
OECD Forum "Building Resilient Regions after a Natural Disaster: Abruzzo 2030" 16-17 March 2012

On March 16, the OECD organised an open discussion with an assembly of the citizens of L'Aquila (Italy), and the next day a Forum more targeted on key policy-makers on "**Building resilient regions after a natural disaster: the case of Abruzzo – Italy**". These events were part of the Territorial Review the OECD is undertaking jointly with the University of Groningen; the Review is financed by the Italian Ministry of Economic Development and will be completed and presented at TDPC in December 2012.

The **Open Forum** gathered a very large group of people (400-500) of L'Aquila, the capital city of the Abruzzo region, severely hit by 2009 earthquake. This Forum was a rather lively moment. At the beginning, people were rather focused on physical reconstruction issues, but over the 3-hour discussion, more and more strategic issues emerged on a long-term vision; for example, how to use the reconstruction as an opportunity for creating a new city, the need to focus on intangible assets, eco-tourism, renewable energy, etc.

The following day Forum was attended by more than 300 people representing local and regional institutions, including the **President of the Region Abruzzo** and the **Mayor of L'Aquila**, the University, business sector and civil society. The Forum was chaired all day by **Fabrizio Barca, Minister for Territorial Cohesion**. **Prime Minister Mario Monti** joined the Forum in its concluding session, together with **Francesco Profumo, Minister for Research, Education and Innovation**, as well as **Anna Maria Cancellieri, Minister of Interior**. In a very fragmented and complex governance structure, the Forum was a remarkable (and rare) occasion for the local community to meet all levels of government, and have the relevant institutions expressing their views on a regional development strategy.

The OECD Forum has clearly helped to create a strong momentum for a change in a community rather frustrated by the lack of political action to reconstruct the city and provide a long-term vision for development. In his concluding remarks, Mr Monti thanked the OECD for this ongoing work, notably by providing a wider regional development approach. L'Aquila city can be a symbol for a renewed economic and social dynamism of many Italian cities, if concrete measures to accelerate the reconstruction process are quickly put in place within a broader strategy for the region.

The presentations of our invited experts from **Japan, Turkey, New Zealand and US** were much appreciated, as they shared experiences of places faced with natural disasters even at a larger scale. In this way, the forthcoming report on L'Aquila-Abruzzo (December 2012) is an opportunity to build a **TDPC network of regions hit by natural disasters**. The report will reflect common challenges and policies implemented in other regions hit by natural disasters. In this respect, we invite countries interested in participating to the study to contact the Secretariat.

You can find more information on the Forum on:

http://www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3746,en_2649_34413_49844740_1_1_1_1,00.html