

Municipality of Prato

Culture and Business in
Development

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The Municipality in numbers

- 185.000 inhabitants
- With Florence (12 km far) & Pistoia (15 km far) it represents the widest urban area of Tuscany
- It is the most important textile industrial district of Europe

Its Economy

- 4500 textiles business companies
- An additional 9.000 ones dealing with trade and services
- Strong presence of migrants (22.500 migrants residing)
- The largest Chinese community of Italy after Milan

Its History

Strong historic ties with Florence

But

Autonomous development of its own economy and in the last century:

- its industrial tradition
- its diversified growth

Have differentiated the development path of the two cities that today are aware of the importance of sharing policies affecting the largest metropolitan area of Tuscany

The Changing Years (1980/90)

- Its urban territory, once strongly interlinking households and business activities, has been reshaped urbanely to relocate the industrial activities (re-qualification of the territory)
- A new wave of vocational training and high-level professional specialisation addressed to the youth who were once mainly used to expect low level education and professional opportunities (human re-qualification)
- The Municipality agrees to invest in highly visible cultural events of regional and national importance

Objectives

- To defend its textile productiveness from external negative competitiveness by investing in research and innovation
- Differentiate its productive investments
- To set-up a socially and environmentally sustainable development

The Municipality and its Culture

The culture of textile entrepreneurship, traditionally connected to the “fashion system”, naturally pictures the current and future reality through:

- In 1988 the most important Italian Museum of Contemporary Art opens in Prato (Centro Pecci)
- In 1977 sees the light the Textile Museum, completely renewed in 2003 and relocated in the former Campolmi Factory
- In 1992 the University of Prato is established with technical-scientific courses, that has since then increased the number of its students by offering courses in arts and entertainment

The Tools: awareness and knowledge of the “non-textile factors”

Since the end of the 1990s the Municipal administration and its civil society act re-qualifies all endogenous and peculiar resources existing within the territory thus connecting quality and culture

As a consequence:

- Strengthening of micro & small enterprises that focus on quality more than anything else
- Growth of the third-sector activities stimulates the re-qualification and awareness towards the own territory (i.e. tourism is an example)

The Tools: A policy of a sustainable territory and development

- Re-location of industrial activities from the city centre towards environmentally friendly specialised areas (Macro Districts)
- Integrated re-use of industrial and households waste waters
- Set up of a system of protected “green belts” (i.e. Park of Monteferrato)
- Increase and improvement of the city public transport system (LAM – High Mobility Lines)

Results

- Lower costs in consumes and transports
- Reduction time cycles of new investments
- Aesthetic/Qualitative re-qualification of historical centre and old factories (on culture: the Museum of Textile and the Library at the former Factory Campolmi, Officina Giovani (The Youth Factory) at the ex Municipal Animal Slaughters)

Methodology applied

- Continuous application of the principle of subsidiary on decision-making policies;
- Fostering dialogue with the civil society;
- Fostering panel of discussions with stakeholders

Conclusions

CURRENTLY:

- The qualitative offer of our Territory
- A qualitative production
- The widespread qualitative cultural degree among the citizens

The are the objectives that Prato aims at when planning its own future of development through an integrated approach