

Comment on the first DEMOS prototype test in Bologna

- translation from the original Italian document -

I oversaw the whole testing of the first DEMOS prototype in Bologna. The chosen topic, so sensitive and up to date for our city, surely meant a real challenge to the spirit of analysis of the involved citizens. I noticed how the opinions of our “Iperboliani” were both fair and forerunners of new solutions for improving the traffic situation in Bologna.

The experimenting side of this initiative didn't prevent me from realising the effectiveness of this tool, both regarding the consensus analysis, by *ad hoc* surveys with real time-results, and the early conflict resolution, so ordinary during the nowadays decisional processes. If applied to the preliminary phase of a debate, such an approach has surely a high value in terms of saving economic, political and social resources. Moreover, I gather that the structure of the web interface, the arrangement and exhaustiveness of the published information, surely fostered the proper opinion making by citizens.

Besides, I wish to thank the moderation team, provided by Nexus-IBA (NPO from Milan), for the great job: with high skill, they avoided any opinion scattering, allowing the discussion to focus on the actual relevant topics for the benefit of our community.

Here follows an excerpt from page 46 of last VI report on “Digital Cities in Italy” by CENSIS:

“Within the process of institutionalization of the web-sites belonging to Public Administrations, the opportunity of exploitation of IT tools to interact with the local administration is likely to be lost. Our survey shows the deep lack of space for discussions, where users could express their opinion and interact each other. Taking into account the most significant experience, only 20% of county towns provides on-line discussion tools like forum or chat.”

The overcoming of the aforementioned attitude and of any form of self-reliance should be promoted both at a European level and, above all, at a local level. Thus, I assume that the development of reliable tools of e-democracy like DEMOS should be strongly fostered. Finally, I'm quite confident next trial of the DEMOS prototype in Bologna will be again so effective and widespread. Let me thank the DEMOS team and express my deep trust to anyone working for the good outcome of this project.

Giovanni Salizzoni
(Vice Mayor of Bologna)