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**Interview**  
with **Riccardo Conti**  
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*Question:* The Territory orientation plan is considered a basic instrument for governing the territory; it outlines the strategy of territorial development closely linked to the regional planning tools.

*Answer:* The aim is to produce single, unified documents which lead to across-the-board discussions. We are producing these highly ambitious planning documents to fill important gaps in the political debate. This is why the Tuscany Region has put forward the Prs (Regional development plan) and the Pit (Territory orientation plan) as two closely coordinated products within the same overall strategy to compensate for this weakness with a more ambitious, concise institutional framework.

*Q:* Why a new Pit after six years?

*A:* Tuscany is different today from how we imagined it at the dawn of the new century and as we saw it in the 1980s and '90s. In the early years of this century, the Prs was based on 'wellbeing' - its title was The Tuscany of wellbeing - in which Tuscany was described by and large as well-off, based on decades of growth that had built it into one of the most advanced regions, and an interesting example at international level. Wellbeing and awareness of a region which had acquired personality and which could, with a certain degree of satisfaction, boast a strong identity. Today, just being Tuscany is no longer sufficient; it needs government. It is one of the regions that has suffered most from globalization. The system of localised economies seems to have

run out of steam and the urban system is not competitive at European level.

*Q:* What is the idea of Tuscany that emerges from this change in direction?

*A:* The image that is set forth in the two documents is of a large, rural Tuscany - the modern rural Tuscany - in which the system of cities is set - the polycentric city of Tuscany - as a polycentric system composed of metropolitan areas and conurbations. The accent is on the relationships between Tuscany and Italy, Europe and the world.

This is a perception that emerges from the need that Tuscany has of a major overhaul to free the seized-up mechanisms of development and interaction among economy, territory and sustainability. Tuscany is a Region in which progressive political forces enjoy a healthy majority. It is this strength that enables us to invest in reforms and in the risk that reforms imply. With the country still uneven nationally, we could be a laboratory - for the centre-left forces especially - and a driving force despite the risks involved.

*Q:* What does the challenge for innovation involve?

*A:* The historical and environmental heritage is a resource to be strenuously defended. Active conservation is dynamic. It calls for plans which are the tools which enable the resource to reproduce. You must remember that the resource of the environment, the environmental heritage is never a natural resource but the outcome of man interacting with the territory. The Val d'Orcia is perfect example of how a wooded area was turned into arable land. Tuscany has a deep-seated tradition of welcoming outsiders and of

cosmopolitanism. Hospitality for us is a resource that has to look ahead and encourage change. We had the courage to reclaim the countryside but we have to move on because it has all been reclaimed.

Active conservation is also change, no landscape reproduces itself except through change. Local authorities are crucial for implementing this reform because they govern the territory day by day. This is a clear-cut strategy that needs government, collaboration, cooperation and also disciplinary mechanisms.

*Q:* How do you combine sustainability and development, conservation and transformation?

*A:* It is important to identify the proper approach for Tuscany and so also for its environmental heritage which can be summed up by the slogan: 'income not profit'. Development generates profit; if it is of a very high quality and sustainability like in Tuscany it generates even more. Development like this tends to treat the resource as a mere source to exploit for short-term gain. Terraced housing on a hill in Tuscany generates a highly attractive short-term profit, so in Tuscany we have to combat tourism that generates profit but not income.

The issue of the sustainability and quality of interventions is crucial but what is equally so is their economic and social usefulness. You have to recognize the worth of the people you're talking to and the policies which discern which investors are useful and which can attract those who, in pursuing their own interests, produce plans backed by an economic or industrial project that can create economic and social usefulness.

In addition, you have to factor in quality urban and architectural composition

together with criteria of sustainability and here urban planning has to make its contribution to the project. Up to now the procedural aspects have been played down but now the project has to be given due centrality and this involves quality of the offices, challenging knowledge and the way projects are developed. It also involves politics because no project can exist without politics.

*Q:* The documents presently going round seem to point to regulated liberalisation?

*A:* The great challenge facing the reformer is to produce simplification through reformation, 'when it's possible, do it'. This requires defining conditions, tools and procedures for easing development and quality; enabling those who want to achieve a goal to do so within the constraints of sustainability principles and in accordance with the general strategy orientation - defining guiding norms and good practices. The regional plan must be the starting point of a stream and not the tip of a pyramid. It should be able to expand horizontally and provide adequate normative and disciplinary resources for them to expand. Words like conformity and prescriptions have to be completely rethought because everything works differently horizontally. You have to think in terms of coherencies. In order for the stream to function properly you need a public plan that goes as far as those who act in the territory, and which provides highly flexible tools: government acts and ways of implementing them. You proceed by practices. You need policies that are open and flexible, and good investors from both the public and private sectors because it is they who implement the plan. This is what the relationship between public and private

is all about, but you need to make a cultural leap to work this way.

Q: The Pit is strongly slanted towards urban Tuscany?

A: Rural Tuscany is inseparable from urban Tuscany. Since Tuscany's greatest weakness lies in urban competitiveness we need an urban network of excellence that raises us to a higher, more European level.

Here again, hospitality is the starting point; getting people to come to study and gain experience. For hospitality to become an economic stream that generates income, and for the cities to become a strongpoint you need to have something to teach. Monuments and landscapes are enough to attract tourists but for hospitality you need to provide something contemporary, starting from the safeguarding and growth of the functions of excellence in our territory - putting the university and the health facilities on line and so on.

The 'polycentric city' is a single major city which is at once a city by the sea and a city of art; a city that has a large port, one of the most important of the Mediterranean and which, with the high speed train, has an crucial infrastructural junction around Florence. An infrastructural design all made of networks, a Tuscany made of networks incorporated into the European network of cities within the network of Europe.