

Press release

Expo Dubai, The Pontine islands protagonists at the Italy Pavilion

The forum focused on Blue Economy and its potential for economic, social and economic growth in Lazio

An environmental, cultural and social heritage to be protected, promoted, strengthened and supported in its growth and ability to represent the regional territory and be a national brand. The Italy Pavilion at Expo Dubai hosted the event "Blue Economy, from subsistence to innovation hubs", focused on the islands of the province of Latina.

The event was attended by Daniele Leodori (Vice-President of Lazio), Quirino Briganti (EXPO 2020 Dubai Coordinator for Lazio Region), Paolo Glisenti (Commissioner general for Italy at EXPO 2020 Dubai), Gerardo Stefanelli (President of the Province of Latina), Giovanni Caprino (President of the Blue Italian Growth National Technological Cluster), Gianni Gargano (Vice President of Assonautica), Maria Vittoria Struglia (Climate Modeling and Impacts Laboratory at Enea), Alessandro Iafrati (Director of the CNR Sea Engineering Institute), Elvira Buonocore (CONISMA Researcher), Chiara Petrioli (CTO and Wsense Founder) and Raffaele Rognoni (Owner Portofino Marine Service).

It was an opportunity to discuss a geographical, social and productive reality capable of playing a primary role in the development dynamics of the regional territory but that has to deal with problems that limit its strategic role envied by the world: connections with the mainland, the school system, energy infrastructural networks, health. All factors that risk to boost depopulation, impoverishing the precious territorial DNA made up of traditions,

culture, history and economy. These sectors must instead be strengthened and put in the best conditions to act for the development of Lazio and Italy.

Such potential has been highlighted by the European Commission itself, which in its Communication on Blue Growth back in 2012 had already noted that "promising indicators are emerging from the Blue Economy for economic growth and employment prospects in the marine and maritime sectors with the potential to contribute to the recovery of European economy".

Blue Economy refers to all activities that make use of sea, coasts and sea beds as resources for industrial activities and the development of services, such as maritime transport, ports and shipbuilding, marine renewable energy, aquaculture, fishing, marine biotechnologies, coastal and cruise tourism. According to the most recent EU Blue Economy Report 2020, this sector has employed about 5 million people at European level, generating a turnover of 750 billion euros and over 218 billion euros of added value.

Italy has contributed more than 10%, with 525,200 employees and an added value of 23.4 billion, positioning itself at the top of the European ranking by revenue, with particular reference to the maritime transport sector. According to the data contained in the VIII Report on the Economy of the Sea produced by Si.Camera-Unioncamere for the Chamber of Commerce of Latina, Lazio was in 2018 the third region in terms of percentage of companies active in the blue economy with 36,114 enterprises (5.5 %).

“Lazio Region is completing the European structural funds 2021-2027 planning process, which includes interventions based on clear and defined strategic priorities. Among the preparatory actions for the improvement of the operational programs of the 2021-2027 ESI funds, there is the adaptation of the smart specialization strategy of Lazio Region (Smart

Specialization Strategy, RIS3 Lazio), which details the thematic areas to concentrate on to achieve the goal of "a smarter Europe". The inclusion in the Lazio RIS3 of a specific "Sea Economy" specialization area clearly represents the Region's intention to focus on the sea as a vector of innovation and economic-territorial development ", said Daniele Leodori, Vice-President of Lazio Region. "The theme of Blue Economy – he added - is among our Region's priorities as far as the planning of the 2021/2027 structural funds is concerned: targeted interventions with a focus on training in relevant sectors, such as tourist accommodation, transport, fishing and technology. Coordination measures between institutions (public and private) and economic operators will be of paramount importance in order to identify the best solutions for the economic and social development of the area. We need to increase the competitiveness of our seaside facilities. The law approved on February the 10th introduces planning measures to identify the resources to be allocated to interventions in the Blue Economy. The law introduces the elements to promote and support research and innovation in favor of youth entrepreneurship on the one hand and development of innovative products and services on the other. The fact that Lazio Region has approved such a law gives the idea of how much we wanted to bring this specific sector to the attention of the entire regional economic and productive world. It will be essential to reduce territorial distances, starting with the connections from the hinterland to the coast and to the islands that will have to be increasingly rapid. This will certainly increase the tourist attractiveness. And tourism remains a strategic driving force in the development of our region ".

"The Sea Economy is a strategic resource for Lazio, generating wealth, employment and innovation. Here at Expo we presented a collaborative and sustainable model: the sea is, in fact, the element that unites a widespread entrepreneurial fabric made up of different sectors and traditions. Lazio Region, thanks to its specific weight within the national Blue Economy,

has introduced a series of policies to support the enhancement of its coast, also by paying due attention to research and development in the field of marine biotechnologies and natural sciences. In particular, Lazio Islands, with their environmental, cultural and social heritage, represent a strategic asset linked to the sea and environmental protection. I am thinking, for example, of the project to recover the San Stefano prison in front of the Ventotene Island on the 80th anniversary of the drafting of the Ventotene Manifesto", said **Quirino Briganti**, EXPO2020 Dubai Coordinator for Lazio Region.

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