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**A First Important Experience in Participatory
Democracy in Italy:
Region of Tuscany Law No. 69 of 27 December 2007**
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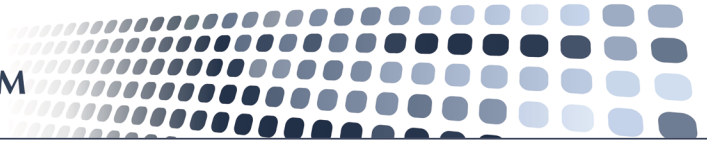
Abstract

Participatory democracy is a theme of growing interest in Italy, in both cultural debate and administrative practice. Some Regions have felt a need to provide a legislative framework in order to facilitate and finance these experiments. The first to do so was the Region of Tuscany which, in December 2007, approved a law that lays down “rules concerning the promotion of participation in the elaboration of regional and local policies.” The law regulates two principal typologies of participatory processes, namely: 1) public debate; 2) the Region’s support for such processes. In order to guide and manage these processes, the institution and regulation of a Regional Authority designed to guarantee and promote such participation has been provided for, in the form of a monocratic organ to be held by a person competent in the field of public law or political science or of proven experience in participatory methodologies and practices.

Public debate assumes the form of an articulated discussion on major measures with possible significant impacts of an environmental, territorial, social and/or economic nature, but it must be emphasised that, during these years when the law has been in force, no request for public debate has been submitted and therefore, to date, this process of participation has never been put into practice.

The support of the Region concerns smaller participatory projects that have to do with “the allocation of public resources”; the law does not specifically define or actually circumscribe the effective ambit of the support of the Region, but limits itself to stating that participatory projects other than public debate are involved. During these years since the law has been in force, many projects have been supported by the Region of Tuscany and with objects varying greatly.

Regional Law 69/2007 has been an important driving force: it will suffice to consider that half of the participatory processes completed in these years in Italy took place in Tuscany pursuant to this law; much, however, must still be done to fulfil the principles regarding participation. Above all, the fact that no public debate procedure has been initiated cannot be left unsaid. We are at the beginning of a process which, if it is not to be halted, needs to be supported by the political class, which should be the first to recognise it as an



instrument for making emerge and for reconciling so many different and sometimes opposing interests involved in public policies

Key-words

participatory democracy, participatory processes, budget processes, public debate, support of the region, local authorities



1. First profiles of Region of Tuscany Law No. 69 of 27 December 2007

Participatory democracy is a theme of growing interest in Italy (Allegretti 2010), in both cultural debate and administrative practice (Valastro 2010). Participatory democracy is a general category which includes new and different practises to which common citizens and public institutions take part to reach, jointly, a public decision (Allegretti 2011b)^I.

The first such experiences (Allegretti 2011a) predominantly arose on the initiative of local authorities, signally involving the introduction of participatory budget processes (Canafoglia 2010: 129 et seq.), even if sometimes concerning important town planning works, among which the Genoa motorway variance (Bobbio 2010)^{II} and the Castelfalfi tourist complex (Baldeschi 2010: 161 et seq.)^{III} deserve mentioning. These experiments, mostly undertaken on the initiative of certain administrators, have spread here and there in the absence of a general normative framework of reference (Pecoriello-Rispoli, 2006).

However, some Regions have felt a need to provide a legislative framework in order to facilitate and finance these experiments. The first to do so was the Region of Tuscany which, in December 2007^{IV}, approved a law that lays down “rules concerning the promotion of participation in the elaboration of regional and local policies.”

To begin with, it must be pointed out that the text involved was itself the result of a participatory process that lasted one and a half years, during which roughly 1,000 people contributed to the genesis of the law; the decision to take this approach, which proved to be fruitful, made it possible for the process of elaboration of the bill to intersect various widespread participatory experiences in the regional territory (Florida 2007: 619-620). Moreover, this law was designed as an instrument to be used for introducing a series of institutional incentives to encourage the spreading of new participatory practices since it was inconceivable to force local authorities to make use of such processes.

