

The Exchange of Practices in Education for Climate Targets (EXPECT) project

Visit to Frosinone, Italy.

EXPECT is an EU-funded Erasmus project involving representatives of technical and vocational education from 7 European countries: Austria, Finland, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK.

Our 7th meeting took place in September 2022 in Frosinone, a beautiful historic and industrial town of 44,000 people 75 km South East of Rome in the Lazio region of Italy. The city is set around a very picturesque hill with views across the *Valle Latina* but seems to be much in need of new public transport infrastructure to address the problems of traffic congestion, reduce its dependence on cars, cut journey times and improve air quality.

Summer 2022 saw record temperatures and we were reminded of the human impact of the climate emergency just a few days before our visit when at least 7 people died in the neighbouring Marche region as a result of torrential rain and flooding. Many areas were cut off, without electricity or drinking water. The consensus was that this was another symptom of climate change rather than 'normal' bad weather.

We were warmly welcomed to the Alessandro Volta college by principal Maria Rosaria Villani and addressed by the mayor of Frosinone Riccardo Mastrangeli, who emphasized how we must all take action to ensure that our habits and behaviours are sustainable and highlighted regional and local policies for fighting climate change. Governments, central, regional and local, can take action to combat climate change. The City of Frosinone has adopted a comprehensive policy of reducing harmful emissions and promoting ecological sustainability in partnership with residents in line with the EU's Next Generation project. The ecological transition is one of the pillars of the and is an essential guideline for future development. Italy intends to improve the sustainability of its economic system and ensure a fair and inclusive transition to a society with zero environmental impact.

We then heard from Martina Vallerotonda, of Ancitel Engy & Environment about the circular economy and the integrated waste cycle and the 'Energy Lazio' Energy efficiency and renewable programme.

Stefano Ceccarelli, a leading local climate activist with the environmental group *Legambiente* addressed Italy's climate mitigation policies and its national and regional efforts to meet EU targets. Despite being the 'land of the sun', Italy is

well behind most other EU countries in solar power use. Stefano outlined some of the obstacles which stand in the way of rapid decarbonization in Italy.

Giuseppe De Righi, General Secretary of ANCI Lazio, the regional section of the Association of Italian Municipalities expanded on the idea of the city as a key site of environmental protection and ecological transition. ANCI is committed to developing the environmentally-aware city and promotes the benefit of local municipalities working in solidarity with each other on the administration of common goods, efficient community energy and better waste management.

Gabriella La Marca, principal of San Giovanni Bosco college gave us an interesting overview of the Italian education system and its relationship to the labour market. Articles 9 and 21 of the Italian Constitution enshrine the environment as a constitutionally protected primary source of value which needs to be safeguarded for future generations. For the first time, the constitution refers to the rights of non-human living things and stipulates that economic development must not harm health or the environment.

We also heard about the Ministry of Education's 'School Regeneration' Plan which aims to implement the objectives of the 2030 UN Agenda and to support education's ecological and cultural transition and the teaching of civic education.

We then visited Luigi Angeloni College which is the result of a various mergers of professional and technical institutes in Frosinone and is located between the Abruzzo National Park and the Agro Pontino on the southern edge of Rome, a region in economic decline as a result of business closures. In the college's training vineyards and orchards we heard from students about how they learn about agricultural processes, such as winemaking, and the college runs a shop its own wine and olive oil.

In the college's science, robotics and design workshops we heard from enthusiastic students about their cross-cutting projects (called PCTOs) based on real-world challenges. It struck me that PCTO had much in common with the Extended Project qualifications which some students take in the UK.

The college works closely with external agencies to keep students and their families informed about job opportunities, specializations and the importance of constant contact with the world of work including by alternating college and workplace learning.

We also visited Michelangelo Buonarroti hospitality and catering college and offers professional training in partnership with sector trade unions and attended

by young people from across the region. The college is set in the grand 'fin de siècle' former Hotel del Cacciatore which is also an important venue for events, conferences, exhibitions.

This was a very successful study visit and we were able to see so much in just two days and had so many opportunities to hear from students and staff. Particular thanks must go to our hosts Antonella Di Fraia and Cesira Trivini who made us so welcome and put together such a brilliant programme.

The EXPECT programme continues to evaluate the progress being made against climate targets in each of its partner countries, and the role that VET is playing in this process. This is done through visits, Peer Learning Activities (PLA's), to each partner country. With 3 more visits to go before the project ends we are now focusing on identifying good practice from each of our visits, in order to produce a final report with general conclusions and policy recommendations and suggestions for a potential follow-up project.

Eddie Playfair – Association of Colleges (AoC)



