INTERVIEW WITH ARPA MOLISE 6/03/26

OPENCOESIONE PROJECT CLASS 3A AFM

PART 1

Alessandro: Dr. Carmela Basile is the reference person for our project and she joined us here today. Carmela, hello everyone, good morning. She supports us and helps us collaborate with the ASOC contacts; she is, let's say, our reference person. She ended up here today almost by chance: she called me saying she was coming, and I thought it came at just the right moment, since there are people asking what we have done so far and what responsibilities we hold. Sara, go ahead, give us a summary, a synthesis of what we've done and who we've interviewed. Stand up, before the lesson.

Sara: Well, first of all, good morning. After the event we participated in — you were also present in Termoli — we went to the Faculty of Agriculture and had the opportunity to interview both a professor and her assistant. We visited the laboratories where she constantly works with her students, in particular on a project concerning trout and their reintroduction into rivers. We subsequently also interviewed the mayor of Montenero di Bisaccia and a former municipal councillor, also from Montenero, who gave us the opportunity to talk especially about the mouth of the Trigno river. Some of us from the group went to the site itself to see the current conditions of the Trigno river mouth and document them. There we also interviewed the owner of one of the campsites in the area. We saw the conditions it is in. She, meanwhile, lives in Montenero, so she knows the area well. We had always known it to be a somewhat neglected area by the institutions, and those of us from Montenero are well aware of this in summer when we go there: the smell and the general conditions don't even favour tourism. We talked about it with the mayor as well, and also with Mr. Chiappini, who is one of the former administrators who was very active during the provincial period.

Alessandro: It seems to me that you've done a lot. Yes, very well done. There is still more to do, and we will also have a contact: we are in touch with the IP contact who will guide us on the available data. By the way, I brought a series of documents, both technical and administrative; I don't know which ones might be of interest, but you decide. Tomorrow we'll go to Ancona to see the Conero Park. We'll go to see the other protected area. And who knows, it would be interesting, especially if you take us on a boat trip! We did it too, one cold day — Paolo was driving.

Pasquale: Good morning, I'm Pasquale. I'll now show you our website and social media pages, where we constantly share what we do and our daily progress. We've also set up a connection with the class we're collaborating with. We consulted each other on the progress of the project — on our side and on theirs — because periodically we need to compare notes to understand how far they've gotten and how far we've gotten with our civic monitoring, and

also what lines of action we're following, because they don't necessarily have to coincide. In the third step, the work of the two groups must come together. This is our website, written in English because the project will be presented in English. On our homepage we've written something about our team, and this is our presentation photo. There are some news items regarding the Adriatic Sea, general news about what is happening on our seas. Here is our logo, in two versions: the main one, which I think you've already seen on our social media, and another version present on Canva and on Padlet. Here is our Canva, our planning sheet, where we write everything we need to do. It's part of the first design phase of what we'll be doing over the course of the project monitoring. Here is the other version of our logo. This instead is Padlet, which is nothing more than an interactive board where we periodically record our outings and our progress. It's interactive because there are many photographs and texts that tell the story of our advancement. For example, in our first step we started designing the Canva, the website and our social media pages. Then we have the other steps: in step two we went on various outings. Today's meeting with you will also be transcribed on our social media and on our Padlet as part of step two, so you are part of our civic monitoring. We started this step by going to the Istituto Tiberio, where there are nautical simulators: we simulated docking in a port and virtually sailed along the Adriatic coast through screens and headsets. We then went to the University of Molise in Campobasso, where they explained their projects to us — as Sara had already mentioned. Some of us also participated in a conference with Free, in the Sala Vittoria del Boccali. We went to the mouth of the Trigno river; here are some photos of us exploring the area and observing the current conditions. We then conducted an interview with the mayor of Montenero: here are photos of us interviewing her. We also held a webinar — that is, an online meeting — with our Croatian partners on Google Meet, where we compared our progress. The interview was done yesterday, so as we find free time in class we'll go and update the content; we don't do it daily, we do it when we have more time. Then there are all the links to our social media, in case you'd like to follow us. We also have a second page where we explain what we do, what the MAPA project is and the construction of marine parks in the Adriatic Sea, and what we need to do as part of this project. There are also some photos of us while working. These are the three steps: design, monitor and tell. In the first step — design — we focused on creating social media, as I've already explained. In the second step — monitor — there are all our monitoring phases: the outing with the simulators at the Tiberio, the visit to the municipality for the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the municipalities at the end of January, the meeting at the University of Campobasso laboratories, the Plastic Free conference held at the end of February, the visit to the mouth of the Trigno river, and finally the interview with Mayor Simona Contucci and the interview with Mr. Chiappini, held yesterday afternoon. The third step — tell — is still empty because we'll start developing it shortly: step two ends mid-month and then we'll begin telling everything we've done, including today's meeting. There is then a section dedicated to collected photos. The last page is dedicated to social media: we are present on YouTube, TikTok, X — the old Twitter — Instagram and Facebook. If you're interested, there is also a poster outside with a QR code that will direct you straight to our page.

