Dear Sirs,

during the years, TECLA has organised, together with the Union of Italian Provinces (UPI), open debates with its member administrations which have enabled a synthesis of their position towards the European politics. In particular, we would like to point out the creation of “European departments” (Uffici Europa) within Italian local authorities with the objective of connecting the administrations with the European institutions.

At this regard, we are pleased to send you a copy of the research that our Association has made on the European departments existing in the Italian administrations. This activity of sensitization and of continuous change regarding local authorities is an important contribution that TECLA has given and constantly gives towards the Europeisation of such administrations.

The attached document is the result of the first reflections that have been developed in the framework of an on going initiative, financed by the Provinces of Milan and Pisa, whose aim is to strengthen the interaction between European institutions, local collectives and society at large through the creation of innovative listening and awareness raising activities which highlight the perception of the way the local scenario is represented at European level. The objective is to set up a more systematic dialogue with the representatives of such organizations and to encourage and appropriately develop the role of local autonomies in the definition of European policies as these are government representatives in closest contact with the people. A website dedicated to the initiative has already been created.

The result of the project will be a document, that will be presented in the course of an international seminar to be held in Rome, suggesting more flexible solutions which take local specificities into account in the implementation of European Community legislation. The initiative is, indeed, divided into three stages:

- Listening stage
- Analysis stage
- Proposal stage
**Listening stage:** so far, the project has seen the drafting of two questionnaires whose purpose is to act as tools for listening to and surveying opinions, identifying the problems in hand and informing the relative political-institutional (provincial counsellors) and trade association (chairmen, directors and managing directors of companies) representatives. The aim of the questionnaires is to highlight the perception of the way in which “local” elements are represented at European level.

**Analysis stage:** Analysis of the data collected via the questionnaires.

**Proposal stage:** A document will be produced using the results of the analysis of the data collected via the questionnaires. The aim of this document will be to supply useful suggestions regarding ways of enhancing the participation of local operators in the development of European policy taking into account the indications set forth in the *White Paper* on European Governance.

The project is endowed with particular importance as a result of its partnership. Indeed, the project involves political-institutional (local authorities) and scientific-academic (universities) players from three Member States of the European Union (Italy, France and Spain) and three Candidate Countries (Poland, Hungary and Malta). The choice of partners was based on the need to enhance the participation of territorial autonomies and, more generally, all players involved in the European Governance initiative, thus not only State and European institutions but also regional and local territorial collectives and society at large (organizations and individual citizens), in such a way that they may play a more decisive and dynamic role in the process of European integration. **The project has received the patronage of the European Parliament and of the Representative Office of the European Commission in Italy.**

Please note that TECLA has already registered in the CONECCS database.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us directly,

Yours sincerely,

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