

Summary of the main results

Building and tourism. These are the channels through which a solid base can be constructed for the Interreg III project, which has the purpose of stimulating greater collaboration between the two shores of the Northern Adriatic. There are a number of reasons that lead us to reach this conclusion:

- *The two sectors are the main economic and production resources both for the Province of Venice and for the Slovene Regions, namely Goriska and Obalno-Kraska.*
- *They stand out owing to the ratios of specialisation, which is higher than the local average.*
- *They constitute the main reservoir of new jobs, both in absolute and percentage terms.*

Furthermore, integration might benefit from the close connection between building and tourism, with the latter often supplying the driving force for the development of the former.

THE GENERAL PICTURE

We will now talk more precisely and in greater detail about the outcome of our research. Starting from empirical data, we see that the survey of a sample of firms in the Province of Venice and the two Slovene Regions involved gives us quite a clear picture. Firms engaged in building and tourism are the biggest sources of the new jobs forecast in 2004 in both areas. The only difference, a subtle one to tell the truth, is that in the Province of Venice building prevails, while over the border the tourism sector is pre-eminent.

The other productive sectors are some way behind, even if Venetian textile, clothing, footwear and chemical firms together will provide a quarter of the new jobs in 2004; the chemical sector is holding up in Slovenia too (10% of the new jobs), the same as that recorded by metal and mechanical engineering industries.

The good prospects as regards new jobs in building and tourism are borne out by the importance of the positions of these two sectors in their respective economic structures. In straight figures, the Province of Venice has nearly 10,000 workplaces involved in building, about 14% of the total for the area, behind commerce and agriculture. Sectors connected with tourist activity, such as hotels, restaurant and tourist services, are among the most important in the economic structure of the Province of Venice, with more than 5,000 workplaces, the significant proportion of 7.3

The picture outlined for the Province of Venice repeats itself on the other side of the Adriatic. The tourism and building sectors can count on important shares in the economic structure of the Slovene Regions of Goriska and Obalno-Kraska – 9% and 11%.

In both the Province of Venice and the Slovene Regions building and tourism have the advantage of human resources with a higher degree of specialisation than the national averages.

The occupational skills most in demand reflect the tendency that emerges at a general level, which identifies building and tourism as the major sources of new jobs in 2004. In the Slovene Regions the person sought after is the skilled workman, especially in building firms and in tourist enterprises, while in the Province of Venice the firms engaged in building are those that most require this type of worker.

The study also revealed that in the Province of Venice there is a demand above all for unskilled workers, mainly in building and tourism, not to overlook opportunities with textile, footwear and chemical firms.

New job opportunities in the other sectors are expected to be significantly lower. It should be noted, however, that there are, in practice, some jobs for office workers in the Province of Venice (specifically, by tourism firms), while executives find work above all in the building and tourism sectors in Slovenia.

Most of the businessmen contacted said that the new staff they expected to sign on will be managed through forms of fixed-term contracts, making use of the employment flexibility advantage this kind of solution provides. This trend seems definitely to be more pronounced in the Venice area, while there is a smaller preponderance of fixed-term over indefinite contracts in Slovenia.

The tendencies that emerge can be summarised briefly as follows. The sectors in which there will be most new jobs in 2004 will be building and tourism, followed to a lesser extent by chemicals, both in the Province of Venice and the Slovene Regions. This fact takes on even greater importance if we consider the important place each of these sectors holds in their local economies. The categories of employee most in demand will be workmen, unskilled in the Province of Venice and skilled in Slovenia, while the type of work contract most likely to be offered will be one for a fixed term.

THE AREAS IN DETAIL>

To make a more detailed analysis at the territorial level and to obtain a map showing where the jobs are expected to be, we have no choice but to concentrate only on the sectors that are the sources of these new opportunities: building, tourism and chemicals.

Building

In the Province of Venice firms in the areas round Dolo, Mirano and Venice are the most probable destinations for new building workers, while on the Slovenian side the position is essentially even in the two Regions of Goriska and Obalno-Kraska. The Portogruaro and San Donà di Piave areas in the Province of Venice seem to be less important from this point of view.

The Venice area, however, is not specialised in the building sector, unlike Mirano and Dolo, which suggests that the position should be considered favourable particularly in these two areas. Skilled workmen seem to be mainly in demand in the Dolo and Mirano areas as far as the Province of Venice is concerned and in Goriska in Slovenia. In San Donà di Piave, on the other hand, there is a preference for unskilled workers.