[Applause, thanks]

As representatives of ARPA Molise, we wanted to say that we're sorry the visit to our technical laboratories fell through. We could try to reschedule it. It depends on them, also because it would have been nice to actually understand and see the role of water and how

ARPA fits into the project with its technical-scientific support: in analyses, in environmental monitoring. ARPA has a role of technical support for the environment, in addition to an administrative coordination function. We hope to be able to reschedule it. Unfortunately, our management is currently vacant; we are waiting for a new interim director to be appointed. As soon as one arrives, we'll be able to make the request and proceed. We're sorry, because among all the photos, the ones from our laboratories are the only ones missing. We hope they will be there.
Alright. Shall we start with the first question? The questions will be asked in English and then we'll translate them into Italian. Will you do the first one?
[Organisational exchange among students about who asks the question and in which language to reply]

The question is: what is the role of ARPA Molise within the MAPA project, and what does the project aim to achieve?

Dr. Basile: First of all, regarding the MAPA project, ARPA provides two types of support: administrative and technical. The administrative support acts as a link between the technical side and the regulatory side. I handle the administrative part, Alessandro handles the technical part, and together we collaborate to provide support on environmental monitoring, analysis, data processing and collection, in order to draft a report that allows us to understand the current state of the area. It is important as an institution, because ARPA is specifically dedicated to environmental protection and environmental monitoring. Alessandro can then go into the details of the technical side.

Alessandro: Let's say that the role of ARPA, at least in the part that most concerns the institution, is to create a synergy with other bodies that have responsibilities in the territory. The objective is to develop a shared mindset so that the body responsible for environmental protection can bring to light the critical issues of the area — issues that, as you've seen for yourselves, not all institutions are well acquainted with. Hence the need to bring together a range of institutions capable of receiving the message the project wants to convey, namely to increase the level of protection of the area, in the awareness that the territory is now partly compromised at an environmental level, due to all the activities you've already seen, which must be managed in a way that still guarantees some form of protection. You have come to realise that, at an environmental level, despite the critical issues upstream, the entire coastal area — and in particular the Molise stretch of the coastline — is still the most intact, and therefore the one with the greatest capacity to receive a better form of protection. There is also certainly a historic asset that you know: the most important tratturiero that runs through Molise from Puglia to Abruzzo. There are also operational proposals that the region has repeatedly tried to put in place, to create structures that could have encroached on that territory. Our objective is therefore to obtain the maximum level of protection both for existing activities and to prevent any future damage to the area. This was our main objective, which Alessandro will develop further in the section on operational proposals, also because he lives in that area and frequents it.

[Participant's remark]: The only thing I had already pointed out is that if, at the end of the project, no continuity is found, that is a problem. The project must not simply end and that's it: that was the concern — that after the monitoring phase, nothing further would follow.

