

VareseNews

Study by Confcommercio: “There are too much shopping centres. No to IKEA.”

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✘ **Retailers have joined together against the invasion** of the area between Gallarate and Rho, **by shopping centres, including IKEA**, a new branch of which is about to be built between Cerro Maggiore and Rescaldina. And it is the new outlet of the Swedish giant that is seriously worrying the confederation of Italian commerce, Confcommercio, in Legnano, Rho, Magenta and Bollate, as well as the Italian retailers' association (ASCOM) branches in Busto Arsizio, Saronno, Varese and Gallarate. They have all joined forces and presented a study of the impact of large sales outlets on the area. The data is strong, and the impact on the environment, economy and employment is negative. In their study, the retailers explain that **“The announced 74,000 m² megastore** in Cerro Maggiore-Rescaldina will be built in an area that is already suffering a lot **because of the 13 shopping centres between Rho and Gallarate, that occupy an area of 255,000 m², in addition to the 46,000 m² of the shopping centre in Rescaldina**, which stands only a few hundred metres from where they're planning to build this megastore.”

The general mobilisation started today, Thursday 7 November, with a public meeting at the headquarters of the local branch of Unione Confcommercio in Legnano, and will continue with additional public meetings, **on 18 November, at the Confcommercio office in Busto Arsizio, on 21 November, at the Confcommercio office in Saronno, and on 28 November, at the Confcommercio office in Gallarate**. The objective is to sensitise all of the institutions in a vast area that includes the provinces of Milan and Varese, and to make them understand the devastating effect on the economy and on the area round the planned megastore, in Cerro Maggiore-Rescaldina.

The study presented highlighted the fact that the negative influence of this concentration of large sales outlets extends beyond the north-west area of the provinces of Milan and Varese, and involves also much of the provinces of Como and Novara, as far as Biella and Vercelli. “We're talking about 74,000 m² of selling space (52,000 m² of commercial gallery alone) taking up **nearly 280,000 m²**, reducing the green land and farmland in an area that is already heavily urbanised,” explained Paolo Ferrè, the President of the local branch of Unione Confcommercio, in Legnano.

According to Confcommercio, “the impact on the area would be unsustainable, and today, with the data from the analysis that was carried out with Confcommercio Lombardia, presented by our speakers, Claudio Scillieri and Francesco Mungo, we've explained why,” Ferrè continued.

The study, which was commissioned by Confcommercio Lombardia, also demonstrates **the considerable, negative effect on vehicle traffic and employment**. There is expected to be a heavy growth in vehicle traffic, with resulting pollution problems: **an extra 5000 vehicles on Saturday, and almost 3500 on Friday** (not to mention the heavy vehicles coming in and leaving, to restock the shopping centre). **Will this large, extra activity generate employment? No. In fact, the study estimates a loss of 244 jobs:** the new employees at the megastore will not make up for the employment losses due to closures in the existing distribution network, “without considering the probable worse conditions of the new employment contracts with respect to those who already have jobs. And, in any case, without considering that the entrepreneurs who lose their jobs are never counted, as all of the other workers are,” Ferrè concluded.

During the meeting today, at the local branch in Legnano, **Renato Borghi**, the vice President of Confcommercio Lombardia, also spoke. “We need to pay a great deal of attention,” he stressed. “We must safeguard the correct distribution balance, and what was decided in the 2012 programme (there is currently still the regional moratorium, ed.) certainly doesn’t help in this respect.”

Carlo Alberto Panigo, the President of the local branch of Unione Confcommercio, in Rho (and the person in charge of Confcommercio in Milan, Lodi, Monza and Brianza) added, “We continue to think that the bigger the shopping centre, the more it will attract customers. But now, there’s a sort of cannibalisation process going on, even between the big shopping centres, and the losers are our town centres, which increasingly become commercial deserts, and therefore, more difficult to live in.

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