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Geoprogess Association

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Editorial Note

As a proof of the return to normality – a new normality, post-pandemic, but in many comforting ways also pre-pandemic – this second booklet 2023 is an ordinary, standard, issue of the GeoProgress Journal. In fact, it publishes 5 articles of various contents: such as flat tax, airports, the devastating effects of the pandemic on the rural UNESCO landscapes, the issue related to the recovery or to a new use of the abandoned fields in the Mediterranean areas of the North Africa countries - topics which all are important for this journal and very important for the Geoprogress's association mission.

Innovations in transport - in their technologies, means and infrastructures - are among the main causes and consequences of development. Since the invention of the wheel, the horse-drawn carriage, and then from railways and steam ships up to modern airports, they have profoundly changed the face of the Earth and the organization of its territories. Ports, post stations, as well as railway and bus stations, have always played a fundamental role in territorial development, not only as transport infrastructures but also as places where people can gather and conduct economic activities. This is not the case for airports, usually built near places already organised and often far away from the cities they are supposed to serve and so this has caused them to develop just as infrastructures after a long time. Only in recent times, following continuous urban expansion, have they also become important sub-centres of attraction and organization of urban life. This is the case, for example, of the airports of Seoul, Dallas, and Amsterdam, on which the contribution of Federico De Andreis and Paolo Pane focuses, who explore "how airports can serve as catalysts for urbanization and economics, as well as influence urban planning and the creation of new urban forms: airport cities and aerotropolis".

The first of the 3 articles about Italian issues, although they are now very common in other countries as well, is about the "flat tax", as personal income tax, at the centre of the political debate since 1994 and it is still highly topical. I believe this article, written by Caterina Ferrario, is very important because it arises relevant and unsettling questions about the reason why some political parties are opponent to the proposal of the most democratic forces, devoted to the value of the Italian Republic Constitution, such as a progressivity of tax and National Unity (value to which all parties should adhere). The proposed reform would affect interregional income redistribution: a very important issue, given the still persistent regional disparities, which is rather disregarded in the current debate. The second and the third article are related to the tourism industry in Italy, which after the Covid-19 shock is taking a promising path of constant recovery. The relevance of the industry – despite being pushed by the downfall of the manufacturing sector – was still undeniable even during the pandemic as demonstrated by the study of Veronica Cavagliato, Clementina Bruno, Marco Novarese.

The study shows the results of questionnaires and focus groups and analyses the consequences of the pandemic on the tourism sector. The study examines how tourists have changed their preference compared to pre-pandemic times and the emerging opportunities for intermediaries and for the development of less-known areas.

The positive recovery of the Italian Tourism sectors should not allow to forget the pre-Covid issues, such as the neglect of landscape, and above all the UNESCO rural landscape, as explained by Fabrizio Aimar in the third article of the journal. This problem has not disappeared, on the contrary it has

worsened during the pandemic. Therefore, it is necessary to restart the discussion around this topic and push the political forces to promote the planning process at national and regional level and to find appropriate solutions to coordinate industry actors involved. In the matter of the rural landscape, the planning process would avoid the risks of changing the nature of places and compromising their social structure, which is vital for their continuity.

The final article, by Simone Robbiano, Anna Menozzi, Fabrizio Erbetta, Guido Lingua, presents a project, which results should avoid and achieve the starvation issue in the low-income areas in North Africa included in the *ProSmallAgriMed* project funded, as part *Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area – PRIMA*. The objective of the project is “improving the agronomic practices of North African small farmers, by promoting the rational use of healthy soil microbiota and their positive effects on productivity of intercropped perennial (cactus-pear) and short-term (field crops and winter-grown vegetables) species, as well as to support synergistic cooperation between farmers and the food-value chain”. It would be vital to review the challenges and the realisation of benefits in a couple of years to understand the capabilities of the project to spread and share the new innovative way of work.

Francesco Adamo