

**THE LIGHTS ARE SHINING ONCE AGAIN IN FLORENCE:
THE ANDREA BOCELLI FOUNDATION AND THE CITY OF FLORENCE IN PIAZZA SAN FIRENZE TO
TURN ON THE CITY'S FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE**

*A sign of support and hope, at the behest of ABF's Founder, Maestro Andrea Bocelli,
and the Mayor of Florence, Dario Nardella.*

*From January, the San Firenze Complex will be home to the Foundation's new headquarters, with
spaces dedicated to training and empowering the talent of young people.*

Florence, December 7 – At a time of general uncertainty, in which even the most simple Christmas traditions seem to be called into question, the Andrea Bocelli Foundation (ABF), together with the City of Florence, is lighting up the city once more, starting with Piazza San Firenze, the future headquarters of the Foundation and a cultural center dedicated to young people and the arts, with our Founder, Maestro Andrea Bocelli, ABF's top management and the Mayor, Dario Nardella, in attendance.

Coinciding with the celebrated lighting of the city, which is usually held on December 8, but will – exceptionally – take place on the 7th this year, the Christmas tree in Piazza San Firenze will be added to the other trees found in the main squares of Florence and will be the first to be lit. It represents a sign of beginning anew in the name of hope for future generations and culture. In fact, the restoration of the second floor of the baroque complex of San Firenze, which was freely granted by the City of Florence and restored by ABF, will be inaugurated in January, as the operational headquarters of the Foundation, during World Education Day (January 24). The inauguration will be an important and long-awaited moment in the history of the Foundation which, in 2021, will celebrate its 10th anniversary.

The tree lighting ceremony in Piazza San Firenze thus takes on two-fold significance: hope for the future and support for the community and the younger generations, symbolically anticipating the light that will remain lit inside the complex, which will open its doors to young people, who have always been the main beneficiaries of ABF's mission. Indeed, for almost 10 years now the Andrea Bocelli Foundation has been carrying out projects aimed at developing the potential of individuals, in Italy and around the world, to guarantee them a future filled with opportunity and hope, breaking down physical and social barriers, in order to allow them to express their full potential. With the aim of offering an innovative project centered around music and art to the city of Florence, the Palazzo di San Firenze will provide vocational meetings and laboratories mainly for the children and teenagers who live in the City of Florence, as well as further afield (in fact, the center will host twinning events, cultural exchange projects, etc.), which they will be able to take part in for free, in line with ABF's mission of *"Empowering People and Communities"*.

*"This is not the first time that the spotlight has been on the city of Florence, however this year light, which has always symbolized the overcoming of darkness, will have even more significance for anyone who stops to admire the Christmas tree in the center of Piazza di San Firenze – said **Maestro Andrea Bocelli** with delight – The period we are experiencing must lead us to believe all the more in young people, in their strength and their abilities. That is why we must combine our efforts so that they may fully develop their abilities. And the spaces created by ABF within the Palazzo di San Firenze will be this: a 'living laboratory' dedicated to them".*

"A more simple and intimate Christmas awaits us – said Mayor Dario Nardella – but we wanted to put on a few traditional activities related to the festivities, such as the F-light Festival and the decorated Christmas trees around the city, as a sign of hope for beginning anew after the pandemic. This new tree in

Piazza San Firenze will also mark a new cultural space that is about to open for the people of Florence. We are truly grateful to Maestro Andrea Bocelli and his Foundation for choosing our city to be the location for this new innovative project that will link the spaces of the former court to initiatives dedicated to the arts, culture, training and charity”.

Like every Christmas, you can donate to develop ABF’s educational projects in Italy and abroad, by ordering the Andrea Bocelli Foundation’s personalized Christmas ornament at www.christmasandreabocellifoundation.org/. Alternatively, to support the “With You, to Shape the Future” fundraiser, dedicated to developing the pilot project for distance learning and hospital schools, you can also donate at <https://donate.andreabocellifoundation.org/>. You can donate from abroad via bank transfer using the following details: IBAN IT53K0523271030000010016699 Reference: With You, to Shape the Future or by sending an email to development@andreabocellifoundation.org.

The Andrea Bocelli Foundation: empowering people and communities.

The Andrea Bocelli Foundation was created in 2011 from the desire of Maestro Bocelli and his family to help people in need due to illness, poverty and social exclusion. ABF promotes and supports national and international projects, which foster the overcoming of these barriers and the full expression of one’s potential.

With the Challenges Program, ABF works in the area of scientific and technological research to bring together the best minds to find innovative solutions that can help people in tackling and overcoming the limitations imposed by their disability, offering them a better quality of life.

The Break the Barriers Program aims to support and promote projects that help the most vulnerable segments of the population in Italy and in developing countries, where conditions of poverty, disease, malnutrition and complex social situations negate or reduce life expectations.

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