



**ALPINE DIALOGUE**  
**ENERGY TRANSITION**  
**NATIONAL**  
**AND REGIONAL DATA**  
**ITALY**



Country considered: <b>Italy</b>	Submitted by <b>CIPRA Italia</b>
<p>1) <b>How important is the topic “energy transition” in the current political discussions/discourse of your country? What are political decisions and actions in this context? (legal regulations, funding programs, incentives, projects and other initiatives....)</b></p> <p>Italy has recently adopted (March 2013) the <b>National Energy Strategy</b>. This strategy, even if takes into account renewable energy production and energy efficiency, has been criticized by the environmental organizations because the sustainability is addressed only to economic aspects (lower energy price and assurance of the supply to enterprises), and aimed at developing the national production of hydrocarbons, so that the country is expected to become the main south-European hub for gas production from hydrocarbons.</p> <p><b>National incentives</b> (Conto energia, conto termico, green certificates) are primarily intended for the production of renewable energy. Tax deductions are set for energy efficiency of buildings (however with frequent modifications and consequent incertitude of citizens).</p> <p>National incentives and renewable energy: <a href="http://www.fonti-rinnovabili.it/index.php?c=nincentivi">http://www.fonti-rinnovabili.it/index.php?c=nincentivi</a></p> <p>In Italy <b>there is not nuclear power production</b> (and this is often used as a threat to convince population to accept new installations for the production of renewable energy).</p>	
<p>2) <b>What topics are in the focus of the discussions? What are the biggest conflicts? (e.g. hydropower, wind energy, solar energy, biofuel, wood, energy savings, pumped-storage plants, power lines, oil prices, non-conventional oil and gas like fracking etc. ...) What are considered to be the greatest opportunities?</b></p> <p>Energy production from renewable sources is considered rather a business opportunity than an occasion to change strategy in the energy supply. In such way, also due to the incentives, the rush to renewable production generates obvious environmental and social conflicts, and, sometimes, it proves to be inefficient in the long term, even from the economic point of view. The Ministries of Economic Development and Environment have issued guidelines for authorizing the construction of new plants for the energy production from renewable sources. Some Regions have planned guidelines to identify suitable and unsuitable sites. However, conflicts and sensational cases still occur, for example concerning the realization of installations in protected areas!</p> <p><b>Conflicts:</b></p> <p><b>Hydropower:</b> <b>exploitation of the last existing natural rivers</b> (the potential of hydropower has already been largely exploited). Interventions with heavy infrastructure and deleterious effects on biodiversity, landscape and soils. The number of small installations is expected to increase.. Discussion is also raising about safety of the large pumping storage basins and dams (the experiences of the Vajont dam and Valgrisenche dam, that is going to be partly demolished).</p> <p><b>Wind energy:</b> even if the wind maps demonstrate that Italy is not a suitable country, the <b>installation of wind farms on the slopes of medium and high mountains is becoming a business</b> because of the incentives. Many wind farms have been blocked for their impact on the landscape; on the contrary, impacts on birds and the one due to the necessary infrastructure to be realized in the sites that host wind farms are less considered.</p> <p><b>Biomass:</b> there is the risk of <b>over-sizing plants or their location in sites where there is not enough biomass availability</b>. One sector to be developed, with a great potential in the Alps, concerns "carbon credits".</p> <p><b>Photovoltaic:</b> there are problems concerning the <b>occupation of agricultural soil</b> for the installation of the plants (ground mounted system, this problem concerns the agricultural plains outside the Alps).</p>	

Other aspects such as biofuels production and geothermal energy have a marginal importance in the Italian Alps.

**Reduction in consumption/energy saving:** theoretically, all programs and energy plans give importance to energy saving. Actually, the decrease of consumption is mostly due to the economic crisis rather than to the effects of energy conservation policies. There are considerable progresses in the field of **building construction** while **transport and mobility** continue being sectors where positive effects can be hard achieved ( it is useless to increase engine efficiency and reduce fuel consumption of vehicles if the number of vehicles and the travelled kilometres are increasing). Also electric cars can help to reduce pollution, but they are not a solution to the problems of energy and climate change.

3) **What key data and hard facts are available in your country and especially for the alpine region (inside the perimeter of the Alpine convention – if data available)? e.g. number of realized and planned projects on different energy sources, data for future energy needs and future energy production, data relating to the share of different energy sources, data on energy savings.**

Data from the Energy platform are complete and correct. Difficulties to disaggregate the "alpine" data from the total, since most of the Alpine regions and provinces only have a part of their territory included in the Alps.

