

Zanonato faces the craftsmen but Swiss is greener

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A thousand entrepreneurs responded to the appeal of the **Confartigianato** and of the **Corriere della Sera** to take part in the **meeting with the Economic Development minister Flavio Zanonato in Malpensafiere**, the exhibition centre of Busto Arsizio. To do the honours the president of national Confartigianato **Giorgio Merletti**, with the economic journalist of the Corriere della Sera **Dario Di Vico**, also well-known among the entrepreneurs of the province of Varese.

At the centre of the stage there is the minister that, for better or for worse, represents the governmental figure closer to the entrepreneurs. **Subject of the event : “Switzerland is better?”**. The meeting, in effect, started from the convention organised some time ago by the municipality of Chiasso in the Canton Ticino, in which approximately 250 Italian entrepreneurs took part. Taxation at one-third of the Italian one, simpler bureaucracy, lower labour costs, quality services are at the base of this migratory phenomenon which – as the president Merletti said – has changed the crossing place of Gaggiolo in a sort of Lampedusa of entrepreneurs, a mirage of a better business life.

To the minister **Zanonato** the **hard task of explaining what Italy is doing to avoid the escape of its own entrepreneurs**, in front of an audience that was definitely not on his side. There were lots of statements of entrepreneurs who are not able any more to create business in Italy because they are blocked by slow bureaucracy, from taxes and from the credit freeze of the banks. **Davide Galli, president of the Confartigianato of the province of Varese, summarized well the drama**: “I see that in Switzerland the taxation is at 20% then I see that in Italy at best I pay double, but even triple. Also there is China, which have put the manufacturing enterprise at the centre making the production chains that have made the fortune of Italy,” Galli said. “Give us a hope on the bureaucracy, they said that we are the backbone of the country and then they stab us in the back. For the bureaucracy something can be done at zero-cost but we can not forget the problems of civil justice and the lack of training. On these subjects we want answers.”

Davide Romanó, foodstuffs entrepreneurs, is ready to go to Switzerland with his firm: “I will go to Vallese where the taxation is at 7% for people and 12% for companies, where I have subsidized bank rate. Why should I stay here? If I have to work 30 years in Italy at these conditions I prefer to go away. The help is necessary now, not in two or three years.” Round of applause from the

audience. Other entrepreneurs ask for more clarity on the safety issue in the enterprise “That, as it is now, requires only more expense without providing guarantees for workers but it is necessary also more flexibility in employment: if I take an apprentice I have a month to decide, it is not enough. If a person is not suitable for a job why should I keep him for three years?”

Claudio Senigallia of Casorate Sempione tells us his experience with the bureaucracy: “I manage an enterprise which realises timber-wood facilities. Since March of this year all additions of extra storeys are forbidden by the municipalities of the Malpensa airport foundation, as far as 15 km from the airport. The national civil aviation authority (ENAC) blocks us and blocks those that want to build, blocks all the production chain of those that build, because it has to evaluate the effect of this addition on the air routes. The problems are not the limits but the times to have an answer. To have a counsel you wait at least 180 days. This delay blocks investments of millions of Euro.” One after another follow the story until Zanonato speaks. The minister try to explain what the government has done, explain these financial measures that he define “the only one which hasn’t raise taxes and has tried to return something” but for the entrepreneurs these are only palliative treatments and there are many grumbles.

Dario Di Vico steps-in and tries to calm down people: “I think we should respect a person who can stand to hold forth in any talk shows but instead is here among us to try to give some answers” round of applause. The situation became quieter, **Zanonato takes note and some entrepreneurs start to talk about the issues of the gains reinvested, of the funding for the small enterprise and of the anticipation of the tax.** The minister steps-in again and promise to work at reduction of bureaucracy: “For bureaucracy we can make interventions at zero-cost to simplify the life of entrepreneurs,” he explains, “but I don’t want to tell stories about the reduction of taxes. Whoever says that 100 million of taxes can be cut from one year to another is telling you stories” Merletti concludes: “this crisis has scared a lot the entrepreneurs and making a law for the investments is not enough as it is not enough to invest money on guarantee fund without watching over the reason why the banks cash-in but don’t loan.” And he concludes, “we ask for more courage.” The meeting was positive but he didn’t face, in the end, the subject of the event: why Switzerland can effort to offer so tempting conditions to Italian entrepreneurs? And how can Italy approach these offers?

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redazione@varesenews.it