

“The aerospace district has to keep growing”

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In order to explain the relationship that bounds the helicopters' giant to our territory, **Giuseppe Orsi**, the managing director of 'AugustaWestland', uses a tree's metaphor. “Our branches are all over the world and our roots are well-radicated in Lombardy,” he said while doing the honours, during the visit of the county councillor for the industry and the handicrafts, **Andrea Gibelli**. This is a clear way to say that the core of the company is not going to move from where it is now, despite the almost widespread presence in all continents. The plants in Vergiate have been opened this morning for the twentieth leg of the tour of the Northern League's politician through the Lombard companies, an initiative that was thought to meet the entrepreneurs and to know the needs of the different economic realities. In this case, the choice fell on one of the main protagonists of the Lombard aerospace district, a big company round which there are lots of other small concerns.

Growing also in the crisis time – The manager of the AugustaWestland explained, “The institutions' attention is essential in this moment even though our reality represents an exception. Many companies are still searching the answers to come out from an extremely difficult period.” In fact, despite the economic crisis, the society of the group 'Finmeccanica' has kept its performance stable. Orsi said, “In 2010, we recorded a 3.644 million turnover, besides a 413 million profit and a 5.982 outstanding orders.” According to the figures that were distributed this morning, the AugustaWestland's output is assigned for about the 70 per cent to the civilian market and for the 30 per cent to the military one, a proportion which works in the opposite way for what concerns the turnover, because of the greater income coming from the last one. The market of reference is the world market which absorbs the 91 per cent of the production while only the 9 per cent is destined to Italy.

The strategy of the partnership – Orsi explained, “There are different strategic factors that have allowed us to stand up to the crisis despite the market's changes and the international competition. In particular, we have decided to establish some partnerships in different countries at a local level, which enable us to enter the markets of all the world. We established technological and production alliances in exchange of the assignment of important parts of the market. Facing giants, such as China or India differently would be useless.”

The settlement with Libya – Orsi, in his report, touched on the relations that connect the company to Libya describing them as a “frozen” situation. AugustaWestland set some years ago a join venture with its Libyan partners: the settlements have led to supply 5 helicopters for the Red Cross and 10 for the cost guard.

Bring youth up in the company – “The average age in AgustaWestland is very low. During the last years we have employed 3500 young engineers. We believe that each one of them represents an investment for the entire company. They are the biggest richness that we have got, we have to offer incentives to make them stay and grow up. Even the current management, of which I am a member, has grown here learning from Caporaletti.”

New challenges for small companies – AgustaWestland plays a central role in the aerospace district of Lombardy “Here there are unique competences” explains Orsi “But the district has made just its first steps, it has still to grow. The model of small companies retreated into a single big reality can’t work any longer. It is necessary on the one hand to boost the aggregation of micro-realities, and on the other hand to make them independent. For this reason we are trying to share as more as possible our strategy with our suppliers. These ones have to be able export and to become in their turn suppliers for our competitors all over the world. We have to build the message that the production of this territory represents a glory, something of great quality for this field. The cluster has to maintain the ability to move inside the international scenes.”

The team’s recipe – “AgustaWestland and the aerospace district” commented the county councillor “ are an example of other realities in Lombardy that together created products recognizable on an international scale. These realities are an example that when people join they are successful and this way we can guard the very important international markets that, at times, were monopolies and supremacy of the economical international powers such as United States.” With the county councillor Gibelli there were present the regional councilor Giangiacomo Longoni and Cesare Bossetti.

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