



WORKGROUP ON ENVIRONMENT FINAL DOCUMENT

Ancona, 27th May 2010

Foreword

The background for the AIC Forum workgroup on the environment has been provided by the illustration by the representative of the European Parliament of the new 2020 Strategy of the European Commission. This strategy identifies three ways of growth that should be put into practice through concrete actions at a national and European level, i.e. intelligent growth (promoting awareness, innovation, training and a digital society), inclusive growth, sustainable growth (including a separate strategy called 20/20/20, i.e. by the year 2020 gas emissions will be reduced by 20%, energy efficiency must have improved by 20% and 20% of the energy consumed must be renewable energy).

The numerous reports, experiences and projects, of great interest and substance, presented by the representatives of the chamber system, public and private institutions and trade associations have shown that environmental and energy sustainability, innovation in technology, processes and particularly culture, as well as the principles of corporate social responsibility have today become the main drivers for competitiveness and the revival of local economic systems.

Strategic guidelines

The main themes tackled and analysed from various points of view were:

- A. The new meaning of CSR;
- B. The strategic role of energy and environmental variables.

A. The integration of aspects linked to Corporate Social Responsibility with those of environmental and energy sustainability has been widely discussed by participants: an integrated approach to development directed towards sustainability as agreed, represents, for both private and public organisations, not a cost but an investment which in the medium-term will become an economic, competitive, environmental and social advantage: it gives and creates new jobs (Green Jobs), new business opportunities for dynamic enterprises, encourages innovation and research, increases its reputation and image and therefore trust, reduces dependency on meagre natural resources. The environmental/social factor therefore represents an essential strategic variable.

The Chambers of Commerce are becoming an increasingly important point of reference and response for businesses and a reliable and competent partner for local and international institutions and trade associations. The System is working to support the world of SMEs with prompt and detailed interventions and dedicated methods and tools such as, for example: the Italian Network of CSR Helpdesks, EMAS Schools for the training of EMAS environmental consultants and auditors and local initiatives such as the *Progetto Veneto Responsabile* (Veneto Responsible Project), the PRESA project - Promoting Renewable Energy Source and energy efficiency in the Adriatic and the constitution of special agencies dedicated to this theme (e.g. CISE and ARIES).

Furthermore, since the Chambers are the meeting place for various interested parties (businesses, associations and citizens), they have started to also aim their information and training proposals at school-age children (CSR&Scuola) and the same citizens/consumers who, through accessible and correct information regarding environmental matters, can choose the more ecological products, thus pointing the market towards improving, in the meantime, the quality of life.

B. The efficient management of energy and meagre resources and respect for the environment have today become a *must* not only for the business production world but also for local government which is required to integrate principles of sustainability into its development policies for the region.

The European Parliament has, in fact, identified and defined some priorities to help reach the goals of the 20/20/20 strategy:

- a European directive has been issued to reduce the consumption of energy by at least 9% between 2008 and 2016, identifying, in the public sector, the area which must play a leading role: in Europe 40% of energy is consumed by buildings (private and public);
- legislation is currently being prepared which will force the building sector, from 2020, to only build houses with a very low energy consumption;
- include environmental, sustainability and energy efficiency criteria in public contracts;
- planned campaigns, directed particularly at young people, to give information, raise awareness and provide training;
- inclusion of aviation and other sectors (transport and agriculture) in the system of trading CO2 emissions, promotional measures for carbon capture and geological storage;
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- promotion of sustainable and renewable energy like solar and wind which entail, however, further scientific and technological progress. According to the European commission the idea of sustainability must include the criteria of the "life cycle of the product".

The reports presented show that public institutions are paying great attention to this matter. There are already many who are striving, in their own region, to take direct action and positively apply the 20/20/20 European Strategy.

The Marche Regional Environmental Office (ARPAM) is carrying out important marine monitoring work of the coast to check the quality of the water and bathing and also the WAP project, which is being carried out jointly with the Marche region for the preparation of a database on the management of waste produced in port areas and the implementation of a system of social-ethical responsibility.

Great interest was aroused by the presentation of the work carried out by the Croatian public institution, Institute for Physical Planning of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County – PGZ, and the various international projects presented: establishment of an information and data-communication centre of the Adriatic Euro-Region, Advance training course of sustainable development, Integral management of seaside areas, Seaside Beaches, Joint network for the Adriatic.

Some points for reflection also emerged: regional planning is an important strategic subject for sustainable development and the protection of the environment. However, to pursue this objective, technical expertise and awareness are necessary and this is obtained through qualified training.

