

Signore *Sottosegretari di Stato*
Signora *Presidente del Tribunale di Bolzano*
Signore *Presidente della Corte d'Appello di Trento*

Chers collègues,

Ich heiÙe Sie alle herzlich willkommen auf der zwölfte Tagung der Europäischen Forum für Umwelt Richter.

On se trouve effectivement dans un endroit particulier. Bolzano ou Bozen est situé dans le Haut-Adige (ou Tyrol du Sud). C'est le chef-lieu de la province autonome de Bolzano, dans la région autonome du Trentin-Haut-Adige. Bolzano est une ville bilingue dont, selon mes informations, trois-quarts de la population est de langue italienne, le quart restant étant germanophone. La majorité des habitants de la province autonome est de langue allemande, parlant un dialecte allemand du groupe bavarois, appelé *Südtirolerisch* (tyrolien méridional). Un quart de la population est italophone et une petite minorité emploie une des formes du ladin comme dialecte maternel. À partir du IXe siècle, le Tyrol fit partie du Saint-Empire romain et, à partir de l'année 1363, de l'Empire autrichien des Habsbourg, partageant le sort et l'histoire de l'Autriche de manière presque ininterrompue jusqu'à la fin de la Première Guerre mondiale.

This means also that for nearly a century the cities where I live and work, Ghent and Brussels in present Belgium, where ruled by the same emperors, based in Vienna.

According various rankings Bolzano ranks first or second as the city with the "Best Quality of Life" in Italy. There are various tourist attractions, amongst them the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology, that we will visit tonight. The museum is well known especially for Ötzi, the Iceman, exhibited with all his clothing and equipment.

Bolzano is also playing an important role in European Environmental Law. By order of 3 December 1997 the *Verwaltungsgericht Bozen* referred to the European Court of Justice for a preliminary ruling six questions on the interpretation of the EIA Directive, a theme we discussed last year. Those questions have been raised in proceedings concerning a Decision of the Government of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano approving a project for the reconstruction of Bolzano Airport. These reference for a preliminary ruling gave the ECJ the opportunity to clarify in its judgment of 19 September 1999 in the case of the *World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Others v. Autonome Provinz Bozen and Others* various provisions of that Directive, most of them have been now explicitly introduced in the revised Directive.

However, the theme of this year's conference is not EIA but the protection of the environment through criminal law.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

I have to thank especially our colleague and friend Carlo Maria GRILLO for hosting our annual conference and those who have assisted him, in particular Fulvia TODISCO, and M. Giovanni Francesco PERILONGO and Dr. Emanuele CORN from the University of Trento.

Furthermore I have to thank the various actors that are active in the enforcement field on the European level and have accepted our invitation to present their activities and projects today.

Special thanks to the European Commission for the continuous support of DG Environment to our work. I wish especially to thank M. Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, the Director of Directorate D Implementation, Governance & Semester, who will present to us 'The Policy of the European Commission with regard to the Enforcement of EU Environmental Law' and Dr. Miroslav Angelov who will give us the Commission's insights on 'the Directive 2008/99/EC on the protection of the environment through criminal law'.

I wish you all a fruitful conference and a nice stay in Bolzano. I hope you will find some time to enjoy the city and its surroundings.

It seems that the weather will rather good for the time of the year.

Thank you very much.

Prof. Dr. L. Lavrysen