The law is innovative in the Italian panorama and explicitly makes manifest its experimental features: in fact, it contains an explicit self-abrogation clause. Art. 26 provides that the law shall be abrogated on 31 December 2012, with the proviso that the participatory processes already begun by that date shall be completed. This decision made by the legislators of Tuscany is certainly to be agreed with, “because it takes into account the natural difficulties that stem from the innovative nature of the subject matter and of



the lack of precedents to draw on for designing an organic law, because it guarantees a high degree of flexibility to procedures that make elasticity their strong point” (Ciancaglini 2008). And, as provided pursuant to the same law, in the first three months of 2012, the Regional Executive, together with the Regional Council, will have to promote and engage in participatory processes in order to assess: a) the effectiveness, the diffusion and the benefits of the participatory processes promoted pursuant to the law; b) the advisability of confirming or amending the law. Actually, the Executive has decided to anticipate the time of verification: already in the early months of 2011, a phase of analysis and debate began over the normative framework, its application and the processes carried out to date, with the aim of possibly reaching agreement on proposals for amendment to be submitted to the Regional Council.

The *ratio* of the law lies in the attempt to deal with the strategic uncertainty of the institutions, namely the difficulty for the decision-maker: 1) to single out the public interest to be achieved in concrete terms; 2) to evaluate the more complex choices to be made and then to guard them against the paralysing objections of “non-institutionalised actors,” i.e. of the concerned populations that act through protest movements (Ciancaglini 2008). This clearly emerges from the first articles of the law, beginning from Art. 1, which starts out by stating the objectives and purposes that the legislator has set out to accomplish, among which we can mention: a) to contribute to renewing democracy and its institutions by supplementing it with practices, processes and instruments of participatory democracy; b) to promote participation as a routine form of administration and governance of the Region; c) to strengthen the capacity to build, define and elaborate public policies through the participation of the inhabitants; d) to create and favour new forms of exchange and communication between the institutions and society; e) to contribute to greater social cohesiveness through the spreading of the culture of participation and the valorisation of all forms of civil commitment.

It is therefore understandable that the law defines in broad terms those who may rightfully take part in a participatory process (whether it involves a public debate or a process supported by the Region), namely:

- a) resident citizens and foreigners or stateless persons regularly residing in the territory affected by participatory processes;
- b) persons who work, study or stay in the affected territory;



c) Tuscans residing abroad when they are in Tuscany;

d) other persons who have an interest in the territory in question or in the object of the participatory process, and who the person in charge of the debate deems useful to allow to take part in the same participatory process.

It is significant that the right to take part is recognised to those who work, study or stay in the affected territory, regardless of formal residency; finally, as regards those who do not have a physical tie to the territory, but do have an interest in it or in the object of the participatory process, there is still a possibility of participation, albeit subject to screening by the person in charge of the process.

In order to guide and manage the participatory processes promoted on the basis of the law, the institution and regulation of a Regional Authority designed to guarantee and promote such participation has been provided for, in the form of a monocratic organ to be held by a person competent in the field of public law or political science or of proven experience in participatory methodologies and practices. This figure is appointed by the Regional Council, which provides the same with means and staff. In particular, it is the duty of the Authority to evaluate and admit proposals for participatory processes; to elaborate approaches for the management of participatory processes; to define criteria and typologies for the implementation of forms of support (cf. *infra* for the institution of support); to assess the benefits and effects of the participatory processes; to prepare the annual report on its activity; to ensure, including via IT, circulation of the documentation and knowledge of the projects presented and experiences gained, including final reports on the participatory processes.

This involves a whole set of very important duties that the law assigns to a monocratic organ independent of the regional government which, in order to perform its functions in the best possible way, would need a greater investment by the Region in administrative support staff.

Finally, I point out that, in this initial phase of verification of the functioning of the law, there is discussion over the advisability of maintaining the monocratic nature of the Authority (initially thought to provide a greater guarantee of independence) or to begin thinking in terms of a collegial Authority, just as there is discussion of the relations (and of the possible unification in a single organ) of this Authority with the Guarantor of



Communication instituted pursuant to Regional Law No. 1/2005,^V which lays down rules for the governance of the territory.

