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## INTERVIEW CONTUCCI SIMONA - 4/03/2026

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That of the Interreg is a very nice initiative. Interregs are exchanges of good practises - and you know it better than me - they are very important because they involve universities, involve local authorities, involve higher authorities, in this case the ARPA, and they put us in contact with foreign realities, precisely for the exchange of good practises.

In our case, ARPA was very good at identifying the mouth of the Trigno, because it is a very beautiful site, with great potential, but highly vulnerable from an environmental point of view. I think you saw it yesterday: unfortunately it is a site where there are many landfills and a serious abandonment. Moreover, there is also a patrimonial competence there, so it is also complicated for us to reclaim. Until a few years ago, when I was the councillor for the environment — several years ago — there was a whole band that skirted the mouth that had been seized. There, unfortunately, criminal episodes also occurred. It is a partly isolated area, sometimes abandoned, and is also strongly anthropized. But this must not be a limit to the protection of that area, on the contrary. Think for example of the Punta Aderci Reserve: there is the Bivouac beach behind, yet it is a nature reserve. Abruzzo did it, so you can work there too.

Now I want to tell you another thing that I care a lot about, because it was a great personal battle of mine. The territory of Montenero borders Padula, which discharges - and those who know this thing know that it is working together with us - in an industrial purifier of ARAP Abruzzo. Precisely for this commission, that area is a middle ground, as they say, close to a strong osmosis with Abruzzo, which used to be Abruzzo territory. Abruzzo has implanted a purifier there for the discharge of the channelled sewage of Vasto Marina, San Salvo Marina and Montenero of Bisaccia Marina, and for the discharge of industrial wastewater from the industrial area of San Salvo. After that, in later times, the transport of waste was also authorised on rubber.

This has caused, over the years, a whole series of problems: a purifier from the 80s, which has undergone few improvements, which works a lot, which collects waste from different regions of Italy, creates a very serious problem of bad smell. And discharge in the Trigno, because the treatment plants have to discharge the purified water, but then they discharge in the Trigno and then at sea.

We are fighting an important battle. For two years now, I have managed, with a large operation in which the Molise Region - which is the one that has the authority - has given me a big hand to block road transport in the summer. This is the second year that we do this, and when the road transport is blocked, the smell is not felt. In recent months, I must say, even ARAP has realised that they had to take action, because the conditions were no longer there, and now they have started a series of procedures to cover their tanks, which are open. Consider that when I was the councillor for the environment, they had come to have a

discharge channel that skirted the road - and that is not our road - that entered the open-air purifier. We managed to get him covered at the beginning of our Counselling, which seemed like something from another world. Even from Asia to Asia, perhaps, there are these situations.

So, let's say, the biggest wins were: this cover, the road transport block, the tank cover. And let's see how it goes, because unfortunately winter continues to stink. This is to tell you that the identification of that site will also help us keep this purification plant under control. I'm not saying it shouldn't be there, because it's clear that the affluents need to be purified - indeed, it's right that there should be - but it can't compromise the development of a territory.

I don't know if you know the territory of the Montenero marina: there is a very nice marina, still developing. We cannot reduce to keeping these conditions of the territory, which will draw its wealth also and above all from the navy, still in the process of development.

I wanted to tell you this, which probably no one has told you, but it is an important key to reading. This is why it made me rejoice when ARPA told us that it had identified the mouth of the Trigno as an area potentially responsible for protection and therefore a hypothetical - because we are still talking about hypotheses, but we hope to work in this direction - marine park. You know that marine protected areas, to become such, need a very important and very heavy administrative and bureaucratic path. But if you ever do it, if you ever get there... I, when I was the councillor for the environment, I fought huge battles, but I turned on myself because I couldn't figure out what the switch was. When we had the intuition - and I must say that the ARPA, Region bodies helped us a lot - we understood and asked for the closure of transport, and that proved us right.

Also in this case, let's aim for a goal and let's all work together, because it's true that it's Montenero's territory, but we're Molise, it's everyone's, and above all it's everyone's sea.

However, the transport blockade was only summer, but it was also unblocked on some winter days, because they are authorised - they have an authorisation called AIA - which obviously allows them to operate. We can intervene, but consider that in the first year they made two appeals with a suspensive request to immediately block that measure of the Region. And they made an appeal to us in which they ask us, it seems to me, 2 million euros in compensation, because they say that we have created economic damage for them with this choice of ours. And this year they made the appeal again.

It is clear that this is an important initiative of the Region. We as a municipality are interested, because I proposed it as mayor, the prohibition of road transport. But these are not things that are done like this: there was a path. The Municipality of Montenero was able to give an assignment to an external consultant thanks to the ASReM, which during some inspections gave us the release to provide us with a technician who could support us. Unfortunately, the public administration is a complex machine, and it is also complex because it must protect everyone. Paradoxically, it must also protect ARAP. So, for the moment, we have won our battle for the summer, but it is clear that this is an authorised purifier — authorised to discharge about 100 waste codes, that is, 100 types of waste that can enter.

