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Scenarios and political actions for the Lombardy Region

Thank you. First I'd like to take this opportunity to share with you the good wishes of our President Formigoni, whom I have the honour of representing today on a theme that is of great interest to him. Special thanks are due to Fiorenzo Galli, the Director of the Leonardo da Vinci Museum; he asked me in particular to communicate his good wishes to Daniel Weygandt, the United States Consul, and to Andrea Moltrasio. I also wish to communicate best wishes to the President, whom I will see this evening, and many happy returns on your behalf. For me it is a pleasure today to speak on a subject as stimulating as the current one. Hence I wish to sincerely complement the organisers for having chosen climatic change as the subject-matter for a wide-ranging scientific, cultural and political debate. The climate, as we know, has a profound impact on the life of human beings, it conditions it, it contributes to it, in particular it determines the way in which one lives and in this context the phenomenon of climate - through its innate ability indirectly to generate questions and issues - galvanises knowledge and learning by involving institutions, Governments, the network of enterprises and individual citizens, but also by involving the scientific world. Scientists have taken many different positions on the nature of climatic changes, their causes and possible effects, but this intense and fascinating debate is often not portrayed in the media, whose reporting of this issue is often contradictory, as a result of the imperative of capturing readers rather than presenting the state of knowledge in an objective manner. Therefore while it is important that science continues to examine these issues in depth, it is crucial that scientific communication in this area remains absolutely accurate and appropriate and does not take refuge in alarmism, and is more concerned to provide political decision-makers with all the elements necessary to guide their choices in a positive direction. We believe this lies at the heart of any discussion of a topic such as this, which inevitably risks dividing and distracting attention from the central question, namely, that climate change is a global preoccupation which requires every person to take responsibility at all levels. Tackling the question of climate change becomes even more of a challenge at a difficult moment such as this for the economy, the world financial system and for the whole system of production. Now, our own regional Government of the Lombardy Region - the third Parliament of Italy as we like to call it - also believes that the current circumstances represent an exceptional opportunity for identifying new models of development, to the extent even of regarding these environmental questions as strategic levers. To this end we are following with great interest the programs being put in place by the United States of America: their general plan of investment in the environment, energy and infrastructure does not regard ecological issues as an impediment but as a great opportunity to relaunch the economy and improve the quality of life. We are just as convinced that there is no equal solution for all and that tailored solutions must be found in accordance with the restraints, opportunities and peculiarities applicable in each individual territory. Therefore what is required is for all the key players to come together to sketch out a genuinely effective path for growth. For this, what is required are clear criteria and guidelines to be followed for future political decisions and for current ones. The first principle or criterion for the Region of Lombardy, especially in relation to the environment, is the subject and his or her good: this means that the subject can for no reason be sacrificed, as some would wish in the name of saving the planet - but this comes across as rather idealistic and unrealistic in any event. Considerations of reality and history both demonstrate that development - understood not only as economic growth but also as the realisation of the whole potential of man - is an important factor also in improving environmental conditions. Any ideological temptation will be resisted, therefore, which seeks to set environmental protection against development. To speak about sustainability today means to have an elevated conception of the dignity of human life and of work, it means to maintain one's focus on the person, on his or her wellbeing and to trust in the person's ability to come up with the technological solution to reduce emissions and develop a healthier environment. A healthy environmentalism should not be understood in opposition to the rights of man and the safeguarding of the environment; it should in fact actively associate human wellbeing with environmental protection. Safeguarding the environment does not only refer to what we should refrain from doing in our territory; on the contrary, it signifies what we should do to improve our territory. This is the definition of sustainable development. Given these premises, the Region of Lombardy has decided to put in place a series of policies for environmental sustainability, based on a number of fundamental criteria. first of all,

