



Special Session Proposal

Pandemic and territorial government

Organised by Trentino Region Administration.

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The Covid-19 pandemic was completely unexpected and its impact at the community level remains unclear. Soon, a review of the objectives and territorial governance tools will be required, as well as of those supporting the cohesion in an European benchmarking dimension.

On one hand, the virus speed, its universality and lethality collide with the ordinary size of care centers, while on the other hand, there are strong limitations to mobility and communication in a social and economic system based on the mobility of persons and goods, as well as a cultural system that is not able to give a different meaning to the common sense of linear time. The issues mentioned above have impeded to carry out interventions aimed at providing structural and longer-term answers to the whole economic, social and cultural system of occidental economies and those linked to them.

The current framework, which emerged in a very short time, forced the public administrations to find emergency solutions along with the activation of local volunteers, especially in mountain areas.

However, what will happen post-pandemic does not currently seem to have those edge details that could be the basis of a long-term analysis. In this new simplified and suspended temporality of the state of emergency, there is a *before* the pandemic, to be considered as the past, there is a *during*, with a no defined duration and refers to the time we are living now, and there will be an *after* pandemic, with no minimum indicators (of time, quality and shaping). These three phases are essential to design long-term actions aimed at pursuing the overall well-being of the local community and its virtuous relationship with its living environment.

Due to this deep uncertainty, public bodies have had to assume a central role in terms of both prospective and operational tasks, namely understanding the community's resilience and transformation's capacity starting from the principles on which the community is based. This is a broad cultural and political process, which has a relevant and concrete impact.

Among the already existing actions -having perspective consciousness, in many public bodies as the autonomous Province of Trento, promotion and innovation were - and must continue to be- research and establishment of 'supervised'

conditions to improve service and territorial development, especially in mountain areas. However, innovation is already more than this: a tool to connect research and local needs, to start exchanges between virtuous public and community economic practices, to establish partnership between realities of national, cross-border, transnational and interregional contexts, which are different but have similar problems, to verify also in limited areas the efficacy of provisions supporting European Union objectives and in particular its territorial cooperation strategic pillar.

These are some of the Province of Trento's commitments: to involve communities through participative processes in the development of projects to reduce the depopulation and the decrease. Furthermore, the Province of Trento participates in the European policies that support cohesion, also in terms of Next generation EU.

Now, a significative fracture has been undeniably introduced by pandemic. This has made tools and sometimes the premises fragile, which are at the bases of governance and of community socio-economic and cultural development. It has brought out what was implicit inside the innovation of peripheral territories (resilience, distance between individual and collective objectives). The pandemic has also slowed down the ongoing innovative processes..

The supremacy of the security/social inclusion and of health promotion as 'natural' and almost universal condition, the linear and verifiable development, the priority for public bodies to intervene on material goods compared to the investment on knowledge to be used in peripheral territories, are immediate lifelines. Anyway, according to a post-pandemic vision, all these elements may delay a process which was still uncertain one year ago but at least definable.

Nowadays it is necessary to face the resistance against innovation to the set of codified administrative actions, but also in the longer term, against strangeness and mistrust of new promising results. This must be done in order not to lose the little but significant progress done within a new innovative vision. The latter should confirm and implement them as a shared principle of participatory policies based on good practices and relationships between the territories and with the aim of identifying realistic objectives and measurable results.

The pandemic and territorial governance section invites to analyse the innovative policies in the mountain areas, while also reflecting on some of the already visible consequences.

A discussion is going to start between the actors and the innovative projects promoted by public bodies for mountain areas. Breaks, delays, reconversion, teachings will be analysed. The aim is to establish premises and identify future action milestones of mountain areas' public bodies: What are the most efficient operational and administrative tools to face any future challenge that is going to arise as a consequence of megatrends? With which actors should the public form an alliance to ensure community well-being in the environment? Can innovation, participation, relationship networks within and between communities still be considered governmental action keystones oriented to a less linear future? What are the most efficient participatory tools? What are the teachings from Europe?