TWO AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN SIGNED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VENICE (MARGHERA) AND TIANJIN PORT FACILITIES AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS

Investments in infrastructure and technology for key ports along the XXIst Century Silk Road

Venice, July 10, 2016 – During the International Conference ‘Along the Silk Roads’, organized by the Foundation for Worldwide Cooperation, the Venice Port Authority and Nankai University (Center for the Silk Road Studies), two important ‘Memorandums of Understanding’ have been signed between the ports that play a key role for the development of the new Silk Road – Venice and Tianjin – and between the two industrial and logistic areas of Porto Marghera and the Binhai New Area.

These agreements turn into concrete results the vision identified in the Guidelines on the ‘Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road’ drafted by the National Development and Reform Commission and by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Commerce of the People’s Republic of China. The aim of the Chinese Government is to invest jointly to build and integrate a maritime route and to facilitate a safe and efficient implementation of the port cities situated along the Silk Road.

At the presence of Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni, the Mayor of Venice Luigi Brugnaro signed the cooperation agreement with Shan Zefeng (Deputy Governor of Tianjin Binhai) to jointly develop of projects in the fields of economy, science and technology but also culture and tourism. The two "twin" areas, Porto Marghera and Tianjin Binhai New Area, have a lot of aspects in common. Indeed, the aim of such cooperation is to promote and foster investment and the development of companies in the two countries by creating real partnerships.

The infrastructural upgrade will increase the competitiveness in the logistics and will strengthen the relationship between the EU and China. Indeed the route from China - via Venice - is the one that minimize the time and costs of maritime trip and of ground handling. So the maritime silk route will be the most efficient route for trade between the two continents.

For this reason, the joint development of the ports, in both infrastructural and operational terms, and also through mutual assistance in the use of technological and organizational innovations, constitutes the main objective of the second agreement signed by the President of the Venice Port Authority, Mr Paolo Costa, and Mr Lu Wei
President from the Port of Tianjin, the largest Port in Northern China. This port - based on current forecasts - is expected to handle 20 million containers by the end of 2017.

If - as forecast by the Shanghai International Shipping Institute - in 2030 the cargo handled at Chinese ports doubles, exceeding 25 billion tons, with container throughput reaching 505 million TEUs, and at least 40 million TEUs will travel along the maritime silk route to and from Europe. From now on the two ports will be working together at sea to strengthen the ties that bind the East and the West by exchanging information and through innovative plans and projects to consolidate the route followed by Marco Polo.

Within this framework, the port of Venice, already identified as the Silk Road western terminal with the other Adriatic ports (Ravenna, Trieste, Koper and Rijeka), will in fact be playing a strategic role for historical and economic reasons, as well as for its potential as a link with the heart of the European manufacturing industry, which in the past 15 years has been increasingly shifting eastward.

"Venice has always been both the key and the lever, a door to/from the East, a crossroads city, a starting, sorting and landing point for all that between East and West has crossed the routes of the Mediterranean. The Maritime Silk Route of the XXI Century will help to promote economic and cultural development of the Asian and African involved countries, thanks to the cooperation signed today in Venice, through targeted investments in infrastructure that will make trade relations between China and Europe more simple. Porto Marghera, the old productive heart of our city - said the City of Venice Mayor - must once again become the flywheel of economic development, investments and jobs. The real challenge is to imagine a new production area, able to attract resources and wealth for the construction of major actions in favor of the territory, thanks to the existing infrastructure and the possibility of using highly skilled labor force. From the port, from the sea, from the relaunch of the industrial area of Porto Marghera, a new hope for our country have to born. And Venice, as the city of opportunities and of the future, an international and metropolitan city, proves once again to be prepared to speak to the world", declared the Mayor of Venice, Mr Luigi Brugnaro.

"Both ports are playing a crucial role to increase traffic flows between Europe and Asia along the new Silk Road. Venice is gearing up to play a prominent role on the China-EU route by focusing on the value of its assets: large ground areas in Marghera and a newfound nautical accessibility thanks to the offshore - onshore port system. We can thus contribute on the west side and, together with Trieste on the east side of the Adriatic, to become one of the few Italian port system capable of dealing efficiently and sustainable large loads transported by large container ships from China. The success of the Port of Venice has deep roots, we have the task of re - equipping the port and Marghera area to be able to grasp the challenges and opportunities that global trade gives us, today as in the past " declared the President of Venice Port Authority Paolo Costa.