Alessandro: We've posed that concern ourselves as well. The moment of involving all institutions within the project — as you also saw at the January event — is difficult: it's hard even just to get them together around a table. And when you manage it, you still run up against completely different needs. ARPA, quite rightly, tries to make clear what the reality of the facts is and what the tools are for improving the current situation, in order to reach the ultimate goal of protecting the area of the Trigno river mouth. At the end of the project, we won't have many tools to keep together all those institutions that absolutely must work together: the region, the municipalities and, even more so, the economic stakeholders who live in the area and who sometimes have interests that are at odds with those of environmental protection. Above all, you young people must continue to make yourselves heard, to be the advocates of attention towards that environment. Only in this way can one engage with institutions so that this doesn't remain just a memory: it's better to start, but then you have to keep coming back, keep raising awareness. You are the future — the future that can safeguard that environment. That said, we don't want to put everything on your shoulders: we will nonetheless try, as I mentioned the other time, to go a little beyond the objectives of the project, to look further ahead so as not to lose this opportunity. Our goal will certainly be to continue, after the project, to raise awareness with the Molise Region and the university, so that together with us they can do the most important part: understand what the environmental emergencies are, the critical issues and the vulnerabilities that, if not protected, would be lost permanently. We will definitely take a further step in this direction; involving schools will also be important.
[Remark by Alessandro, technical contact]: May I add something? The project ends in July, but this doesn't mean that by July everything that was done before gets wiped out. There is an obligation for the concrete results of the project to persist for the five years following its conclusion. So, even though the project lasts 30 to 36 months — two and a half years, which can extend to three — there is a mandatory requirement that those results be tangible for at least five subsequent years. Otherwise it would make no sense for the European Union to fund something that only lasts two years: it would truly be an end in itself. So, on a timeline basis, we're talking about a minimum of seven years in total, and the aim is for this to be merely a spark, an impulse — as they said — for local administrations, which are the primary parties responsible for managing the area. I wanted to emphasise this: it doesn't last two years, it lasts at least seven, and the hope is that it will be only the beginning of a long cultural journey.

[Participant's question]: That presupposes coordination among the various municipalities, districts and the region. Do you think that's achievable?

Alessandro: Yes, truly. At the last — or rather, the second-to-last — meeting we already reached some kind of agreement, with both the university and the municipalities. The only institution still giving us some doubt is the Molise Region, which is the main institution that must then put forward the protection proposal. But if there are many other institutions pushing in that direction, I believe a path can be set in motion, also because the regulations establish that marine protection is an obligation the region must fulfil — otherwise infringement proceedings are initiated. So it will have to be done one way or another. We are also trying to understand whether, at the level of the Abruzzo Region, an extension towards the Trigno river mouth could be possible, given that they have already done something similar for the Punta Aderci area. We are therefore trying to contact the various institutions

and understand whether it could be functionally feasible. So there is a genuine will to continue, beyond the project and beyond the five mandatory years of sustainability. There is a real institutional will to carry this forward, and after all it falls within your area of competence. The foundations are there, the will is there. If we all remain sensitive to the issue — young and not so young alike — perhaps we can maintain high attention and achieve some results beyond those already significant ones of the project.

[Remark]: By the way, speaking of what we heard yesterday: Mr. Chiappini was pointing out an important problem, that of transport. Many citizens — I'm talking about Montenero, because I live there — don't frequent that area much and are not sensitised towards it precisely because of the lack of services: they can't even get there, so they're not encouraged by the infrastructure to go. It's a problem both for residents and for those coming from outside.

[Question]: Which area exactly are you talking about?

[Answer]: The coastal area, near the Hotel Strand, near the Rosso Verde campsite. The lack of transport is evident: without a car there are no adequate means of getting there. Perhaps this should also be worked on. The situation is fairly complex: there aren't only environmental protection issues, there are also transport issues. We talked about it with the mayor as well: our interview with her came after the one with Dr. Chiappini the day before, and if it had been the other way around we would have had the opportunity to look into that point more thoroughly. Yesterday it clearly emerged as a fundamental problem: the residents of Montenero are not very attached to that part of the territory.

Sara: I can confirm that. I also live in Montenero and I'm one of those who doesn't frequent that area. The main problem is infrastructure, because it's not a developed area. Very few people from Montenero go there, also due to the lack of job opportunities: some young people do go to those areas to work, but there isn't much on offer. The more developed infrastructure is in San Salvo and Petacciato, which are practically right next door, so people go there instead. I'm the first to do so: San Salvo is very close to Montenero, and Montenero Marina ends up being somewhat absorbed by San Salvo and Vasto. This shortcoming is fairly widespread across the entire Molise coast, which in terms of what it offers is not very competitive. If you recall, back in January in Termoli we put forward a proposal for a sea-fishing tourism course — a form of activity certainly more sustainable than many others — which could have a chance of being realised in a small area like that of Montenero di Bisaccia, which has a small but sustainable tourist port. Also, when speaking with one of the people in charge during the July meeting, he told us that the port has a somewhat low sustainability: without a large user base, it risks being closed in the future. So another unresolved issue remains: the risk that no driving force can be created for other activities. In that area, for example, the tratturiero between Foggia and the interior passes through — a stretch that no longer has defined boundaries or any form of protection. There was even an active proposal for a Chinese fund to build mega-structures in the area. Channelling an idea of maritime protection can therefore also discourage those proposals that the region itself had tried to push in that area. Our mindset, as ARPA, leans toward protecting the territory while trying to balance it with electoral interests.

