

URMA 3RD STUDY VISIT AND PROJECT WORKING MEETING

REPORT

28 FEBRUARY – 1 MARCH 2013, FIRENZE – REGIONE TOSCANA

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URMA project partners met in Florence (Italy) at the end of February for a two-day meeting, continuing the exchange of experiences and providing an insight of urban-rural cooperation in Florence Metropolitan Area. The two days gave all partners the opportunity to discuss about differences between examples that were already seen, also during the study visit.

STUDY VISIT, 28 FEBRUARY 2013:

PARCO DELLA PIANA AS AN EXAMPLE OF URBAN–RURAL COOPERATION IN FLORENCE METROPOLITAN AREA

The visit organized by bus in the Piana Fiorentina represented various different aspects of the peripheral area between the cities of Florence, Prato and Pistoia that is characterized by road-infrastructures, airports, nature reserves, factories and historical architecture and monuments.

Just past the imaginary gate to the park north of the city, it was possible to see the external walls of the new large complex of the military school. This large complex was imposed on the free territory of the Piana between the town and the airport of Florence and subsequently leads to the entrance of the national highway A11. The complex has been under construction for the last 20 years and is also currently being enhanced. The visitors first stopped at the Scientific University built in the 90's in the middle of the plain. The university is well connected by bus to the town, but remains relatively independent towards the rest of the city. Following this stop, we could see from the outside the WWF park called “Oasis of Focognano”, a beautiful example of natural oasis surrounded by the national infrastructure network. A further important example of architecture from the end of the twentieth century was the nearby Autostrada’s church, projected by arch. Michelucci. The visit continued towards the city of Prato that was famous for its fabric/cloth production until the 12th century. Before

arriving at Prato, it was possible to see the archaeological site of Gonfienti. Here an archaeological excavation is currently carried out for the discovery of an Etruscan city of the 7th century B.C. Driving through the city of Prato the URMA partners could experience the uncoordinated development of the productive area, which has mainly been developed in the last century. It is one of the testimonies of how the Piana Metropolitana has been used for productive purposes in an uncoordinated way. The visit of the morning ended with a walk on the estate of the farms of Cascine di Tavola, a former residence of the fifteenth century, built by the Medici family. It is currently at the center of a restoration and participation project opened to people living in the metropolitan area. After having lunch in Prato, the visit continued towards Calenzano, a little town located in the north of the Piana Metropolitana. It was possible to visit the medieval Castle of Calenzano, where we enjoyed a broad and beautiful 360 degree view over the metropolitan area. From the top of the castle, the project partners had an ideal point of view on the natural areas that will be part of the metropolitan park of the Plain of Florence. In addition, it was possible to examine the infrastructure network composed by two national highways and the airport of Florence. The way back to Florence was made along the northern edge of the Piana, passing the town of Sesto Fiorentino and the airport of Florence. The visit ended with a view of the town and of the Piana Metropolitana Firenze-Prato-Pistoia from Piazzale Michelangelo, a very nice viewpoint on a hill close to the centre of the town.

IMPRESSIONS