2. Participatory processes: the public debate

The law regulates two principal typologies of participatory processes, namely: 1) public debate; 2) the Region's support for such processes.

Public debate assumes the form of an articulated discussion on major measures with possible significant impacts of an environmental, territorial, social and/or economic nature.

The request to organise a public debate may be put forward by:

- a) the proponent of the major measure, whether public or private;
- b) a subject that contributes to the realisation of the measure;
- c) the local authorities involved territorially;

d) at least 0.50% of the citizens, of the foreigners or of the stateless persons who are 16 years of age or older and are regularly resident in the Region, including on the initiative of associations and committees.

The Authority decides on the admissibility of the request after having heard the opinion of the public authorities concerned and of the delegates of the proponents. For purposes of the acceptance of the request, the Authority evaluates whether the impact of the measure is significant and verifies that no administrative act pertaining to the preliminary project has been approved. These two conditions established by the legislator do not clearly circumscribe the scope of applicability of the public debate: on the one hand, the assessment of the impact of the measure leaves wide margins of discretion; on the other hand, it is not easy to establish that no administrative act pertaining to the preliminary project has not already been approved (Ciancaglini, 2008).

With the same act that accepts the application for public debate, the Authority orders its opening and establishes how long it shall remain open which shall not exceed six months, barring extensions not exceeding three months; establishes the phases of the debate in such a way as to guarantee the maximum information among the inhabitants involved and to promote participation, and to ensure the impartiality of the proceedings, the full parity of expression of all viewpoints and equal access to the places and times of



debate; and appoints the person in charge of the public debate, choosing the same from among experts in participatory methodologies and practices, defining their specific duties.

The opening of the participatory process entails the suspension of the approval or implementation of administrative acts of the competence of the Region connected with the measure forming the object of the same process.

At the end of the public debate the person in charge of it delivers a report to the Authority specifying the process adopted, the issues that were raised during the debate and the conclusive proposals that it gave rise to. The Authority, after having verifying that the participatory process was properly carried out, takes note of the report and makes it public.

Within three months of publishing the report, the proponent subject publically declares whether it intends:

- a) to abandon the project or submit an alternative one;
- b) to propose changes in the project, specifying those that it intends to make;
- c) to continue to back the same project that formed the object of public debate, explaining the reasons why in a convincing manner.

If these are the normative provisions applying to an important typology of participatory process, it must be emphasised that, during these years when the law has been in force, no request for public debate has been submitted and therefore, to date, this process of participation has never been put into practice. Up to now the institution has remained a dead letter and the fact that it has not even been tried risks undermining the very framework of the law, where public debate is one of its pillars. It is therefore understandable that in recent months the Regional Executive, together with other interlocutors, is weighing the advisability/need to carefully review the legislative provisions, even if the failure to try out this institution is mostly attributable to a lack of political will and to the wariness of many administrators rather than to legislative shortcomings. If anything, at the time of reform of Regional Law No. 69 it would be advisable to consider the possibility of making it mandatory in certain cases.



3. Support of the Region

The other participatory process introduced by the law of the Region of Tuscany is the support of the Region, which concerns smaller participatory projects that have to do with “the allocation of public resources”; the law does not specifically define or actually circumscribe the effective ambit of the support of the Region and it does not formalise participatory modalities, but limits itself to stating that participatory projects other than public debate are involved (Art. 14).

Before proceeding to examine the regulations, it is important to me to point out at once that, during these years when the law has been in force, many projects have been supported by the Region of Tuscany and, as we shall see, with objects varying greatly.

Eligibility to apply for support is as specified below:

a) the following minimum percentages of residents in territorial ambits of one or more provinces, municipalities and/or municipal districts, within which it is proposed to carry out the participatory project, which may be reached including on the initiative of associations and committees:

- 1) 5% for up to 1,000 inhabitants;
- 2) 3% for up to 5,000 inhabitants;
- 3) 2% for up to 15,000 inhabitants;
- 4) 1% for up to 30,000 inhabitants;
- 5) 0.50% for over 30,000 inhabitants.

b) local authorities, single and/or associated, including with the support of citizens, residents and associations;

c) educational institutions, single and/or associated, by resolution of the collegial organs, including with support as per letter a).