[Remark by a student]: I'll recount a bit of what we saw when we went there. Those of us from Montenero already knew, but with us came people who aren't from Montenero, and they saw with their own eyes the rubbish: there's literally everything there. It's an area that could be enhanced from a tourism perspective. Near the Trigno river mouth there are beautiful spots, but some of them we couldn't reach on foot. In other areas we found household appliances, every type of waste imaginable.
Dr. Basile: You could file reports with us: we will intervene. If you have photos as well, you can send them to ARPA and we'll initiate the relevant procedures. We have them on our phones too. A suggestion: it's right that those who are responsible should know what is happening — they know and have fought over the years to change the situation. But now, with the project as well, there's the possibility of doing more. We've already collected data on various types of plastic. Years ago, something similar had been done with the primary schools of Montenero, but the associations had a low level of involvement, and in any case not specifically in that area. Some of the waste is washed up on shore; some is the result of abandonment by residents, who don't always take care of the territory. Sometimes you even find lorry tyres left behind. There is also a cultural problem related to separate waste collection: it has been introduced in the area, but it isn't always received with the right mindset. Out of habit or laziness, it is sometimes simpler to put everything in the general waste bin. Municipalities make collection centres available which, if called, have a duty to collect waste directly from homes, or there are recycling stations. It's a combination of factors. The municipality is certainly sensitive to the issue, but taking care of one's own territory is one of the objectives every administration must have, and that also means dedicating a share of — increasingly reduced — resources to cleaning the beaches. We at ARPA always carry out monitoring. If you have the inclination or the possibility to take photos and send them to ARPA, we can then do the same awareness-raising with the municipalities. Participating in demonstration events — such as Plastic Free — can also be useful for raising awareness and making known an area that is, in fact, still free from concrete. That alone already makes it a wonderful place. It's many kilometres of coastline that, if protected, would benefit everyone.

[Question from a student, first read in Italian]: The three areas of the project have very different environmental characteristics. Can you explain what makes them so special at a European level, what priority habitats are present in each, and what specific ecological threats does each area face?

Alessandro: I explained, in summary, that the three areas are very different from one another, but that there are two reasons why they were brought together. The first is of a project-design nature: the partners were identified first, and then the project framework was defined, which in this case falls within the environmental sphere — monitoring certain areas and promoting the creation of marine parks in the Adriatic, with the main objective of increasing the level of protection, conservation and awareness. The second reason is of a European Community nature: these are areas that fall under the attention of the European Union, because some are parks, some are unspoilt islands, and the Trigno river mouth area is a SAC site. The fact that these areas receive specific attention from the EU — even if marginal — makes them different, while at the same time sharing enough common ground to allow this project to come into being.

[Next question, read by Sofia]: When the project was approved and launched in February 2024, what were the main results that ARPA expected to achieve by its conclusion? If you were to indicate concrete objectives that ARPA set itself within MAPA, what would they be?

Alessandro: As I mentioned earlier, the main objective — or rather, the main objectives — are: to create relationships between institutions and to lay the groundwork for achieving the ultimate goal of protecting the area. One thing that directly concerns us is placing greater attention on the sources of pressure present in the area — we've talked about all of this: the wastewater treatment plant in the industrial area, all the sources of pollution coming from industrial and agricultural activities upstream. Increasing sensitivity to these issues also helps us reduce the level of pollution and thus carry forward our mission as an institution. The third objective is certainly to initiate a genuine conservation activity that we will try to carry on into the future. Someone, during the first meeting in which we carried out dives, raised a question: comparing the Conero area and the Šilba area with the Trigno river mouth, the first two would seem better suited to becoming protected areas. Why did you choose this one in particular? The area was chosen because it still shows evident levels of naturalness, as demonstrated by the dives carried out along the various transects, which give us a sense of a still fairly intact environment. Despite the pollution upstream, the area remains in relatively good condition, there are still species worth protecting, and it therefore has a valid conservation value. The last objective — little understood by the economic activities in the area — is that creating a protected zone actually benefits the fishermen as well. A replenishment zone not too far from the coast — they were talking about a maximum of 300 metres — would be a benefit for them, because beyond 300 metres they carry out their fishing activity. This area could therefore be a concrete aid for fish restocking and for increasing the earning potential from fishing.