And then I'll tell you one more thing. To come to your side, I also asked, during the technical tables, to be able to do the review of the AIA, which is their authorisation, the one that was given to them to be able to work. The review means tightening the possibility, on the part of the conferrers, to confer. But if you don't follow the administrative procedures, it's clear that you're going wrong. Consider that during a technical table - I'll tell you - the General Manager of ARAP Abruzzo said in front of 20 people: "I can't lose millions of euros because there's a pain in the ass." They gave me a ruthless war regarding this initiative. But we don't deserve to have a territory in those conditions. I won't tell you the reports at night: I had to run, it was a continuous, because it actually stinks there. ARPA was very good, because now it has inserted a control unit - it's called O-BOT - and if you want, maybe you'll go back there and you can smell if that smell arrives: it's a very characteristic smell, different from the sewer smell, you notice it immediately when it's from the purifier. They put switchboards connected to a Telegram channel, so that when citizens hear it they can report it. And it is also connected to a nasometer, in order to cross the information and verify the reliability of those who make the report. And then there are a whole other series of controls that ARPA does on the waters and wells. For the moment it is not yet fully operational — this is a new thing that I think they have not told you.

So there is a need to move more local authorities to work together: at the moment there are the Region, the ARPA, the ASReM as the health authority, the Forestry — which is also following the dynamics, but is not invited to the tables — and the Province, because the Province also has competences in environmental matters.

And from what I was saying, going back to the project, for us it's an extra quid. So much so that I also told the ARPA management about these Interregs, explaining that raising the bar of coastal protection. I have a list of a very famous ornithologist, Nicola Norante, I believe that at the mouth there are about seventy species of birds, maybe even more, even rare. It could really be a very attractive area, despite the bridges and structures underneath. But strongly requalified, it can become one. It's not a limit, on the contrary: when I was told "but that area doesn't work", I replied that you can work.

How could we intervene? Blocking road transport creates damage to the economy for environmental service companies, but we intervene by doing work to improve the conditions of a purifier that is from the 80s and that over the years has had little or no improvement. A revamping is required. The problem is which: an Abruzzo treatment plant in a Molise territory, which only Molise complains about, not the people of Abruzzo. It is clear that it is a more complicated battle. But the moment a mayor points his feet, doesn't give up and goes ahead, it's a sign.

Is your municipality involved alone in this type of problem, or is there a synergy with the other municipalities, with San Salvo? Because these canals pass through San Salvo, so we also go along a part of San Salvo Marina before entering — not really the marina, a part just behind. Those who live in that area clearly feel it, it is not a very extensive area. However, I had my colleagues involved, and it is clear that the territory is ours and we must protect it, even if the relations are excellent. All in all, they realised that there was a problem, because when I arrived they told me that the problem was not them - as if they were sure they were clean. I remember that when the old guard told us to report, no one did it. The waste issue is complicated, but it's also very impactful: you have to be good.

I remember the first closure to road transport that we made: I had the rebellion of several conferors, even those who do the purge cars. They said the mayor had blocked them, but the others have other places to go. It is clear that our purifier, the one on our territory, practises lower prices, also because it is closer. Transport costs are reduced. But you have to equip yourself: if you want to confer, you equip yourself, make the improvements, invest.

This purifier belongs to a private company — it is as if it were an armoured arm of the Abruzzo Region. ARAP deals with the productive activities of Abruzzo: it manages all the industrial areas, manages the services of the industrial areas. Yes, it is an entity that also has political appointments and in which people sometimes try to make their own interest. I say that politics is people's lives. They can say a lot of things to me: they can tell me that I'm unpleasant, maybe even stupid - but not dishonest. When you do political activity you have to have your hands free, even to say no, because no one has come to me to put pressure. I caught the bad words, but I didn't have the pressures because I knew it would be useless, indeed counterproductive. I must recognise this: everyone fought their battle with the utmost respect, even if there were clashes.

Now there is a new director, because ARAP becomes ARAP Services. Our purifier is managed by ARAP Servizi, which also does purification activities in the APPs — so much so that we, down by the sea, have a drinking water treatment managed by ARAP Servizi. And so there is this link: ARAP that becomes ARAP Services for the management of the purifier. They should be concerned with improving, they should invest to reduce the negative impact. They absolutely have to do it, also because right now they can't do otherwise. Especially because when I formally asked for the review of the AIA - which means reviewing the entry codes - it is clear that if you go in this direction, either you equip yourself and show me that the smell is no longer there, or you are working for a relocation of road transport, since they have, it seems to me, five purifiers. Or for a real relocation of the purifier, but you know better than me that in Termoli it takes almost centuries for these things. Yes, it is an important movement to relocate structures of that type.