The town of Ancona has shown the close links between urban development and impact on the climate: about 72% of the greenhouse gas emissions produced from urban conurbations in the Mediterranean region are caused by the high consumption of energy, only 3% of the primary energy requirements of Mediterranean countries is covered by renewable energy (excluding biomass), more than 20% of the total emissions depends on political decisions taken at a local level.

This means that intervening in the development of local energy systems would create further new jobs in innovative and ever more strategic sectors. These actions would have to be more sustainable, combining energy efficiency and production of renewable sources. This would allow the reduction at the same time of the index of energy dependence and the percentage of CO2 emitted annually and the risks of impact on the environment and health of the citizens.

In other words, it means defining a local strategy which can combine sustainability, innovation, participation and integration: energy efficiency of buildings, transport, proper waste management, control of biodiversity, cultural and behavioural growth of all citizens, "green" public procurement policies. The recent (2007) EASY project (Energy Action and System for the Mediterranean local communities) and the recent signing of the Covenant of Mayors (2009) are leading in this direction.

The decisive and driving role which local governments, even small ones, can have in following the 20/20/20 European Strategy was demonstrated by the Municipality of Ostra Vetere.

In April 2010 the town registered to be one of the 1300 EU towns, which signed the European Union Covenant of Mayors, i.e., the authorities committed themselves to reducing by more than 20% their own greenhouse gas emissions through local energy saving and the promotion of alternative energy sources. To this aim a project has been set up to create the first public photovoltaic plant (5,000 sq.m. of land and 750KW of rated power).

The operating structure and examples of the activities carried out over the last 20 years by the Union of the Baltic Cities illustrated by the General Secretary of the Environment and sustainable development Commission can represent a valid and concrete example for the development of our future initiatives. It emerged that the success of this structure, which in various aspects has elements in common with the organisation of the AIC Forum, depends on the ability of the various public and private bodies to collaborate in defining a common and integrated policy for the sustainability of the regions. The CHAMP project (Local response to climate change through integrated urban management) was presented – it sees the participation of 4 EU countries, including Italy.

Public Institutions must, moreover, provide incentives for GPP (Green Public Procurement) both as a driver for the development of eco products and new businesses and as a means to reduce the environmental impact of public actions. To motivate people to make green purchases it is, however, necessary to create a synergy between PA and the business world so that supply meets demand with regard to green products and services. The Acquistiverdi.it portal is a project that intends, on the one side, to supply information to users and PA on the characteristics of GPP (lack of awareness being an obstacle to the development of this tool), on the other to make national Green businesses visible.

The trade associations, representing businesses, confirmed the need to define a new industrial policy which places the accent on environment and energy sustainability, on eco-innovation and on expertise as factors for the development and competitiveness of businesses.

Confindustria Marche emphasises the importance of "collaborative networks" between all parties, including universities and banks, so that initiatives to support businesses are efficient. It is about a way of operating, which is based on the ability to streamline individual areas of expertise, roles and responsibilities in order to pursue a common objective.

The association's projects and initiatives are based on this logic of working together and are aimed particularly towards the development of environmental innovation and research as an element in the success of businesses:



“InnovationXBusinessXMarche Project”, “Developing a Life-Cycle Thinking Tool Box for SMEs” (LCA-Tools); RIDITT (Programme for transferring technology from the research system to businesses and the creation of new high-technology businesses); EcoMarche Project (dedicated to the promotion and spread of environmental certification); Study on Energy Dependence in the Marche region.

Confartigianato in Ancona emphasises the importance of a greater “synergy” with banks and institutions in defining intervention strategies in support of businesses, particularly for small and very small enterprises like those in our textile industry. It specifically proposes to integrate incentive policies for energy efficiency operations (which are already partly present in our region) with the creation of specific credit lines for investing in energy efficiency in businesses. Such investments, if carried out properly, produce economic returns even in the short-term and can favour situations of competitive advantage.

Environmental and energy actions carried out by businesses, therefore, must be considered “self-sustainable”, or rather be seen as factors of competitiveness and future profitability of the businesses and therefore be analysed separately – in particular when the banks examine all the indicators for the business – and not be superimposed with those relating to production and business structure.

It also intends to offer businesses a tool, such as the one of the “energy check-up”, to make business managers aware of the potential for energy saving, including both the identification of wasted energy, and any possible use of renewable sources.

CNA in Ancona emphasises that even for small local businesses the green economy can constitute a valid opportunity for revival as it is this part of the market which is seeing turnover and jobs increase. A reconversion into production and style models of everyday life, research and innovation and a greater public intervention to spread the idea of sustainability could be the key which is a turning point in the current economic crisis.