[Next question]: As of March 2026, with approximately five months still remaining until the end of the project, which objectives have already been achieved satisfactorily and which ones are still to be completed? Are there objectives that have exceeded expectations and others that have fallen behind schedule?

Alessandro: Among the objectives already achieved there is certainly that of raising awareness about the area — by "people" I mean stakeholders, operators, students, schools, administrations such as ARPA, the region, the mayors. However, this can also be mentioned among the objectives still in progress, because for the moment only a small step has been taken, and many more can be taken. I consider it nonetheless an achieved result: identifying the area not only as the zone of the wastewater treatment plant and pollution, but as an area with significant environmental value worthy of protection. Much like what you yourselves have done with this project, trying to highlight both the critical issues and the potential of the area. Certainly the research activities — which before the MAPA project had not been carried out, or at least not in a thorough manner — have revealed an environmental, landscape and naturalistic value that it has been important to bring to light, even if more can still be done. We can therefore include it both among the achieved results and among those still in progress: it is important that it happened, but it can be done in a much more significant way.

[Next question, read in Italian]: What have been the main problems that ARPA has encountered in the day-to-day management of the project, both on the technical-scientific

side and on the administrative and organisational side? Have there been any difficulties in coordinating with the other Italian and Croatian partners?

Alessandro: Let's say there haven't been any real problems as such. There are simply some difficulties linked to the fact that each of us also carries out other activities, so the portion of time dedicated to the project is what it is. We hope it's enough, but above all we count on having, after the project, the opportunity to continue working towards the objectives we've set ourselves. As for the partners: with the Croatian partner there is a good synergy, even though there are difficulties related to language — fortunately the students help us with English. They are nonetheless very proactive. With the University of Marche and the Conero Park we have tried to establish synergies also for future projects. They've already proposed another project to us, which we hope will come to fruition, once again on the monitoring and protection of marine biodiversity in the Adriatic, along the coastline between Marche and Molise. There are also other Interreg projects being carried forward by the University of Marche, such as one called Brig — spelled in a particular way — which has the same underlying theme. One of the functions of cooperation is also to facilitate dialogue between projects. To answer the question more precisely: there are difficulties, yes, because everyone comes from different contexts. The Conero Park area, although it is a land-based park, is larger and has a more structured reality — fishing and sea-fishing tourism, for example, are much more developed there. For us, operating in an area of the Molise coast somewhat further removed from these dynamics, it is certainly more complicated to organise certain activities or to meet project objectives within the set timeframes. But that is also one of the objectives of cooperation: to take ideas that work elsewhere and bring them here, and at the same time to receive help in return. In terms of the partnership, for example, the University and the Conero Park asked us for support on some documents in which we were further ahead. We, in turn, on the research activities benefited from the work of Professor Cerrano from the University of Marche, who carried out dives here at the Trigno river mouth together with our experts and divers, building on the groundwork we had already prepared.

[Question: which of the organised meetings worked best or surprised you most in terms of the engagement of operators, tourists and citizens?]

Alessandro: The meeting that struck us most was the one in Ancona, where we witnessed a very active participation from all stakeholders. Each of them brought their own interests in a constructive way, contributing to the collective development of a form of protocol respected from multiple points of view. The community participated with genuine interest: people were informing themselves, understanding what was happening and putting forward their own motivations. This is something that took us much longer to achieve here. The reality is also different: in Ancona, people were talking about a thriving economy, linked to a fish product that provided livelihoods for many economic realities. There is also a deep-rooted culture, that of mussel harvesting, both at the level of companies that do it professionally and as a widespread habit among citizens. Every person felt the need to understand whether the protection measures could reduce their fishing opportunities, and hence a very strong and incisive participation. The most critical thing — which many outside the sector fail to understand — is that a protected area does not diminish development opportunities: it is quite the opposite. Studies have shown that protected areas have brought more benefits than limitations, balancing the needs of conservation on one side and the economy on the other.