So you asked the company for a certification? No, I can't ask anything from the companies that confer. I have asked the Region to re-examine their AIA, which is their authorisation. I don't have the competence to apply to companies. If the company wants to enter the purifier, it must certify — the tankers must have the type of connection with the waste that can be delivered to the purifier, and they must still do the analyses, there are procedures and protection systems. However, in the review of the AIA — this is what I asked the Region — it is estimated whether perhaps these codes are too many. It's not really that simple, but to simplify: let's try to tighten. And to limit. They also went on self-limitation: this summer we did a test, they worked three days. Then, especially in summer, with the tanks uncovered... of course. Forty years, those tanks.

Yes, I put myself in the shoes of the residents in that area. I think there are many: if you have an estimate of how many people are there in the summer... There are families, but if you notice - maybe go there - my aunt lives nearby, there is a house by the sea, she always comes, especially during peak periods. But let's say that when the problem is very big, even those who come from neighbouring countries feel it. Unfortunately, there are also those who live only from that enterprise, maybe those who only have a service company - almost like a

Pasquale - and there are others: in Foggia there are, in Caserta there are some. Those who stay there most of the time, we don't know why, have very competitive prices. I don't want to say it, but it's competitive because it can practice these prices as it doesn't do improvement activities. It's clear: if you make improvements, you have to charge them on the cost of the service. And then there is also the issue of water, because obviously in some situations they have exceeded the limits — but these things happen, unfortunately, and they are delicate situations that must be held in high regard.

Environmental matter cannot be declined, it must be held in high consideration. That's why I'm glad you're passionate about this kind of project that, I repeat, Interreg brings a lot, it's not just talk. I have seen initiatives for ecotourism, because in fact we are not formal partners — Montenero has made a sort of adhesion.

### **QUESTION FROM LANGIANO DALILA**

In January 2026 you signed an important agreement in Termoli, the memorandum of understanding. We would like to understand what exactly the Municipality has promised with that signature and above all with what money you plan to keep these promises.

So, it must be said in the first place that the Municipality of Montenero di Bisaccia is not a partner of Interreg, but is a support subject. We entered thanks to this memorandum of understanding, and we thank ARPA for giving us the opportunity, choosing the mouth of Trigno as the site within which our municipality is located. Money, funding, is already defined: Interreg's budget has already been defined for activities. It is therefore more of a protocol linked to the exchange of good practises. We will give all the necessary support for the start and definition of this project, making ourselves available as an administration. From an economic point of view, there are no direct spending commitments, but we are ready to intercept resources as an entity. At the moment, however, there is no talk of economic commitment.

### **QUESTION FROM PAGLIA FRANCESCA**

We talked to people from Montenero and we realised that even young people know almost nothing about this protected area. Who is involved in the project has done anything to inform citizens?

So, yes. Before you - and this must be a commitment that I make - there was a project in the middle schools of Montenero to revitalise and restore dignity to the area of the mouth of the Trigno. It's very nice, I have to bring it to you — I'll get it back through you and I'll show it to you. In addition to that, with environmental associations, we made many initiatives down to the mouth, and the same schools often went down to the mouth of the Trigno. We tried to communicate and make us understand the importance of biodiversity in that area. It is clear that in a changed society like ours the work is all the more difficult, but we must not give up. Initiatives, even several, have absolutely been made.

### **QUESTION FROM NARDO MATTIA**

At the end of the MAPA project, who do you think will actually take care of the mouth of the Trigno, to keep it intact and continue to value it?

So, here too, it needs to be clarified. The project will give the stura to start an activity that will then lead to the definition of these marine parks. It is good that we do not have any illusions, because the times will be long, as long is the bureaucracy and how long are the dictates of the public administration. Sometimes this could also represent a guarantee - I am told - but I assure you that very often it makes you stare, because you can't see something that begins and then ends.

The second problem is one that grips all the administrators: it is realised, but how is it managed? While before funds were allocated and then the administrations were left the hot potato of maintenance, very often in the current calls there are also sums for maintenance, maybe not for 10 years, but for the first years in which a project is set up. It is clear that to activate a marine protected area we need support, probably regional, probably national. These designs presuppose an upstream allocation of funds, as happens everywhere, and with those we certainly move forward. And having said that, sponsors can also be intercepted, for example to renew the signage.

We, for example, now have the PNRR cycle path in fire - which you know well, because the Municipality of Termoli is the leader - 23 million euros on the Trigno. I don't know if you've seen it, the work is starting. A wonderful bridge will be made. I wouldn't want to be in the shoes of those who will come in my place, because who has to keep him? A bridge like that needs maintenance — not now, but in 10 years. It is clear that the Municipality does not make it with its own resources, it must intercept higher funds. This is done, and so it will also be for the established marine protected area of the mouth of the Trigno. And let's hope it arrives as soon as possible.

THANKS.