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Italy

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**From the glasses district a concrete answer to the problems
of the industrial waste disposal**

I thank those who gave me the opportunity to take part in this important appointment and present the experience that the "Manufacturers' Union for the Protection of the Environment" of Belluno Province has gained in almost fifteen years of activity in the field of protection of the environment, for the benefit of the local firms.

This Union was born in the ambit of the Manufacturers' Corporation of Belluno in order to remedy a serious emergency in the waste management that developed mostly in the northerner area of the Province – called Cadore – during summertime, at the end of the eighties. This area, located in the heart of the Dolomites, while attracting many tourists, is also an industrial area, since this is the area where the glasses industry was born back in 1878. The emergency, as time went by, had become chronic in almost the entire Province.

The fact that the local dumps were unable to receive both urban and industrial waste determined a situation of great inconvenience, as there were heaps of garbage amassed on the street-sides and in the squares that, certainly, did not give a nice picture to the many tourists that visit the Cadore Dolomites especially in the summertime.

This was happening because many municipalities were not able to perform this task any longer. Therefore, with the support of the law, they let private firms take care of waste disposal at their expenses and using their own means.

Our Union's task was to try to patch up the situation, by assuming the responsibility of stipulating terms with various local and Veneto dumps so as to ensure the firms on the correct disposal of the waste that was compatible with the urban one, the kind of waste that they found more difficult to dispose with.

But this was not enough. The typology of the waste that was produced included also toxic, noxious and other types of waste that, because of their own characteristics, had to be necessarily discharged in specific disposals or had to go through a preliminary treatment. This is the reason why it was necessary to begin to co-operate with private plants for the treatment and the storing of waste throughout Veneto, in order to discharge this type of waste correctly. This kind of enterprise has caused a levelling and control of the prices, thus favouring the associate firms.

In few years the activity of CIPA – the acronym for our Union – has grown, outgrowing the borders of the Glasses District and spread throughout the entire province, offering its services in the environmental sphere to industrial, artisan and service firms.

For its own definition the CIPA has maintained a privileged relationship with the local authorities as it granted the compliance with the quality of the waste produced by its associates. Such waste had to be collected in the firms by authorised and arranged carriers and then taken to the public disposals that were available from time to time.

For them, we had become a real interlocutor as we were able to stand for correctness on environmental issues, in the industrial world of the Belluno Province.

Later on, it was possible to have access alternatively to various dumps such as those of Belluno, Longarone and Ponte delle Alpi and, at the beginning of our activity and only for a short time, to that of Cortina D'Ampezzo. The alternation had been imposed by the lack of capacity of the same plants. However, this arrangement was highly expensive both for the disposal and the transportation of the waste.

As the years pass by, the opportunity to find a solution to the problem of the industrial waste disposal matured and, cashing in on the experience of our CORSEA colleagues from Vicenza, we decided to set up a dump for special non_dangerous* waste for the exclusive use of our

associates. This project should have put an end to the important and delicate problem as the disposal of industrial waste is.

As a matter of fact the entire area of the Belluno province was totally lacking in adequate sites – even for the morphological characteristics of the territory, 94 per cent of which was bound by legal limitations – and the whole responsibility for the disposal fell entirely on the few public dumps that hardly could satisfy the primary necessities of the community because of their inadequate dimensions.

Eventually, the final choice was Perarolo di Cadore. This was actually a second choice as at the beginning of the nineties we had to give up the plan to create a similar implant in the Logarone area, in a disused cave although it was more barycentric. Without any doubt, that could have been the optimal solution but, unfortunately, it was not possible to pursue that target because of mere political obstacles.

As we said, this implant was realized in Perarolo di Cadore, in the industrial area of “Ansogne”, inside an active dump for inert waste.

The technical management was given to a big company, with a great experience in the field and owner of the area where the dump has been built. The site had previously been used for the extraction of marl, to be used for the making of cement, and considered even by Belluno Provincial Government one of the most eligible sites for the setting up of a dump.