A business may apply for support for a participatory process only as regards its own plans or measures having a significant impact of an environmental, social or economic nature on the territory of reference and with the support of subjects as per paragraph 1, letter a).

The law establishes eligibility requirements,^{VI} so that the Authority may approve support for projects meeting those requirements, also establishing criteria for determining

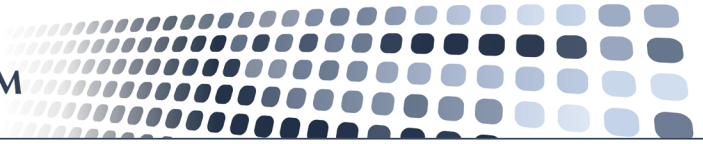


preferential treatment, owing to which the Authority, when processing applications, gives priority to projects that:

- a) provide for the involvement of weak or disadvantaged subjects, including those with disabilities;
- b) take place in territories with particular situations of social or territorial hardship;
- c) have as their object works or measures potentially having a significant impact on the landscape or environment;
- d) take the responsibility, through suitable venues, times and places, for the participation of both genders on equal terms;
- e) have a better ration of total costs of the process to own resources;
- f) adopt innovative forms of communication and interaction with the inhabitants, allowing them to have an active say in the different phases of the process;
- g) are sustained by a considerable number of applicants, exceeding the minimum percentages specified in Art. 14(1) a).

When the application is submitted by local authorities, the Authority considers as priority projects those that, in addition to the above-mentioned criteria:

- a) propose to provide continuity, stability and transparency to processes of participation in the practices of the local authority or that, with the same aims, constitute application of local regulations on participation;
- b) have an integrated dimension cutting across sectors;
- c) are submitted in associated form by more than one local authority;
- d) utilise the IT network of Tuscany, including the assisted access points it provides for and any forms of IT interactivity with the participants;
- e) make available via IT all documentation important for the participatory process, including concise and popular versions;
- f) offer free of charge periodic forms of communication, including via IT, concerning the activities of the local authority and the participatory processes in progress;
- g) propose to contribute to local development that is equitable and respectful of the environment, including by proposing a local plan of action defined in the ambit of an Agenda 21 process.



Since up to now the funds made available by the Region have not sufficed to cover all admissible requests,^{VII} the Authority has felt the need to indicate additional criteria of priority, in particular:

a) the need to distribute available resources in the different provinces of the Region both for reasons of territorial equity and to promote the diffusion of the culture of participation throughout Tuscany;

b) the need to apply participatory approaches to diversified themes and policies; this decision, too, is justified by considerations similar to those just stated: promotion of the culture of participation and learning from a variety of experiences;

c) the need to promote processes promoted by a variety of subjects – by educational institutions, by citizens and by businesses.

In January 2011, faced with a growing number of requests, the Authority deemed it necessary to define more specifically the priorities in the grant of regional support, making explicit additional, more cogent criteria, and decided to give preferential treatment to:

1- the need of the larger municipalities to replace the districts – abolished due to the effect of national rules in all of Tuscany's municipalities except for Florence – with other “mechanisms” intended to foster the “closeness” of the Administration;^{VIII}

2- local processes concerning the matter of waste (reduction, modalities of collection, modalities of disposal and disposal systems)^{IX};

3- a greater diffusion of participatory budgeting practices.^X

Consequently, beginning from the deadline of 31 March 2011,^{XI} the Authority decided to give special attention to requests for support regarding the three themes described, including on the part of authorities that have already received funding pursuant to Regional Law 69/2007, even if “crossing them” with the criteria followed up to now.^{XII}

Actually, the relationship is not crystal clear and, therefore, neither is the “cross” between the first general criteria established by the Authority and the subsequent ones of January 2011, since, for example, the *ratio* of criterion b) (of the first set of criteria) is at loggerheads with the channelling of funds to finance certain thematic areas.