[Intervention by Alessandro De Paola, school representative]: Good morning. I'm Alessandro De Paola and I'm here today to represent the school, also in my capacity as a member of the executive committee of an association that has decided to collaborate this year with our school as part of the Zero Waste project. I don't know if you're familiar with it: the president is Andrea Barsotti. It's an association whose aim is the reduction of pollution, in particular the consumption of plastic. Together with the Istituto Bernacchia, we have joined this project with the aim of physically measuring the amount of plastic consumed daily, in an attempt to reduce it as much as possible — obviously a 100% reduction won't be achievable. Sample classes will be chosen: each class will weigh, at the end of the week, the quantity of plastic produced. The objective is to reduce this amount by the month of May. There is also a kind of competition, both at a family and school level. In our school, distribution machines for drinks should be arriving shortly, designed for use with one's own cup — somewhat like what already happens in some schools in northern Europe — so as to eliminate the classic plastic cup. Another element of the project is to raise awareness among students, teaching staff and support staff about the use of water bottles, avoiding plastic bottles. In agreement with Professor Sottile and the contacts of the association and the school — Professors Bracone and Polavita — we've been thinking about a collaboration between the two projects. Since they deal with environmental issues related to pollution, a link between the two activities could be created. Today the other school representative on the executive — Di Fazio — is not present, for academic reasons, but I'm speaking on his behalf as well. A collaboration could therefore be considered, given that both activities take place within the same school and address the same issues.

[Question]: Do you already have any concrete ideas for the collaboration?

Alessandro De Paola: Not at the moment, a dialogue would need to be built to identify the points of contact. We also work on the waste registry: everything that concerns the world of waste — informing, training, collecting data, analysing it, providing percentages. We could in some way act as a bridge between users and transporters or managers, to help people understand where this waste ends up and give meaning to this collection. Many people think that the collection process doesn't work out, whereas if plastic is correctly collected, it really is recycled and transformed into a new product. ARPA could help make people understand the importance of reducing plastic and collecting it in the correct way to give it a new life. We could act as an intermediary between them and the managers we are in contact with.
[Various remarks]: Regarding the two projects, it will be necessary to understand whether there are useful elements to share before the conclusion of the MAPA project. This collaboration is very recent, it came about just a short time ago. The association also organises waste collection days. A plan is being considered for one around May, in collaboration with the other school. On that occasion, the press could also be involved to bring the issue to the public's attention at a regional level and to introduce the objectives of the MAPA project, thus finding a fixed point from which to continue after its institutional conclusion in July. We've set ourselves a second appointment in the month of May. With the hope expressed by both head teachers, the idea was to be able to continue the following year and in the summer months, with activities involving the students outside school as well. The month of May is the ideal period: weather problems are avoided, it comes before the summer tourist season, and good weather facilitates outdoor activities. Some elements of

analysis on the quality of the water reaching the sea from the river could also be added, in relation to the various critical issues present in the area.
Dr. Basile: That would be a good initiative. Send us a formal involvement request, so we can make things official. We're waiting for the new director, but once the bureaucratic issues are sorted out we could proceed. Congratulations on this combination between your project and this other initiative. I also wanted to remind you that from April to October the European Days of the Sea are held: these activities could easily fit into that context. The picture broadens even further, and it creates a system. We could also involve the institutional partners who have supported us in this phase of the project — the municipalities, the region, the university — and find a meeting point there. The activities shouldn't be limited to beach cleaning: the MAPA project could be presented, the Zero Waste proposals, the water analysis. The protection of the sea, after all, doesn't start from the beach: it comes from everything that the sea receives from the rivers. It also comes to mind that you young people, as protagonists, are the most effective channel for conveying the message of protection: reaching older people is much more difficult. Being protagonists yourselves, you have an audience of young people who can be engaged and deliver concrete results.
One more thing: do you know about the jellyfish monitoring project? We, as GAL, are following a project — I think it's called Jenny Bez — that will be starting shortly. It involves monitoring jellyfish with real-time messages informing bathers about sea conditions. Then there is also a local project, which someone had already told us about: they were at a meeting in Ancona last week and they basically carry out monitoring and cleaning of the seabed using robots and drones. They've also created an app. The whole thing is developing rapidly. I think your project can find a wide network of situations to connect with: the Days of the Sea, the jellyfish project, the underwater robots. But who acts as the collector between all these initiatives? Someone would need to bring them all together. Conveying the messages is the most important thing.

