



INTERVIEWS

**CLAUDIO MARTINI: CONSENSUS CANNOT BE REACHED
ON THE BASIS OF COMPROMISE**

Ireland says NO to Europe, or maybe the Irish are totally indifferent to it considering the low voter turnout. Claudio Martini, President of CPMR and of the Tuscany Region, was one of the six Presidents of European Regions who participated in the preparatory work of the Convention for the drafting of the Constitutional Treaty, which was subsequently rejected after the NO vote of France and the Netherlands. Today, Mr. Martini expresses his "deepest regret and concern for this vote that is a serious blow to the political integration process of Europe".

EM: President, what is your first comment on the Irish NO vote?

CM: "The outcome of the referendum comes at a time when everybody recognizes that we need Europe even more: individual countries cannot solve the big problems that affect the modern world alone. Indeed, even large international institutions have more and more trouble in tackling the situation. Clear proof of this is the recent failure of the FAO Conference. This vote is a paradox if you consider that Ireland is the country that benefited the most from European policies and funding. In recent years Ireland has grown at an astounding rate thanks to Europe. I believe the vote was influenced by private and national selfishness and apprehension. There is a clear climate of widespread ingratitude vis-à-vis common efforts that have been made and this does not bode well for the future of the Union".

EM: Does Europe not hold any responsibility?

CM: "The Irish vote is also a clear message for all those who advocate political integration in Europe. If you lower Europe's profile and accept compromise in order to avoid fear and rejection, you only reap disappointing results... The time has come to strongly reaffirm that it is better to lose while keeping one's head up, trying to give new momentum - without any hesitation - to a high profile policy of European integration, with a view to earning the consensus of the productive representatives of society and the professional world at European level. It is better to be defeated in the pursuit of a brave policy, than to lose by giving in to compromise and inactivity! This is the reason why I hope that, after the Irish vote, Europe is able to give a new thrust to this great challenge".

EM: What will happen now? Is the Treaty dead?

CM: "The Treaty is not dead, but the whole integration process will slow down once again. It is difficult to make any predictions: indeed, the ratification process must continue as a form of respect for those countries which have already voted YES to the Treaty. We, Regional Governors must increasingly commit ourselves to disseminating the European message at local level. We must contribute to European policy with our local experiences and our proximity to citizens; these assets are more precious than ever today."

Interviewed by Enrico Mayrhofer (enrico.mayrhofer@crpm.org)

SAMSØ AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

"Socrates and Plato were teaching philosophy in the Athens' agora in the 5th century BC. With the same

commitment, the Energy Academy of SAMSO (DK), is today a place where scientists and researchers from the whole world can meet and discuss renewable energies..." With these words Søren Hermansen, Director of the Energy Academy started his presentation to the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission in Samsø, a beautiful Danish Island that is 100% self-sufficient due to windmills and biomass.

Jens Peter Nielsen, Manager of the Samsø Energy Agency is an engineer who has been involved in the implementation of this worldwide example in terms of CO₂ reduction.

EM: Mr Nielsen, what does your project consist of and how did you succeed?

JPN: In 1997, Samsø won a national competition formed by the Danish Energy Authority (The Energy Minister Svend Auken). The idea was to find an Island in Denmark where the energy system based on fossil fuel should be converted to renewable energy within a period of 10 years. As mentioned, Samsø won and the master plan had 3 major points: electricity, heat and transportation along with energy savings and energy efficiency. We believe that the success is based on a strong master plan; lots and lots of information towards the local society and local ownership.

EM: What was the most difficult obstacle during the implementation of this idea?

JPN: To convince people about the benefits and the potential for them though the implementation of the master plan. Also, to establish citizen groups that should work with the individual renewable energy installations, such as local district heating. Finally, it has been really hard to find the right spot or place for the energy installations according to regional and local planning and especially in respect of the neighbours.

EM: What message would you like to convey to other EU Islands or Regions interested in transforming their territory in a self-sufficient area?

JPN: First of all it is essential to have a master plan where the possibilities for renewable energies in the local area are described. It is also very important to involve all the locals, private people, the industry and craftsmen and the political system in the plans and the implementation. Again, local ownership and involvement is the key to a success!

EM: You reached the level of 100% renewable energy production, what is your goal now? Do you think you could go even further?

JPN: Our goal for the future is to convert the transport sector. We have 23 MW wind energy off-shore, with yearly production in the area of 80,000 MWh. This production of green electricity corresponds to the use of fossil fuel in the transport sector. Therefore we are, in a way, CO₂ neutral in the transport sector. However, we want to make real changes for example to convert fuel and diesel engines (cars, tractors, service cars, trucks, etc) to rapeseed oil or second generation biofuels. We also want to improve the use of electric cars and hopefully in the future, hydrogen cars and moreover to improve public transportation. Another area is energy efficiency and energy savings among all people in society, such as private homes, offices, industries, or schools. Energy savings must be a daily topic for all of us.

For more information on the Samsø Energy Academy please find details on www.energiakademiet.dk and in the 10 years report.

Jens Peter Nielsen, Manager

Samsø Energy Agency

Interviewed by Enrico Mayrhofer (enrico.mayrhofer@crpm.org)

ARTICLE

MEETING OF THE CPMR POLITICAL BUREAU

Mr Charalampos Kokkinos, Secretary General of the South Aegean Region, will host the CPMR Political Bureau which will be held in Rhodes on 27th June 2008.

Territorial cohesion, energy and agriculture will be the main issues of the meeting. Julie Gourden,

Director at the CPMR and responsible for Regional Policy, will present a technical note on territorial cohesion. She will define the concept of territorial cohesion and how it can be put into practice in today's Europe.

Should the CAP guarantee a safe and stable supply of foodstuffs for European consumers in compliance with the strictest standards of security, sustainability and protection of the environment, or not? Should CPMR Member Regions support a CAP focused on the production of food products? Is diversity within the European farming industry an advantage for the EU? Should a quality model complying with EU guidelines and recognised by consumers throughout European territory need to be consolidated? Patrick Anvroin, Director for Agriculture at the CPMR, will ask these questions, expressed in the document "*Towards a CPMR contribution on the reform of CAP*".

Mr Claudio Martini, President of Tuscany and President of the CPMR, will chair the one-day meeting in the presence of Mr Prokopis Pavlopoulos, Minister of the Interior, Mr Yiannis Papatthanassiou, Deputy Minister for Finance and Economy and Mr Yannis G. Valinakis, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, of Greece.

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POST OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CPMR ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION

The CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission recruits its Executive Secretary - Please see <http://www.arcatlantique.org/index.php?act=1,6,1,,,,,en>

EVENTS

26 June 2008, General Assembly of CPMR BBSC, South Aegean, (GR)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,68>

27 June 2008, CPMR Political Bureau Rhodes, South Aegean, (GR)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,66>

26-28 June 2008, Sustainable Innovation for Regional Development, Leeuwarden (NE)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,2,2,38>

1 July 2008, French Presidency of the EU

<http://www.ue2008.fr/>

7-10 July 2008, European Parliament Plenary Session, Strasbourg (FR)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/plenary/agenda.do?language=en>

8 July 2008, AQUAMARINA Meeting, CoR, Room JDE 53, Brussels (BE)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,95>

7 August 2008, 2nd Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop, Trondheim (NO)

<http://gftw.org/>

18 September 2008, General Assembly of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission, Naples (IT)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=3,2,2>

1-3 October 2008, 36th CPMR General Assembly, Bayonne (FR)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,65>

6-9 October 2008, OPEN DAYS, CoR Plenary Session, CoR Brussels (BE)

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2008/index.cfm

LEGAL NOTICE

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