Tourism

As was to be expected, the Venice area has the lion's share of job opportunities in tourism, followed by Dolo and Chioggia. The Chioggia data are particularly interesting, also in the light of a high specialisation ratio, while an unpleasant surprise comes from businesses in the San Donà di Piave area (which includes Jesolo among its municipalities), where 2004 is expected to be a lean year for new jobs.

On the Slovene side the most positive signs are those from firms in Obalno-Kraska, which have the advantage of a solid, well-established specialisation in tourism output. In this sector, the enterprises in the Province of Venice mostly need unskilled workers, evidently with different requirements from those of their colleagues in Obalno-Kraska, who tend to look for skilled labour. Firms involved in the tourism sector in the Province of Venice report requirements for unskilled and skilled workers; in absolute terms the Dolo need for skilled workers and that of Chioggia for unskilled workers is noticeably lower than in the area of Venice, the provincial capital, which also records a fair number of offers of jobs for clerical staff. The firms in Obalno-Kraska are much more demanding: there is a strong tendency to engage skilled workers.

Chemicals and plastics

The percentage of new jobs expected in this sector in both the Province of Venice and the two Slovene Regions is 10-12%, even if the specialisation ratio is in each case below the average in the two macro-areas considered. The main source of jobs is Venice, followed by Portogruaro and San Donà di Piave; the situation of job opportunities in this sector in the two Slovene Regions does not show any particular lack of evenness.

What occupational skills are wanted? In the Venice area firms do not seem inclined to seek particularly skilled people, as is also the case in Goriska. The results from Obalno-Kraska should not be overlooked: 9% of the new job vacancies for skilled workers in the Region is expected to come from the firms in this sector.

Other sectors

The sectors we have looked into up to this point have provided quite high percentages of new jobs in both the Province of Venice and the Slovene Regions. Nevertheless we must point out that there are other sectors that may provide opportunities of work, even if not on both sides of the Adriatic.

In the Province of Venice the sectors concerned might be textiles, clothing and footwear, especially those located in the Mirano and Caverzere areas, where these activities have a specialisation ratio higher than the Italian average.

The position is similar in the Slovene Regions for the metal and mechanical engineering industries, even if in the context of a contradictory picture: while the highest percentage of new jobs is among the firms of Obalno-Kraska, this sector only seems to be specialised in Goriska, where the demand for new personnel is half that of the Gorizia area.

THE OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS REQUIRED IN DETAIL

Our analysis will now dwell on the quality characteristics of the occupational skills required in both Slovenia and the Province of Venice, concentrating particularly on building and tourism, the sectors in which not only is there the

greatest need for new personnel, but above all the sectors that are expected to be the quickest to increase output and job opportunities.

Building

Any flow of workers from Slovenia to Venice could take advantage of the demand from Venetian enterprises. According to our survey most of the firms that expect to take on fresh workers intend to do so by means of indefinite-term contracts, thus attracting above all workers from over the border in Slovenia, where short-term contracts seem to be much more common.

In general Slovene and Venetian building firms can benefit from many points of contact. The skills requested are not particularly high, especially for labourers: the qualities most sought after are reliability and basic technical competence. To help the flow of jobs, on the Slovene side efforts should be made in improving technical skills and the other abilities required in the sector, judging from the fact that building firms in the Venice area complain of a certain shortage of people with these necessary qualities.

The building sector expects a high standard of education from office staff and executives (sometimes a higher secondary school diploma is not enough), and also language (knowledge of English is indispensable) and information technology skills. Venetian businesses have found quite some difficulty in finding middle-level employees, especially because of a shortage of the abilities required for these positions, while Slovene firms complain of shortcomings due to the employees' educational background even among the more qualified personnel.

Tourism

Good knowledge and adequate mastery of English are elements shared by all the requests from Venetian and Slovene firms in the tourism sector, as much for workers as for clerical staff. The ideal identikit on the Slovene side, however, seems to be even more complete, because the candidate sought should also know German and Italian and have basic information technology skills.

In spite of this, knowledge of languages is also the weak point in personnel employed in this sector: both Slovene and Venetian enterprises name their staff's degree of mastery of a foreign language as the aspect they are not quite satisfied with. This seems to be the key factor in recruitment, also because no other particular abilities seem to be required.

There are, on the other hand, material differences in the type of work contract proposed: in this, unlike their Slovene colleagues, Venetian employers aim at greater flexibility in managing their conditions of employment, induced by the very seasonal nature of this sector.

The strategy to assist employment relations between the two areas in this sector, then, appears quite clear: to concentrate on training, especially on learning foreign languages (English in the Province of Venice, English, German and Italian in the Slovene Regions) without neglecting information technology skills.