

MAKARSKA

Speech by Mrs Pasin – Chairwoman of the Committee for the Promotion of Women Entrepreneurs in Padua

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all let me thank the women organizers of the VIII edition of the forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian area and send you the regards of the Council Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce of Padua and of the members of the Committee for the Promotion of Women Entrepreneurs.

I would like to show you some statistics about the businesses run by women in the province of Padua.

A quarter of the Paduan entrepreneurs are female: Padua is still the Venetian capital in terms of women entrepreneurs on the total amount.

The total number of female businesses in the province of Padua amounted to 19,753 units on 31st December 2007, 20.1% of the total operating businesses. 14,978 of them operate in the industrial and service sector (19.7%).

As far as the development of the last year is concerned, there was a positive trend (+2.5%) with reference to the total amount of women entrepreneurs in the industrial and service sector, even though this percentage is smaller than at the beginning of this decade, in line with a general trend concerning all businesses.

Padua was again above the regional trend (+1.9%) in terms of growth in the number of women entrepreneurs in the industrial and service sector.

The number of female businesses had a higher increase than that of the total amount of businesses in 2007 (+1.2%), a trend that was also recorded at regional and national level.

As far as the development in the single sectors is concerned, the highest growth of female businesses was in the service sector, particularly in the activities destined to business (real estate companies, consultancy, finance service, activities connected to transport and travel agencies, just to mention the few most significant).

In the total amount of services provided to companies, the initiatives of women entrepreneurs in the province recorded a higher growth than their counterparts at regional and national level.

The growth rate of Female Enterprise in Padua was actually 4.5%, the second rate recorded in the Veneto region after Venice (+5.1%) as compared to the total regional figure of 4.1% and the national figure of 3.9%.

Further information on female presence can be found with reference to the total amount of company office (owners, partners, managers, etc...) held by people running, managing or owning businesses in the province.

Summing up: by 31st December 2007 women holding company office were 38,445 in the province amounting to 25.5% of the total number of operating entrepreneurs by that same date. If you take into account only the industrial and service sector women holding company office were 32,927 (25.3% of the total, thus lower than the percentage of 26.3% at national level) corresponding to 20.3% of the total in the Veneto region (confirming Padua at the first place in the region) and at the 8th in Italy.

Always referring to the industrial and service sector, last year a positive trend was recorded not only in businesses but also in the number of women holding company office with a growth

of +1.6%, higher than in the Veneto region (+1.2%) and Italy (+0.9%). This figure placed Padua at the second place in the region after Treviso (+2.3%).

At sector level the development was similar to that recorded in terms of number of women entrepreneurs, with a higher growth in the services provided to companies, and partially in trade.

Women have proved to bring a creative flexibility and an ability to believe in the future that are sometimes missing in men.

Paduan entrepreneurs are also more and more oriented to women thus confirming their ability to include more and more women managers in their companies: it is a sign of great social flexibility especially thanks to a number of initiatives carried out in the last four years by committees and associations promoting and supporting the training and the insertion in the work market of young women.

As far as the activities of the Committee for the Promotion of Women Entrepreneurs of Padua are concerned, let me remind you of the project "Promotion of women entrepreneurs in the province of Padua" in cooperation with Confindustria Padova.

It is a long term project already started in 2007 referring to the four sectors that are most in need of entrepreneurial support in the small and medium enterprises with female owners or a majority of women managers: handicraft, industry (SME), cultivation and distribution of agricultural products, commercial distribution, and innovative services for distribution.

The project, among other things, foresees the creation of international networks for cultural exchange and openness and is aimed at creating relationships with the National Association of Finnish Women Entrepreneurs in order to enable an exchange of experience and to compare projects and

activities and also to meet entrepreneurial approaches and culture different from their own and very advanced in terms of conciliating life and work.

It is also meant to carry out the project “Website for women of Padua in network” aiming at creating a website for women where the main topics are equal opportunities (bodies and associations, laws, national and transnational projects, local initiatives etc...), as well as work and conciliation (entrepreneurship, skills and competence, career, flexible work, etc...)

I would also like to remind you of the project Artemis of the Chamber of Commerce organised in cooperation with Promopadova, a special agency of the Chamber of Commerce, that foresees a training course of 80 hours for future women entrepreneurs willing to start up a new business within a year.