

SPEECH - NOTES

HYBRID PARKS ATELIER

PROGRAMME: INTERREG IV C

LEAD PARTNER: SCHLOSS DYCK GERMANY

PREVIOUS SPEAKERS:

MR RONNIE CALLEJA (CHAIRMAN FONDAZZJONI WIRT PAOLA), PERIT RODERICK SPITERI (MAYOR PAOLA LOCAL COUNCIL), MR CHRISTIAN GREUSSEN (LEAD EXPERT GERMANY).

DR MALCOLM BORG (LOCAL EXPERT/CONSULTANT PAOLA LC) (NO SPEECH)

VENUE: HOTEL EXCELISOIR

TIME: 8:15 – 9:30

Minister: Dr Konrad Mizzi B.Sc., M.A.(Notts), Ph.D.(Notts), M.P.

MINISTRY FOR ENERGY AND THE CONSERVATION OF WATER

LADIES AND GENTLEMAN

MAYOR, COUNCILLORS, DELEGATES AND EXPERTS

Energy and Water Conservation are a challenge. It is 'the challenge' in Europe, with the current economic scenario and the effects of climate changes which are hitting Europe and the world. My Ministry has taken these two major challenges in the electoral manifesto and have translated them into tangible milestones for the next five years.

Meeting in Malta in such a moment of change is important and vital especially in the local context but more importantly in a European context. The balance between the economic impact and climate change is felt throughout society. We are however responsible to sustain our society, our European citizens without jeopardizing our goals in Europe's Energy Road Map.

Hybrid Parks is a challenge in itself and it is a very intelligent way at dealing with future aspirations and citizens' needs. INTERREG IV C like all research driven

programmes is giving us an opportunity to test the goals, objectives and European Union directives of the future and calibrate these to our societies. Ultimately sustainable communities need good governance as do today's parks and tomorrow's hybrid parks.

The Ministry for Energy and Conservation of Water has been working diligently in the past few weeks of this legislature to put to practice our policy and the electoral manifesto by changing the direction of Malta's energy plan. We have just launched the public tender/competition for a radical change in fuel, from fossil fuel to gas. The driving idea is to have a cleaner environment, reduce the carbon footprint and also reduce bills and rates which had impacted negatively not only on the local industry but most importantly on our citizens. As we have seen lately in Europe the citizen plays a crucial and vital factor in the economy's well-being.

But sustainable communities are not only about the economy and energy use, sustainable communities are also about the well-being of our people. The parks and gardens, especially in Malta which is one of the most densely populated countries in the European Union are the link with nature. Nature, human interaction and communication are the basis of civil society in the Mediterranean. This contact needs to be maintained for the good of society which needs to be more close to nature than ever before. This brings the notion of sustainable parks and gardens which depends on another goal that of the conservation of water. Again in the local context we are spurring a cultural change in water consumption. Consumption is not only controlled by raising utility bills and increasing burdens on society but through a change in our idea of water as a precious gift and water as part of our landscape. We have embarked on a viability exercise which tackles the balance of water consumption and production. For the Maltese Islands but also for the rest of Europe the storage of

water, the important elements of re-cycling is significant. In the context of Hybrid Parks it's the fulcrum.

Hybrid Parks is an interesting forum of expertise which as one may see from the partners involved is a very healthy mix of practitioners, academics, government entities, garden societies, conservationists but also creative people; designers, planners, architects and engineers. As an engineer and also an academic it is highly appreciated that EU funds are directed towards research and development. It is through these programmes that we venture out to develop new ideas and most importantly gain tangible results. It is through the harmonisation of professions and the integration of diverse skills that ideas succeed. Together we are responsible for Europe's future, a sustainable future in attractive spaces and parks. It is through 'good design', the application of new technology and the conservation of nature that all the states may guarantee a healthy future to our citizens.

It is very apt that you are discussing Environment in the Maltese context. This is the one main challenge in Malta as you will witness from your visit. The balance of development and conservation is a very difficult and contentious one. Hybrid Parks sustained by the experience of its main partner the European Garden Heritage Network will definitely contribute to develop and apply new ideas in the development, design and management of parks and gardens.

I have discussed earlier with the local representatives, their experiences in the various Ateliers at Lund, Umbria and Schloss Dyck and the importance of the exchange of experiences with other professionals and practitioners. We were also discussing the priorities of Paola, its projects and the strategy and plan being developed for the gardens in the locality. No matter the size of a community the

exigencies are the same. Society needs space, it needs green, it needs air and it needs human interaction. The public gardens and parks give a new meaning to our urban landscape and create a reference point in the development of civilization. I wish you a very fruitful workshop with examples from the Maltese situation which may help build the 'best practice' guidelines for the future of Europe's parks.

Thank-you