If we take a look at whom, in actual fact, has taken the initiative in these first years of application of the law, we observe that over 80% of the projects funded were proposed by local authorities, of which municipal authorities accounted for the lion's share,^{XIII} while about 10% were proposed by educational institutions and only a small percentage by



residents. This latter datum indicates that the organised groups (with a few exceptions)^{XIV} formed around highly controversial local issues have been wary of the procedures contained in the law and have judged it to not hold out a significant possibility of making their positions count.

The Authority attends to the admission of the participatory projects with a justified act within 30 days from the time of application. When examining projects proposed by citizens, residents, educational institutions and businesses or by local authorities if the results of the participatory process involve competencies of other bodies, the Authority takes into account the opinion of the competent administration and ascertains its willingness to consider the results of the participatory processes or else to justify their rejection or partial acceptance.

Wanting to provide a panorama, albeit concise, of the issues that up to now have given rise to a participatory process, we find that about one-third had to do with matters of town planning (e.g. structural plans, town planning regulations, etc.), one-third had to do with urban requalification projects, and the remaining one-third involved participatory budgeting, environmental policies, waste treatment policies, social policies and educational projects.

The participatory modalities in these processes are not formalised nor can they be in a normative act; instead, they can vary widely (Bobbio 2004: 54 et seq.) because they must be chosen from time to time depending on the object, the applicants, the arrangement of the underlying interests, etc.; it is a delicate task that can affect the outcome of the process, whether successful or not. Among the requirements for eligibility for support, Art. 15 of the same law requires that the projects shall provide for participatory instruments and methodologies in keeping with the purposes of the process and the context of reference. And as it turns out, the promoters of participatory processes have so far made use of outside consultants for help in elaborating appropriate participatory methodologies.

If we go on to examine in detail the modalities chosen to date in such processes that have taken place over the years in Tuscany, we find a wide variety of methodologies: focus groups, workshops, world cafés, open spaces, public meetings, forums, interviews, listening posts, questionnaires, role playing and forms of IT communication.

Furthermore, the law provides that the management of the process shall be assigned to a neutral and impartial subject or that in any case provision shall be made for modalities



for the management of such process that ensure neutrality and impartiality. More frequently, this involves boards of guarantee, therefore formed by a plurality of subjects, the composition of which varies considerably depending on the type of process involved.

Finally, Art. 17(3) of Regional Law 69/2007 makes the support of the Region subject to the submission of periodic and final reports on the relevant process, in addition to the itemised documentation of the costs.^{XV} As stated on the Authority's website, the aim of the final report is the sharing of experiences, so that other subjects and the community in general can become aware of the experiences that have taken place in the Region, benefit from them from the standpoint of "collective learning" and thus progressively improve the quality (in the sense of dialogue/deliberation where applicable) and the effectiveness of the participatory processes. The report therefore constitutes an important contribution to the creation of a "practising community" among all the subjects (citizens, administrations, political and technical/administrative staff, scholars and consultants) involved in various ways in the reflection on and practise of participation in Tuscany.

The matter of the impact of the participatory process is obviously more complex. First of all, it must be pointed out that some of the participatory experiences to date have not so much been directed toward the execution of certain works or the approval of certain decisions and therefore did not fit into a preliminary investigative phase possibly leading to a decision, but have reflected a value and a purpose intrinsic to the deliberative/reasoning process itself. I refer, for example, to projects promoted by educational institutions whose common trait is the valorisation of moments of confrontation/comparison, of dialogue among all parties that rotate around a school; the characterizing feature of these participatory processes, above and beyond their respective singularities, is precisely the utilisation of a method of reasoning to rediscover together values and a sense of community, as well as to bring to light critical points and to make possible solutions emerge.