The Perarolo implant began to operate in October of 1999, after more than two years of negotiations. It has a capacity of 60.000 mc, half of which have already been used and the access to which is limited exclusively to the associated firms of the Belluno area.

On the average 9.000 tons of waste are carried there annually. Part of it is carried directly by the firms whereas the rest is carried by authorised carriers who collect the waste from the firms which have previously stocked it in sacks and containers. Therefore, the means of transportation too differ according to the necessities ranging from those with lifting facilities to those suitable for unloading or fitted with compactor.

Recently we have began the process of further enlarging the site by 60.000 mc. This will follow the recent regulation which has been introduced in Italy and follows the European policy that regulates the management of the dumps and the waste disposal.

Over the years, our dump has taken on strategic importance for the economic compartment of the Belluno province as its role is transversal to all the productive sectors: industry, artisanship and commerce for it is the a reference point for the treatment of special, non dangerous waste produced in the Belluno area.

It was very hard and compelling for the Belluno Province Manufacturers Union for the Protection of the Environment and the Manufacturers Corporation to carry out this plan. Luckily the local and institutional authorities such as the Perarolo Provincial Administration and the Comunità Montana of Central Cadore have been on our side and have always supported us.

As a consequence, the Veneto Region, with its very competent Massimo Giorgetti at the time counsellor for the Environmental Policies and with the technical and administrative, since the beginning firmly believed in the effectiveness of our project, gave its attention and support, and co-operated with us in the carrying out of our project.

A proof of this is the recent regional law that regulates the waste management that has been somehow inspired by our experience. As a matter of fact from now on only waste producers or “no-profit” unions will be authorised to set up dumps in the Veneto area in order to avoid any kind of economical speculation by private companies.

The economical world as well has welcomed this enterprise and this has favourably encouraged Veneto Manufacturers and the Veneto Chamber of Commerce..

As I have already mentioned the fact that our Union is a no-profit organisation and that our aim is to give services to our associate firms at the lowest cost possible.

This is why our policy is based on co-operation with companies that operate in the management, assemblage and recycle of the waste.

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This kind of approach most certainly goes in the direction of the European and national regulations on this matter, lowers the management-costs and prevents that the re-usable waste, such as paper, wood and metal, to be taken to the dump.

This kind sorting out of waste is done by the very same firms and the result is that the 80 per cent of the waste produced can be recycled or reused. From here comes a great saving for the firms and a high recovery of raw material, thus favouring the environment.

It has been demonstrated that the kind of waste that is taken to the dump is that without any value and quality and that, eventually, could be used in a incinerator, with a production of energy.

Thanks to the setting up of this dump and its success the Manufacturers Union and the CIPA have taken on an even more important and qualifying role, co-operating with the firms in their hard daily work.

Besides, we think that we have helped them face in the right way the problems regarding the environment and particularly the waste disposal, thus favouring the growth of sensitivity and respect for the environment that are even more felt in our territory, the mountains.

Our attempts of awakening the local firms to these problems has been noticed in a gradual but decisive reduction of the sanctions for environmental offence, which were reasonable most of the times

On the basis of this experience, we think that a role, such as that our Union has taken on, can be even more effectively exploited in the context of public and private relation.

As a matter of fact, we are of the opinion that the management of the urban waste must be clearly separated from the industrial one; and in the same way the related responsibilities. If those who produce waste must be in charge of the disposal, Municipalities and local Authorities should be in charge only of the urban waste, and let the privates manage that which they produce.

In our opinion, the congestion of the dumps is caused by the indiscriminate disposal of the waste produced by firms in the bins reserve for "compatible" waste. This must cease.

These kind of solutions goes on only to let some Municipalities collect taxes – that very often are out of proportion in relation to the real quality of waste that the public service collects for disposal – but which help only to cover management costs.

The example of our Union can be the demonstration of how the Belluno manufacturer world learnt to face with consciousness, determination and seriousness the not so easy and delicate problem of the environment protection.