

(Maria Epifanio – Vice-Prefect in Service at SSAI)

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Association, and I would like to remind you that the Scuola Superiore dell'Amministrazione dell'Interno (SSAI) was one of the founders and supporters of the European Days through the years and that the first European Days were actually held at SSAI in Rome.

As a training institute, we consider that our task is to spread innovative training projects. This is what the School's Director anticipated in the meeting in Bologna last Autumn.

So, today I will be talking about "How the STR may handle complex processes between development and environment through a method of analysis. Due to the topic chosen - as you may imagine - this round table I am participating in is not exactly the most appropriate. In fact, my speech will not properly concern the environment in urban zones. Particularly, I am presenting a method that SSAI has successfully experimented in cooperation with CHEMI, the training institute of the French Ministry of the Interior.

In January 2013, at the Scuola Superiore dell'Amministrazione dell'Interno in Rome, a group of 20 French and a group of 20 Italian officials from home affairs institutions met for two days and successfully tested four critical case studies concerning the dilemma between development and environment.

The cases were the following:

the construction of the high-speed train line between France and Italy; the seizure of the chemical plant of Taranto due to damages caused to human health and the environment; the response to a nuclear accident occurred in France; and finally the response to environmental crimes according to French laws.

Each team, which worked on a specific case of public policies, focused on a micro-level analysis. The methodology adopted consisted of singling out:

- Players

- Formal rules
- Conflict and problem framing
- Policy instruments

All teams worked for 8 hours following the selection of two coordinators for each one of them. The working language was English.

The final product of this analytical exercise consisted of four power-point presentations in which the analytical grid was applied homogenously to the four cases.

The project aimed to reach the following goal: training high-ranking officials serving in the home affairs sector to team up and analyze four critical cases within a common framework, in which economic and social values and objectives were inevitably clashing and institutions were expected to ensure a common security level as well as maintain safety and public order.

We deem a public policy to be a complex “institutional game”. This metaphor unveils the negotiating processes and interdependent effects featuring in public policies, in which key collective goods such as public order, security and legality need to be ensured in respect of fundamental rights. Balancing the different requests, preferences, and values in a context where the pillars of a peaceful and loyal social pact have to be anyhow protected, turns out to be a highly challenging goal for home affairs officers at any stage of their daily work. This holds for an even more compelling issue for the representatives of the State.

The four case studies share some common points beyond specific differences.

1- The first one consists of the high degree of social and political sensitivity of the issue. In different ways, this entails that the costs of a failure might be too high for the entire political community. Such a sensitivity also demands an extremely strong authority as a source of norms and policies that tackle the issue.

2- The second point is the intrinsically complex nature of the issue. Hence, those institutions whose legitimacy comes from their prestige, their impartiality and their impersonality are the best ones to address these

complex problems. In fact, the complexity does not originate from the objective nature of the problem, but rather from the multiplicity of the actors targeting the potential solutions as well as the plurality of interests and values that coexist among all players.

3- Third and last point is the need for a reframing process, which shows the possibility of combining – in a virtuous manner – two different collective goals such as development and environmental quality. Reframing collective situations can take place only if the source of a new frame is considered as a legitimate one.

The above-said three points represent the axes of the activities carried out by the Representatives of the State.

This last point should also be connected with the role played by the Representatives of the State in an integrated EU. We increasingly need to share languages and methods. The more decision-making processes reach high levels of complexity, the more we need to ensure that Representatives of the State located in various regions or countries and involved into solving different problems, are provided with common languages and methods to share solutions, compare approaches and facilitate mutual learning as well as transfer best practices. This does not delete national differences. It rather amplifies the positive effect and the mutual benefits that institutions and ultimately citizens can draw from a Europe in which differences coexist: it is a shared space in which problems are examined and tackled with the support of simple, flexible, and exchangeable tools.

Also, we should consider the possibility to transfer this method to different contexts.

SSAI is ready to cooperate with other Countries, possibly involving their training institutes of public administration, in order to share a common methodology aiming to harmonize the multi-faceted roles of STR from various European Countries. This could be an effective support for sound territorial governance and a safe management of territorial dynamics within a European Union framework.