

The fair system of Lombardy, and the Milan Fair in particular, are a point of excellence of the region's entrepreneurial dynamism and a significant player within the social and economic system. In an increasingly complex and competitive context, it is strategically critical to constantly sustain and strengthen the acquired position.

The co-ordinating role of the Regional Government

For this reason the Regional Government, on the strength of the figures characterising the Lombard fair system (75 events are held annually in Milan alone, with over 4.5 million visitors and 40,000 exhibitors), is defining a planning process capable to foster agreements between fair centres, in view of enabling a more profitable territorial balance. Our planning, however, is not – and has never intended to be – an imposition of constraints; it is the product of a mutual agreement with trade operators, in order to favour the overall development of the fair system of Lombardy.

Within such a complex system, the Regional Government plays a well-defined co-ordinating role, in that it does not confine itself to authorising the holding of fairs, but recognises their qualifications – whenever of regional relevance – in order to schedule the events to be held in the Lombard territory, seeking to satisfy the requests of the promoting and organising entities. It is a complex undertaking, but it is the only effective way to enhance the value of the entire fair system of the Country, and it requires great attention to avoid that events of the same type be held simultaneously, making reference to the whole Italian territory through constant contacts with the competent Ministry.



The Lombard fair system

President Roberto Formigoni illustrates Regione Lombardia's initiatives

Promoting also the minor fair venues

We have therefore to consider the adoption of particular legislative measures; we are making remarkable efforts to improve legislation, to increase the number of events within our territory, by incentivating organisers and exhibitors, also by providing economic aid. A bill is being examined with the purpose to streamline bureaucratic procedures which unduly complicate or slow down business initiatives. In this way we will promote the development and territorial balance of fair events; that is, we seek to ensure that a profitable role be played even by smaller-sized fair centres, which until now have been unduly neglected, though certainly being capable of hosting events of great significance.

A decisive step will be taken when the process for the reform of Title V of the Italian Constitution will be completed, based on which exclusive competence in economic matters – and consequently including the fields of fairs and commerce – will be attributed to Regional Governments.

We are fully aware that Fairs play a leading and almost decisive role in the development of the Lombard territory, as an excellent operating marketing tool, all the more significant in that the production sectors availing themselves of fairs are heterogeneous and comprised of small and very small businesses, which entrust fairs themselves with the marketing and promotion of Lombard products, thus optimising their own means and resources.

Boosting the internationalisation of Lombard enterprises

Recognizing that the international dimension is an essential aspect of our economic system's growth and competitiveness, we are favouring the internationalisation of Lombard enterprises, which must be able to withstand increasingly the strong competition from their European "rivals", establishing themselves as market leaders and proposing the Lombard model as an assurance of quality, supported by the credibility acquired by the regional system as a whole on the financial markets of the world.

In the outlined scenario, our Region intends to further boost the already thriving fair system of Lombardy, making the most profitable use of all the means and resources at its disposal. Precisely in this perspective, the Regional Government has decided to participate in all international events with its own institutional exhibition stand, in order to promote its image and capacities.

It is worth recalling that for several years our Regional Government has been supporting local organisers with a budget of its own; furthermore, the Departments of Crafts, New Economy, Research and Technological Innovation, Industry, Small and Medium Enterprises, Cooperation and Tourism, and Agriculture can use funds we have purposely allocated to facilitate participation in fairs on the part of their respective business sectors by partially reducing participation fees.

Finally, but equally important, the Government of the Region participates in financing the enlargement and upgrading of exhibition areas through specific Programme Agreements.