but also for the emission of pollutants which are the main cause of diseases and mortality from respiratory problems, it is clear that cities are the first places to intervene with a profound change. The Covid pandemic has shown us how fragile our lives and our bodies can be and highlighted the importance of improving the environment and above all the air of the cities in which we live. In addition to absorbing CO2, reducing energy consumption and urban heat, increasing the biodiversity of living species and making cities more attractive, trees drastically reduce fine dust pollution. Let's not forget: plants and trees are the only way we have to absorb the pollutants already emitted. I believe that the time has come to promote, with all our strength and resources, a great campaign to clean the polluted air of our cities, that microparticulate of substances harmful to the health of our lungs that has certainly accentuated in some particularly polluted urban areas the intensity of spread of the COVID 19 infection. We already have several solutions available that can help us: protect and increase the permeable and green surfaces by creating new parks and gardens, in and around our cities; transform city roofs into lawns and vegetable gardens; promote community gardens and urban agriculture; use tree roots to decontaminate polluted soils; create a network of green corridors to connect parks, forests and green buildings. "

In Fiat’s vision, the penetration of electric mobility will rise, as more and more barriers are overcome. The topics under discussion in the talk included the need to improve access to electric cars, by means of innovation and new financial products that can lower the bar of entry; the need to increase the number of private charge points at apartment buildings, requiring a rethink of the infrastructure of the apartment buildings of the future, but most of all by adapting existing buildings; the need to raise visibility of charge points in cities and increase the penetration of fast charging stations.

That will entail a rethink of urban planning, a challenge that requires the involvement of a wider range of stakeholders. This is the stimulus and message Olivier François and Stefano Boeri wish to put out as their contribution to World Environment Day – held by the United Nations every June 5th, the message of which this year is “TOGETHER WE CAN BE #GENERATIONRESTORATION”.

Turin, June 4th, 2021