

The European Dimension

"The aim of this exhibition is the discovery of Abruzzo by means of a voyage through the history and the traditions of a Region which has seen, in recent years, a very important and remarkable industrial, economic and tourist development. In comparing ourselves with and recognizing ourselves more and more as European citizens, we can share with Europe the deepest aspects of our identity, offering beauty, culture and tradition.

The works which are exposed, typical examples of the craftsmanship of Abruzzo, are small masterpieces born from the skill of hands, but also from great tales born from the relationship of man with his own land.

The mountains, the sea and the countryside are the soul of our Region: Abruzzo is in the heart of Europe."

Ottaviano DEL TURCO
President of the Abruzzo Region

EUROPEAN UNION
Committee of the Regions



Regione Abruzzo



"I am a citizen of the Region of Abruzzo and the love of the land lives inside you and becomes a part of you wherever you live."

Ignazio SILONE (1900-1978)



ABRUZZO MADE IN ITALY

Exhibition

Committee of the Regions

Atrium - 5th Floor

Rue Belliard 101, B-1040 Brussels

25 - 29 June 2007



Discovering Abruzzo



A journey through precious samples of the local artistic handicraft

The Region of Abruzzo

Abruzzo, a green Region of Europe, is located in the centre of Italy. It is the hinge between the Centre and the South, a strategic junction of the Mediterranean and also has a large area of natural parks (three National Parks and twenty protected zones) occupying the highest percentage of its territory of any Region in Europe. With a rich artistic heritage, it is said that nature in Abruzzo has a history woven through Roman ruins, abbeys, castles and fortified mountain villages. Its sea shore is varied. In the North the coast is low-lying and there are sandy beaches, while in the South it is rocky and the beaches are surrounded by vineyards and Mediterranean vegetation.

From Roman times the towns of Abruzzo have been important centres for the trading of goods between Rome and the Adriatic, as witnessed by numerous archaeological sites, such as Alba Fucens, Juvanum and Pelutium. In the late Middle Ages the Region was annexed by the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and between 1200 and 1400 many abbeys and most of the castles were built. The later Spanish domination lasted until the end of the eighteenth century, but it was some hundred years later that the principal economic event of the Region took place, namely, the draining of the Lake of Fucino.

Due to its history and its special geographical characteristics, Abruzzo has preserved much of its territory unchanged. Thanks to this, the Region's archaeological sites are situated in natural environments which are still very similar to those of the past.

Abruzzo is steeped in great traditions of which craftsmanship is an ancient and famous example. It is an expression of an austere civilisation and of an aesthetic taste tempered in a natural environment of rare beauty.

Transmitted from father to son, the traditional work of Abruzzo's craftsmen has remained virtually unchanged through the centuries. You are held spellbound when watching expert hands executing the time-honoured "dance of the bobbins" as they make exquisite lace, master copper-smiths beating out household utensils, craftsmen modelling the famous earthenware and ceramics of the Castelli or the wooden sculptures of Pretoro and creating precious jewels such as the famous Presentosa.

Abruzzo has successfully combined the protection of its natural heritage and much of its landscape with a thriving socio-economic development.

Wine, oil and saffron are the most important products of the Region's agricultural economy which also boasts many well-known designations and indications of origin (DOC, IGT, PDO, PGI). A closer acquaintance also reveals that there is an incredible variety of typical authentic food in Abruzzo.

The development of Hi-Tech industry, the construction of industrial areas, the three university centres of excellence have, in the last few years, led to an economic renewal and attracted inward investment into the Region, which has a vast fabric of dynamic and flexible small businesses, from numerous Italian and foreign companies.

The sea and the mountains are the destination of tourists who arrive in Abruzzo looking for idyllic landscapes, rich in both history and tradition.

Abruzzo also means culture and has many illustrious sons, including the famous Roman poet Ovid, the philosopher Benedetto Croce and two of the most important Italian writers of the first half of the twentieth century, Ignazio Silone and Gabriele D'Annunzio.