promoting the integration of scientific environmental studies within development policies, supporting research and innovation in enterprises and in the public administration, promoting awareness and public communication with the precise aim of generating a genuine and active environmental consciousness in citizens, one that does not simply refrain from harming the environment but which takes civil responsibility for actively protecting and improving the ecological and social system. The first act to defend and safeguard the environment arises necessarily from the individual citizen. Another theme is the direct involvement of the agencies for the Territories and the Provinces, of the system of enterprises in Lombardy through the important role played by Confindustria (the Italian Manufacturers' Association), the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, the same research bodies such as our ISPRA centre (Higher Institute for Environmental Protection and Research) as well as our eminent university system. From all of this emerged our Region's approach, which we have been developing since 1995, and that of its regional council; I have personally been honoured to be a part of the council for almost four years, the first two years as Councillor responsible for civil protection; I would wake up in the morning in the hope of a sunny day because of the hydrogeological problems occurring in our mountains, and now I wake up in the morning, especially in certain months of the year, hoping that there will be sufficient water, given that the PM10 situation in our region reveals an appreciably high threshold. In light of this, therefore, decisions have been made to adopt avant-garde positions regarding environmental issues, with policies that integrate and that are, above all, far-sighted in nature, and that often are not recorded or even mentioned. I refer in particular to the measures taken to enhance air quality, or measures to limit pollutant emissions – factors which are known to be responsible for global warming and climatic changes. On this front, Lombardy Region has worked to promote targeted action that is extended over time, involving rules, regulations, economic incentives for change and controls based on the most up-to-date scientific knowledge available. In addition to the structural measures to enhance air quality in Lombardy, approved for the five-year period 2005/2010, we are the first Region to have applied and adopted a law based on the well-known Law 24 of 2006 on air quality, the first example of systematic intervention in this sector both in Italy as well as in Europe. We have also signed a super-regional agreement, an agreement with the regions of the Po basin, given that we have the Alps and the Apennines - as you well understand - and we have this situation to deal with, which is exceptional in the European context. And I wish to remind you of some of the most significant measures we have brought forward these years. They represent courageous moves forward : progressive limitations on the circulation of the most pollutant vehicles belonging to categories euro 0, euro 1, euro 2, incentives for the acquisition of anti-particulate filters for owners of diesel vehicles destined for the carriage of merchandise, namely vans, lorries. For this incentive, still underway, we have allocated 10 million Euro in the last six months, also for the promotion of equipment capable of treating the emissions of vehicles and of boilers. We have introduced rules to inhibit and reduce the use of fuels with higher environmental impact, including the inappropriate use of biomass, but that is not all: the adoption of industrial and civil emission limits adapted to the Po basin and more restrictive than those applicable in the whole of Italy. Then there is the tax incentivisation of the use of methane for heating and autotraction, and the adoption of extremely restrictive criteria for emissions from the big thermoelectric power stations. These interventions have enabled us to achieve significant results. The values of the principal atmospheric pollutants have dropped: I cite some figures here: sulphur dioxide down 50%; nitrogen dioxide down 20%; carbon monoxide down 60%, even the values for the concentration of PM10 fine-dusts and smaller, have decreased by several percentage points, and today this still applies - today they are a third of what they were in the nineteen-eighties. Emissions of nitrogen oxides from thermotechnical and thermoelectric stations have been cut by as much as 40% between 2004 and 2007, in advance compliance with the same objective fixed for 2008. We are the first region in Italy to offer distributors for methane/LPG; currently we have 385, of which 54 are for methane. By 2009 there will be 100 methane distributors and more again will arrive on foot of a new project being promoted by us. Consider that in 2000, there were only about 20 methane plants in the whole of Lombardy. These are measures, therefore, which aim to reduce impacts at the local level, with a view to protecting the health of citizens and at the same time to make a significant contribution globally. Certainly, much remains to be done in relation to air quality, but we know that the road we have taken is at least facing in the right direction. Furthermore, a few months ago, with the signing of the local public transport agreement (the famous EDPL), we have committed ourselves to find solutions to develop forms of mobility which respond effectively to the real transport requirements for persons and things, and which can safeguard environmental capital and especially, as we said earlier, the health of citizens. We hope that we have shown the positive advances made in recent years, without underestimating the depth of the challenge facing us, but in order to highlight the importance of pursuing a line of cross-party ethical standards and integrated policies which can result in a powerful alliance between institutions and the world of research and of production, and especially the whole citizen body. What is really required, therefore, is to act in synergy, as a team

or network; we are only too well aware that the environmental challenge is a complex one which can be won only with the participation of all, and nor will this be in the very short term. To facilitate this, President Formigoni has frequently made known his thoughts on the European Commission's procedures for reprimand and infringement in relation to atmospheric pollution, highlighting how it should give due consideration to the peculiarities of different territories, as I mentioned earlier, especially those of our territories which are most exposed to the risk of atmospheric pollution, just as the same European Commission should, with greater courage and consistency and in the light of these critical situations, direct its support (including financial) towards national and local government action by providing for specific measures to sustain environmental policies, and by removing bureaucratic red tape. We are confident that we in the Region of Lombardy can make a significant contribution to this end, which will compare favourably with the contributions that will certainly be made by other countries and regions; it is a challenge, therefore, in which the Region of Lombardy and its President have great faith, and we are investing very significant resources and willpower and also considerable human resources within the Region.

Thank you.