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The territory of the Province of Trieste in the new Europe

William Starc

Trieste Province differs considerably from the other three provinces in Friuli Venezia Giulia because of its history and geographical location. Indeed, the size of the Province is such that the difference between the territory run by Trieste city council (where 86% of the population resides) and that governed by the Province is minimal. The Province's political weight derives principally from roles it is assigned by law rather than from any actual role of settling territorial conflicts between the capital of the Province and smaller town councils. The number of inhabitants in the province has decreased from 300,000 in the seventies to 245,000 nowadays. This reduction is a consequence of economic decline of the area, which despite receiving constant financial help since the war, has not been able to bring about structural development. With the decrease in State industries the local commercial networks have suffered a crisis connected to the liberalisation of Eastern European markets. The banking sector and Trieste's historical insurance sector have undergone several resizings and the port activities, the original founders of Trieste's fortunes, now feel the pressure of competition from Koper and Monfalcone. On the other hand, the new science and research institutes at world-class level in Trieste represents a relevant recent development, even though up until now there has been no evidence that research carried out has provided a spin-off for local production. This limited territory also suffers from the fact that the

bodies charged with its planning do not only belong to city councils, but there are also second level institutional bodies which have a say over shared space. The Pa (Port authority) has in part jurisdiction over the industrial zone, which is in its turn run by a specific body called Ezit (the governing body for the Industrial Zone in Trieste). The latter is subject to port jurisdiction where state-owned maritime property is concerned. While Ezit is in favour of a planning project which brings together the municipalities involved, the Pa has not yet concluded its planning process, raising objections to Ezit's choices regarding shared, state-owned maritime areas and the use of industrial areas facing the sea where port activities are to be given precedence. In order to resolve the conflicts between the two parties, the Regional Government has drawn up a protocol of agreement subject to ratification by the bodies of the municipalities involved and the Province itself. This situation with its poorly defined urban planning tools is also affected by the limits outlined by the Minister of the Environment related to the institution of a national site subject to reclamation, which as yet requires an organic plan and financial backing in order for it to be carried out. In the light of its accession to Europe, Slovenia has set forth a global legal reform with particular attention paid to land planning, picking out its strong territorial aspects. Koper plays a fundamental part in the national socio-economic system, as it constitutes the only sea port not only for Slovenia and its produce but also for Central European countries. The preparation for transport infrastructure which can efficiently connect Koper to the rest of the European

road networks has therefore been swiftly carried out. As well as this, a rail connection is planned between Trieste's industrial zone and Koper which would reduce transit times and distances from one state to the other. It is in this way that premises are being set forth for a metropolitan system in which productive, port and industrial systems must be fully complementary and integrated. However, widening the demographic and occupational base entails the definition of planning policies in the various sectors and the heightened need for agreement between representatives of the diverse socio-economic categories involved. Hand in hand with this goes the necessity for a pro-territorial planning culture. Another theme for discussion for more than 30 years has been that related to the safeguarding of the Karst environment even though, stretching on both bordering territories, there are two profoundly different approaches. On the one hand, the Italian side has been more interested in the safekeeping of the natural environment whereas on the other, the Slovene interest lies with the human dwellings located in the area. As EU accession gets closer, there has been a Slovene tendency to think of the Karst more as a unique environment where policies for safeguarding and maximising the potential of the landscape can be activated. With this in mind, closer relations have been set up with the ex Mountain Community (now Mountain District) with the aim of elaborating projects for bordering areas and with the European Community for financing these. On the basis of these prospects and with Interreg III A Italy-Slovenia (2000-2006), Trieste Province,

together with the municipalities, the Chamber of Commerce and the University has elaborated a planning proposal in which the diverse interventions will be part of one system. This has been carried out with the aim of both creating a network between those involved and promoting development of the area with closer links to analogous activities being carried out across the border. On the eve of the creation of a Slovenian territorial body which will be intermediary between State and local councils, there is the concrete and valid possibility of looking into a Plan for the International Park of the Karst. Starting from such objectives and still within the field of Interreg initiatives, the Regional Government of Friuli Venezia Giulia has set up a working group with local governing bodies which is currently discussing the definition of contents of a competition brief for sustainable development. The aforementioned initiatives deal specifically with the elaboration of co-participatory landscape plans; the strengthening of relations networks and creation of shared visions, programmes and policies; the outline of strategic environmental evaluation procedures of a vast area; the innovative realisation of databases and information systems. Sharing some common themes with our Slovene partners, such as development and preservation of the Karst environment and the complementarity of industrial production and port systems which take place in the same Gulf, will give further opportunities for territorial planning in the Province of Trieste. The themes discussed call for the definition of shared policies and tools which are

capable of safeguarding a unique habitat at the same time as integrating and coordinating already existent activities so that territorial resources are not irreversibly destroyed.