

Editorial Note

The first two articles of this Journal issue are still papers proposed for the international conference, held in Brussels on 7 September 2017, which has been the starting event of the 2nd Geoprogress Global Forum (GGF) on ‘Sustainability and Energy Issues’, assuming energy the key issue for a sustainable global development. The question of how to achieve a global development which guarantees a sound, better and more equitable living environment for future generations, is not reduced to the energy issue, namely the issue of how to ensure sufficient energy and ecological security for all. Certainly, however, the energy issue is a large part of the question and is also the essential part. In this Forum, whose initiatives will continue, energy will not be considered in itself but in relation to the natural environment: to the global need to ensure a healthy environment, which is - and has to be recognized - a fundamental right of all beings. The problem is to increase energy production without increasing environment degradation, that really is dictated not only by fuels, but also by the food production itself and in particular meat. Therefore, food production that was subject of the I GGF will continue to be an important issue and the question of how to ensure sustainable energy for everyone will largely identify how to achieve sustainable world-wide development, with technologies, financial resources and cultural approaches.

Two other articles remind us of the conditions of the global financial markets with which every sustainable development project must take stock and consider some effects of the 2007 financial crisis and the long depression that followed. The third highlights that the crisis has most affected the weakest regions, accentuating the economic distance of the South from the Center-North of Italy. Considering that the financial crisis led to an emphasis on lower risk assets, real estate in particular, the fourth article seeks to understand the role of the new players in the financial system to determine the effects of their local investments and examines for this purpose the Qatar Investment Authority’s acquisition of the Porta Nuova district in Milan.

The policies of various governments (regional, national and supranational) seek to respond to the center-periphery disparity, often significant even within the central regions of economic development, favouring the development of ‘rural tourism’, which is certainly possible and can make a significant contribution. However, investments in structures such as ‘Il Ciocco’ in Tuscany, which are dealt with in the fifth paper, can be understood - even if they are already an attraction in themselves and not just hotels - only in peripheral areas whose countryside are endowed with important agro-cultural landscapes and are peripheries of regions of very important tourist towns which become more and more a destination for excursions for tourists who prefer to stay in the countryside. Apart from the difficulty in most rural areas to be able to dispose of such investments, the model does not seem feasible.

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