Alessandro: We have a major problem in terms of communicating data. The data we produce often stays in the technical archives, and we struggle to bring it out into the open, to make people understand both what we do and the environmental emergencies on the territory. This creates a low level of awareness among citizens: the less they know about the environmental reality, the less they worry about it and the less they act on a personal level. It's a problem of awareness. Take renewable energy, for example: nobody really knows that there is strong political pressure to build certain installations on the territory, and nobody realises the future damage that could result. From a certain point of view it seems like a positive thing — clean energy — but one has to ask whether we are capable of converting that energy and feeding it into the grid. And then there is all the disruption this brings to activities on the territory and to environmental protection. If there were greater awareness, more considered choices could be made, balancing different types of energy — including nuclear — and putting everything on the table. One needs a thorough understanding of the issues to be able to step into certain mechanisms of economic power; otherwise territories are left at the mercy of powerful private interests that do not have environmental protection as their objective.

[Final remark]: Fundamentally, we need to act in advance, so as to be proactive. We can push the region in this direction. I was also reflecting on what you are doing: an attention to environmental issues on the part of young people that, I have to say, I don't see much of in Campobasso. Congratulations to all of you. In Termoli there is more attention, whereas in

Campobasso it doesn't seem to me that much work is being done on this. I have a 14-year-old son who goes to a scientific high school, but the environmental topic is almost never touched upon. These are projects that can involve all schools, regardless of their specialism. Seizing these projects gives students the opportunity to go beyond what they do on a daily basis: to collaborate with institutions, to get to know various contexts and various points of view. It's an excellent opportunity that not everyone takes up, but I appreciate it greatly. I've told you where we'll be going tomorrow — it was the students who pushed for it. It was some of the students who guided me; I simply embraced their interests.
Dr. Basile: This is truly praiseworthy: it means that independently of the project, a genuine curiosity has been sparked, one that comes from within. Very beautiful. Well done.

[Closing]: Do you have another class? Do you need to go? We'll manage until one o'clock. Very well. If there are any other questions we've prepared, we can continue. Would you like to read it now?

[Question]: From the project's public data, it emerges that ARPA Molise was allocated a budget of approximately 280,300 euros, equal to 20.3% of the total of 1,402,920 euros. Considering the breadth of environmental monitoring activities required — across an area as vast and scientifically complex as the Trigno river mouth — do you think these resources have been sufficient to effectively carry out the planned work? Are there activities that would have required greater investment?

Alessandro: I can answer this, and then I'll add something about the structure of the budget at a project level. Let's do this one in Italian. 20% for five partners means that in the end the budgets were divided more or less equally. There is no fixed mathematical formula: the allocation also depends on the activities to be carried out. It should be noted that the project's lead partner — the Italian one — also has the task of coordination, and therefore has a slightly larger budget compared to, for example, the Croatian partner. To answer more precisely: I think the budget has been adequate. Personally I thought that the research activities, such as the dives, might have a higher cost; instead, three diving campaigns were carried out at contained costs. This was a positive aspect, but it also made me reflect: it could have been done even earlier, because the amounts involved, in my opinion, are modest for a region or a municipality — let alone for our organisation. The research and monitoring activities could therefore have been broader: an area as large as the Trigno river mouth would require much more. That said, I believe that within our means, important activities were carried out with a proportionate budget. Within the budget there are many line items: personnel costs charged to the project, equipment — cameras for monitoring can cost thousands of euros, platforms in other projects reach 100,000 euros — travel and accommodation costs for meetings, costs for communication campaigns such as leaflets, roll-up banners, event organisation. So there are many line items. In conclusion: the 20% for five partners was an adequate share for what we have done. More could have been invested in research, but as I said, it is only a small step towards something that will then need to be done at a local level in a much more incisive way.