Moving on to the matter of processes that have been included in the preliminary investigative phase of a decision, unfortunately a lack of surveys must be reported, after an interval of months or even several years (as regards the more complex issues), on the part of the Regional Authority, which was also because the resources made available do not make it possible to monitor the results of the process beyond the end of it. I believe that this is a point which, in this phase when the regional law is being re-discussed, is worth



reflecting on, possibly strengthening the structures of the Authority to enable it to keep track over time of the results of the processes funded.

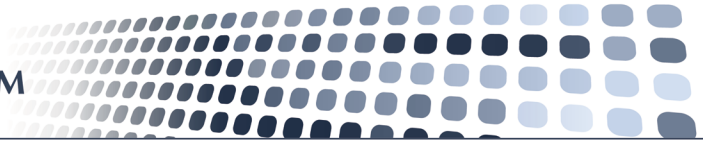
4. Relations with local authorities

A further question that the law had to deal with regards the relationship with local authorities; since the Region could not impose the acceptance of methods of participatory democracy, it mainly resorted to mechanisms involving incentives and collaboration (Corsi 2009). The instrument singled out by the legislator is the protocol of understanding between local authorities and Region, the signing of which^{XVI} mean that participating authorities must share the law's principles, voluntarily accept the procedures it provides for, and suspend the adoption or implementation of administrative acts of its competence whose adoption or implementation may foreshadow a decision anticipating or compromising the outcome of the public debate or other participatory processes.

Moreover, the signing of the protocol is a condition for being able to submit a request for the support of the Region^{XVII}; in particular, applications for support submitted by local authorities are admitted if they meet, in addition to the general requirements for admission, the following additional requirements:

- a) declaration committing the authority to take into account the results of the participatory processes or in any case to justify the failure to do so or their partial acceptance;
- b) participation in the Region-local authorities protocol as per Art. 18;
- c) accessibility of all documentation relevant for the participatory process;
- d) making available its own financial and organisational resources in support of the process;
- e) when territorial planning instruments and acts of governance of the territory are involved, the opinion of the local guarantor of communication, instituted pursuant to Art. 19 of Regional Law No. 1/2005.

To date the protocol has been signed by about 90 local authorities and has proved to be an effective instrument for encouraging participatory practices, as well as a good instrument for coordination among territorial authorities. It cannot be overlooked that, in recent years, the majority of the participatory projects have been submitted by municipal authorities. If, in fact, forms of participatory democracy can be conceived and regulated at



any level of government, there is no doubt that the local level lends itself more than any other when it comes to conceiving, experimenting with and providing for processes of participatory democracy. And Regional Law 69/2007 has been an important driving force: it will suffice to consider that half of the participatory processes completed in these years in Italy took place in Tuscany pursuant to this law; much, however, must still be done to fulfil the principles regarding participation sanctioned *in primis* by the regional charter and made his own by the legislator in 2007. Above all, the fact that no public debate procedure has been initiated cannot be left unsaid. We are at the beginning of a process which, if it is not to be halted, needs to be supported by the political class, which should be the first to recognise it as an instrument for making emerge and for reconciling so many different and sometimes opposing interests involved in public policies.

^I To investigate the differences between participatory democracy and other forms of participation, see Allegretti 2011b.

^{II} This was the first public debate held in Italy over a major infrastructure; it took place in Genoa between 6 February-30 April 2009 over a new stretch of motorway about 20 km long between Voltri and Genoa, known as *Gronda di Ponente*.

^{III} Deserving of mention in Tuscany is the process, promoted by the Town Council of Montaione in application of Regional Town Planning Law No. 1/2005, concerning the project for a huge tourist complex promoted by a German company in the village of Castelfalfi.

^{IV} Regional Law No. 69 of 27 December 2007. With Regional Law No. 3 of 9 February 2010, the Region of Emilia-Romagna also laid down “rules for the definition, reorganisation and promotion of the procedures for consultation and participation in the elaboration of regional and local policies” (Ciancaglini, 2011). In the same period the Region of Umbria approved a new law (Regional Law No. 14 of 16 February 2010) on the institutions of participation that provides in a very generic way for the institution of consultation, whose features remain rather undefined, so that doubts arise as to whether they can be considered institutions of participatory/deliberative democracy.