See also Cipro Info n. 85 Le Alpi oltre Kyoto <http://www.cipra.org/it/alpmedia/pubblicazioni/3222>

4) **Who are the key actors in the national discussions? Are there national associations/NGOs active with this topic?**

The environmental organizations are currently working to reconcile the use of renewable energy sources with nature and ecosystem protection. However, even the promotion of renewable energy is carried out by the associations (when the impacts are acceptable).

The association Legambiente, for instance, has promoted a program on renewable energy for municipalities.

Within the member organizations of CIPRA, **Legambiente** is the most engaged in the energy sector. Beside CIPRA, it's important to highlight the activities **Kyotoclub** and **APER** (Association of producers of energy from renewable sources).

Kyotoclub was invited to the alpine dialogue. CIPRA Italy has been working for many years with Kyotoclub.

APER has also prepared guidelines for hydropower in collaboration with Italian Section of WWF.

The theme of energy saving is strongly felt by the associations, but often there are not necessary competence to go beyond the slogans.

At the institutional level, regional and provincial agencies for energy have been established. The competences are not always clear and the situation is made even more complex by the fact that Alpine Regions and Autonomous Provinces are organized differently from each other. Experiences of local agencies are running, e.g. **Pubblichergie**, the agency which operates as a consultant and that has been created by several municipalities in the Province of Belluno. The regional agency are engaged also in the field of energy saving (not only in the one of renewable energy).

<http://www.legambiente.it/temi/energia> Al di fuori della CIPRA segnaliamo l'attività di Kyotoclub

<http://www.kyotoclub.org/> e APER (Associazione dei produttori di Energia da fonti rinnovabili)

<http://www.aper.it/home.asp>

<http://www.pubblichergie.it/>

5) **What are the most urgent needs of action in your country from your point of view and why?**

A serious **energy planning** is needed, where renewable energies must be considered not only as an economic business.



In the Alps, the main problems are those generated from **hydropower**. The economic concerns of the local authorities, that recently have dramatically increased, persuade them to accept more and more installations for the production of renewable energy in their territory, in exchange for royalties, even if this means hard impacts on the environment and the landscape.

The most important challenge about renewable energy is the **economic transparency** (who really receives the profits? what are the real prices of energy?) And the real **need to increase the energy production** (linked to the demand).

In the field of energy efficiency, it is necessary that the **good practices (spot) are accurately applied**.

**Transport and traffic** (internal and transit) need to be faced seriously. The transport sector (goods and people) is the most difficult to tackle and efforts are needed that go beyond the capacity of NGOs.

In general, to reduce consumption, we need to **develop and to increase the awareness on the concept of “grey energy” and to introduce the concept of sufficiency** in the lifestyles.

6) **How can the national CIPRAs (at local and national level) and CIPRA International (supporting the national level and at international level) get more involved and be active?**

Many local actors need a **coordination, both** national and international. In Italy, in each Alpine valley there is an association or a committee of people that make opposition or discuss about a specific hydropower project (although we know that the hydropower potential has been fully exploited, there are still many requests for new plans). CIPRA Italy experienced in the past the coordination of Alpine-wide groups (in the 90s we organized a working group with most of the Alpine provinces, that are the local authorities in charge of authorizing new projects), and in this direction we could move again.

7) **Any other thoughts, ideas, proposals?**

On the basis of the report of Legambiente, the most part of “renewable” municipalities are situated in the Alps. This confirms the potential of Alpine municipalities.

Who made these statements\*? (this is a provocation, all of us could say this, but he is not a member of an environmental organization)

- **"The hydropower resource has been exploited in all possible ways by past generations"**
- **"In our country the winds are too weak: we are at the limit of suitability"**
- **"Concerning energy from biomass, it makes sense the realization of small modular installations, to be installed in residential districts near wooded areas, so that they can use wood at zero kilometres!"**
- **"If there is an excess of sun or wind, it's much better to reduce the power of thermal power stations, saving gas, instead of pumping water in basins and losing 20% of the energy"**

\*Francesco Starace, CEO (General Manager) of ENEL Greenpower (one of the largest company in the world for renewable energy production). A recent interview to the magazine QualEnergia (3rd September 2013)