In the afternoon session of the workgroup a large amount of time was given to the presentation on good practices and experiences of “Green Ports” in the Adriatic area.

The port authority of Rijeka illustrated the activities of the EcoPort Foundation – to which it belongs, along with 122 other European ports – for the exchange of experiences of innovative environmental solutions and to the creation of new projects such as: EcoPort Noise Management System for ports (NoMEPorts), World Port Climate Initiative (WPCI). The Croatian port authority also presented its own projects: the Rijeka Gateway project, the Port Reception facility study (Waste management), the definition of the noise characterization of the Port of Rijeka; the technical assistance on development of cost efficient emission reduction measures in the harbour of Rijeka (Clean Air Management); the Ports Sustainable Energy Management System (PERS).

The services for the management and collection of port waste carried out by the Croatian business Ind-Eko are also of great interest; the Marche region together with ARPAM and the port authorities of Ancona presented the results of the WAP project with the related system of survey and management of port waste which, it is suggested, should also be used in other Adriatic and Ionian ports, but in the meantime the need for harmonisation of disposal costs for port waste has been shown.

The Province of Ancona ended the speeches and supplied some interesting ideas on which to reflect: the need for a common Adriatic-Ionian strategy for maritime protection, to be put in place as a prevention tool and to assist if faced with any future environmental disasters including both natural ones and man-made damage to eco-systems; the future role of the port of Ancona (which seems, today, to be staying outside of the Napa agreement - North Adriatic Port Association), which should change from being (mainly), a petroleum port into a green port. This change in port activity could happen through a specific benchmark action to be undertaken and ‘borrowed’ from northern Europe, and then continue on to the ports on both shores of the Adriatic. Through a *collaborative governance*, the city and the port can be the fulcrum and engine of tourism, a “short-chain” food and wine sector, the countryside, the environment and cultural assets, to which our region is undeniably the gateway. A green port which hinges on a “sea district” of quality, good practices, wide accountability, certified activities linked both to goods but even more to passenger traffic and cruises: a hub of sustainable policies.

Conclusions (concerted actions)

Participants in the workgroup conclude that in order to carry out European policy on energy and the climate, an innovative “collaborative” common strategy must be defined, which is shared between all the players (public bodies, businesses and their representatives, universities, research centres, banks, civil society and consumers/citizens), which changes the current cultural models and prevailing managerial paradigms, based on consumerism, and crosses over to the idea of sustainability. And it is therefore necessary to concentrate on the strategic assets which Europe 2020 suggests: great attention to the so-called green economy (eco-innovation, environmental and energy sustainability) in terms of allocation, of ease of access to credit, of simplification of regulations and administrative processes for authorisation procedures, creation of a favourable context for eco-certified businesses.



However there are limits which have been identified, particularly the lack of awareness, specific expertise and technological know-how, of those working not only inside the businesses but above all in public institutions, which are the main players in this process of cultural growth/change.

Hence the suggestion that specific pathways are defined for awareness-raising, information, specific training and times of support. These should be aimed at all the players in the market and also involve citizens, the main and direct speakers for the city who assume an increasingly strategic role in carrying out local environmental policies.

It is also essential to create networks of collaboration with universities, research centres and technological parks for the development of new, more advanced and innovative technologies, instruments and materials.

It is therefore suggested to streamline the great expertise of the various subjects taking part, the significant experiences developed in the individual regions and the great projects highlighted by the workgroups through the establishment of two theme-specific FOCUSES (CSR and environmental and energy sustainability). These would be represented by various stakeholders and could become somewhere both to exchange experiences, information and results of experiments and also a place providing opportunities to define shared objectives, methods and tools, to develop within the Adriatic-Ionian area a common conscience and awareness of sustainability.

For example it intends to:

- repeat the model of the Italian CSR counters for the awareness and promotion of sustainability directly to local SMEs and for the assessment of local good practices;
- repeat the EMAS Schools and CISE models for special training;
- repeat the working and technological methods suggested both by the Veneto Responsible project e.g. the self-assessment table with economic/social/environmental performance indicators);
- enhance the PRESA project with further elements and ideas which have arisen from the workgroup.

It also urges to:

- motivate tourist operators towards the path of environmental quality in accordance with the criteria of the new EU Ecolabel Regulation;
- make the marine monitoring data bases available to all the countries and coastal regions and in particular data relating to bathing, and to diffuse such data to the population in a more capillary manner also including businesses involved in coastal activities and bathing establishments;
- encourage the exchange of information between the two shores of the Adriatic on seaweed problems.