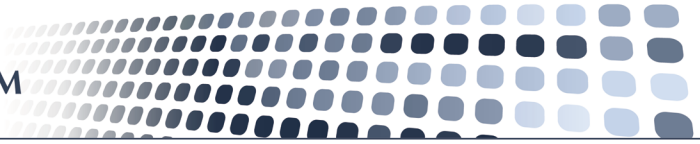
^V Regional Law No. 1 of 3 January 2005 instituted the Guarantor of Communication for the purpose of facilitating the participation of the citizenry in every phase of the procedure for the forming and approval of the instruments of territorial planning and of the acts of governance of the territory.

^{VI} Cf. Art. 15 of Law No. 69/2007.

^{VII} The available resources amount to less than 700,000 euros per year, divided on the basis of three periods. As stated in the Authority’s website, the experience gained since the beginning of the implementation of Regional Law No. 69/2007 reflects a growing interest not only among local administrations but also on the part of citizens and educational institutions in the funding made available by the Region, but the current resources available have made it impossible for the Authority to satisfy everyone.

^{VIII} Law No. 42/2010 suppressed the municipal decentralisation districts, except for municipalities with a population exceeding 250,000 inhabitants, which have the right to organise their territory in districts with an average population of no less than 30,000 inhabitants.

^{IX} The Authority has taken into account that the Department of the Environment has expressed a willingness and need to promote in the near future a participatory process on a regional scale directed toward the



preparation of a new Waste Plan; it might be useful for this regional process to be accompanied or preceded by some local processes funded pursuant to Regional Law No. 69 (a pertinent case is already currently in progress in Castelfranco di Sotto; another request in this sense was received at the deadline of 30th November from the Municipality of Pontedera).

^X As stated in the Authority's communiqué, the reduced financial means of the local authorities, due to the national government's budgetary policies, obviously are creating significant difficulties for the same. One response to this difficult situation ought to be to involve the citizenry in the ranking of priorities, to allow the same to make an informed assessment of the situation and to develop a "sense of propriety" about the difficult solutions and decisions.

^{XI} Art. 14(2) of the law provides for three deadlines per year for the submission of applications for support (31st March, 31st July and 30th November).

^{XII} www.consiglio.regione.toscana.it/partecipazione/documenti/domanda/ComunicatoModificaprioritàGenn11.pdf.

^{XIII} In addition to municipalities, which account for about 70% of the projects submitted, proposals were made by provinces, mountain communities, health companies and unions of municipalities.

^{XIV} For example, the process promoted by a committee formed to channel protest against the project submitted by the Port Authority of Carrara for the realisation of a new waterfront in the harbour area.

^{XV} In addition, the decree by the Authority granting support makes mention of other documents (in paper and IT format) that must be sent in for purposes of the payment of the third quota of the same grant-in-aid. Specifically, the following must be enclosed:

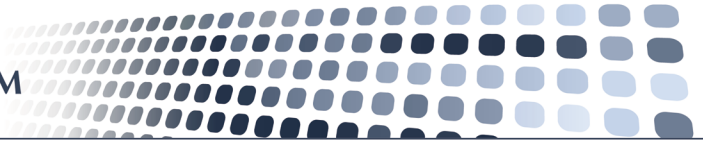
- results of the questionnaire for evaluating the project administered to participants at the beginning and at the end (where applicable) of the participatory processes;
- the audio, video and photographic material created during the project;
- two copies of all paper documentation produced in the course of the project;
- itemised documentation of the costs.

^{XVI} The protocol may also be signed at a later date.

^{XVII} The signing of the protocol is not a requirement for eligibility to apply for public debate. Art. 9 specifies that for administrative acts of competence of local authorities, suspension of approval or implementation of administrative acts connected with the measure forming the object of debate takes effect if the authority concerned has signed the protocol pursuant to Art. 18 or in any case in the event that the authority so decides. Such suspension concerns acts whose approval or implementation may foreshadow a decision that anticipates or compromises the outcome of the public debate.

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