

PRESS RELEASE

REDEVELOPING SITES: AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT AND IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT *From Asinara National Park: Unipol's commitment to innovative and sustainable development*

Asinara, 11 September 2013 – When environment, development and employment are all considered together, they represent a powerful opportunity to create new possibilities for growth and to exploit the value of the region's land resources. This line of thinking is constantly gaining momentum at an international level, as is an awareness that natural resources are not infinite and that we need to conserve them by making use of renewable sources of energy; the countryside and the environment are thus seen as assets which can, if properly protected and explored, provide the driving force for sustainable development. This is true on a global and national scale, and is even more relevant for a region such as Sardinia, which not only has historic and cultural wealth but also rich natural heritage.

It was with this in mind that the Unipol Group chose the location of Asinara National Park to present its **2012 Sustainability Report** to its stakeholders, using this as an opportunity to reflect on and discuss **"Redeveloping sites: an opportunity to provide employment and improve the environment"**. Participants at this meeting, which took place today in the evocative setting of the Island and, specifically, in the ex-prison, included **Andrea Biancareddu**, Regional Environmental Protection Officer, **Renato Soru**, Chairman of Tiscali, **Enrico Fontana**, Manager of Legambiente, the Italian body responsible for protecting the natural environment, and **Pierluigi Stefanini**, Chairman of Unipol Group.

The decision to convene in the courtyard of what used to be the Asinara prison was not made lightly. The meeting was called to explore themes around ensuring that policies and plans for developing areas of the region, aimed at regenerating the social fabric and the environment, do also incorporate provision of skilled employment. The island has been a shining example of redevelopment since the National Park was created in 1997, leading to important conservation of the natural environment.

The increased amount of land use in recent years has made the region poorer as there has been no consideration of sustainability issues, the quality of life for people living there, the effects on places and on the community, and the impact on natural resources. The challenge which the island of Asinara also faces is to instead adopt a holistic, long-term vision which can convert these risks into opportunities in terms of job creation,

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social cohesion, making the most of the cultural heritage, and protecting the environment, natural resources and landscape.

This opens a window of opportunity for partnerships between public bodies and the private sector, aimed at promoting virtuous synergies between town-planning policies and entrepreneurial strategies, with sustainability becoming the keystone of shared responsibility for the region.

“Our Group’s commitment,” stressed Pierluigi Stefanini, Unipol chairman, “is designed to help strengthen the idea of economic growth based on fairness and sustainability. That means working on a daily basis to make sure that these basic criteria become ever more closely embedded in the process of producing value, which in turn means making the products and services we offer tangibly useful and sustainable for individuals. This approach becomes even more important when addressing issues which affect the region, environment and landscape. Together these are our shared heritage, second to none”.

The Unipol Group – which has always taken care to put sustainability factors at the core of its business policies, as is well documented in its own Sustainability Report – sponsored this conference in the Asinara Park and as an example offered the approach it took itself when building and redeveloping its own offices.

As is evident from the recent work done on the Unipol Tower and the Porta Europa complex in Bologna, the Group’s headquarters, projects undertaken by the Unipol Group are guided as a matter of course not only by spatial functionality, meaning the redevelopment of existing buildings and inclusion of public spaces to be provided to the city, but also by the environmental sustainability of the building, seeking to minimize energy consumption by making best use of building management and construction techniques, and encouraging good practice on the part of its “inhabitants”.

The Tower, in particular, the tallest skyscraper in Bologna, was awarded LEED® GOLD certification - the top level of a voluntary international system which certifies the environmental sustainability of buildings - in recognition of its efforts towards sustainability and innovation in construction.

This example of Porta Europa, and the elevated piazza at Sergio Viera de Mello, demonstrate how Unipol, having created infrastructure which has restored a deprived area of the city, has taken steps to ensure that these areas are open, alive and available to the city and its citizens, thanks to the presence of restaurants and bistros and an extensive wi-fi zone, and by staging cultural and artistic events which have made the piazza a meeting place for all.

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