

Press release

International conference “Global Connectivity with the Mediterranean Basin”

The challenge of the free zones system for the free trade areas of Trieste, launched by the President Marina Monassi

The message from the Minister for the Environment Corrado Clini stresses “the importance, for all the strategies aimed at promoting green economy, of having suitable Free Trade Zones, such as the Port of Trieste”

Creating a modern “free zone” system in the free trade areas of the Port of Trieste: this in short is the objective, with important implications for the development of traffic in the Upper Adriatic, launched by **Marina Monassi**, President of the Trieste Port Authority, on opening the **international conference “Global Connectivity with the Mediterranean Basin”**, which will be held until tomorrow at the Stazione Marittima in Trieste, thanks to the organisation of the World Free Zone Convention and of the Trieste Port Authority, with the support of Simest SpA.

“The Trieste Free Trade area is one of the oldest in the world: it was founded along with the one in Fiume in 1719 by the emperor Charles VI of Habsburg,” explains the president **Marina Monassi**. For this reason we asked the Italian Government if the Management of the Free Trade Areas of the Port of Trieste could be accomplished according to the uses in force in other ports and free trade areas in the world, in other words according to article A (Annex VIII) of the **Paris Peace Treaty of 1947.**”

This scheme contemplates offering incentives, of a fiscal or non-fiscal nature, to attract investments and economic development. Specifically, **no imposition of consumer or income taxes** limited to the incomes produced in the Free Trade Areas, the option to consume goods in the foreign state for activities carried out in the Free Trade Areas or goods destined for export; maximum promotion of international trade **export for export**, with full opening to all contacts and proposals for development and funding; promotion of infrastructures and services that ensure the right of access to the Free Trade Area; further development of the so-called Black Box, an I.T. system that allows traceability of goods in the Free Ports.

President **Monassi** also recalled that she had recently sent a **letter** to the Prime Minister, **Mario Monti**, asking that the potential offered by the Port of Trieste with its free trade system be considered in the Government Policies for development.

A message arrived from the government, through the Minister for the Environment **Corrado Clini**, who stressed “the importance, for all the strategies aimed at promoting green economy, of having suitable Free Trade Zones, such as the Port of Trieste, for the installation of logistic and production activities with a high level of technological innovation, with moderate impact on the environment and notable energy savings, as well as the resulting elements of added value and employment”.

Amedeo Teti, Director General of the Ministry for Economic Development, suggests that “in case of necessity, a conference of the services should immediately be called to deal with situations that specifically involve the operators in the port system”.

The value of the path followed by the APT is also based on the words of Graham Mather, Chairman of the World Free Zone Convention: “There is the real possibility,” he stated, “of attracting investments and promoting cross-border cooperation. This is a favourable moment for involving the Prime Minister Mario Monti because, thanks also to his actions, the world is looking towards Italy with great interest. Trieste has an important role in the world of free

trade areas and this is going to continue: this is the path to be followed, as has recently been demonstrated by the conferences in China (Shanghai) and in India, with two countries that have shown great interest in free trade zones. Poland, Greece and other countries are doing likewise, because they are the dynamic crossroads of finance, economy and communication.”

The mayor of Trieste, **Roberto Cosolini**, stressed how the reflection of these two days is an important contribution: “There has been a great deal of confusion on these issues in Trieste for many years, so comparing notes with the world’s protagonists of the free trade areas is very important because today more than ever we need clarity. Clarity regarding feasibility, legal rules and the opportunities of the market. In compliance with the rules, one has to understand how to maintain, develop and transfer these areas to derive maximum benefit. The experience of the operators will therefore be of great assistance.”

Antonio Paoletti, President of the Trieste Chamber of Commerce, pointed out that “we shall at last tackle the issue of free zones with clarity. All economic studies point to the Port of Trieste as the primary asset of this region. The Old Port has been allowed to slumber far too long, our thought must now go to the New Port and to the dry port system, which have enormous development possibilities. The Trieste Chamber of Commerce has been active for some time, encouraging companies from the Far East to set up their European base in the Port of Trieste.”

The Prefect of Trieste **Alessandro Giacchetti** confirms the opportunities and advantages of the venture. “Trieste must find its future on the sea,” he said, “as a strategic point in the North Adriatic, especially in this period of crisis, when something must be done to boost economic and social cohesion. The time is ripe to speak in Trieste about free trade areas, thinking of the economic possibilities that these new strategies can offer to capital investments.”

On the financial front, **Alberto Castronovo**, director of transnational finance at Simest, stressed that “competition is taking on more and more the form of competition between clusters. In this sense I believe strongly in the expansion of free trade zones in the Mediterranean: the strategy that we wish to implement, a strategy based on logistic platforms, will improve the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises and the stability in the various areas concerned.”

The free zones may be seen as an effective instrument of economic development policy, the more so at this point in time characterised by widespread recession. “Free zones may be the future of the world economy,” said Graham, “and in order to be able to exploit their potential in Europe we must succeed in combining the principles of competition and growth, Community legislation with the principles of benefit offered by these systems.”

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