



37TH INTERNATIONAL
NO - DIG
FLORENCE 2019

Fortezza da Basso • FLORENCE (Italy)

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Paolo Trombetti
IATT Chairman

Good day, ladies and gentlemen.

It's a great pleasure to welcome you to this astounding city, resplendent in its history and culture, where the main players in the next three days will be technology, innovation and research.

The choice of this location may have seemed intentional but it was actually simply a lucky chance that the 37th International No Dig ended up being held precisely in Florence in the year that the whole world is marking the death, exactly 500 years ago, of one of the most illustrious “innovators” in history, Leonardo da Vinci. Architect, painter, sculptor, engineer and much more. There was no field the great master did not explore with intense curiosity. I feel we share this trait and we need to keep it alive in order to promote that “new” way of thinking, the kind that can change the world.

This year is also the 25th anniversary of the foundation of our Italian association. During this time IATT has worked tirelessly to spread no dig technology. The attendance here today of UNI (Italian National Standard Body), ANCI (Italian National Association of Municipalities), UTILITALIA (Association of water energy and environmental agencies) and ANCE (builders National Association) bears witness to the deep and fruitful collaboration that we've succeeded in forging and the willingness of large Italian stakeholders to build a team that can stimulate the growth of the country.

However, coming back to our event here, back to what it represents, we can ask ourselves, “What are we doing?” Have we ever stopped to think what we’re doing to our world?

Last July the 29th we reached Earth Overshoot day – the day each year that humanity has consumed all the primary resources, water, soil and wood, that nature is able to produce in the space of one year. We took just 210 days to consume what nature can create in one year.

This information comes from the *Global Footprint Network*, the international environmental research organization that promotes “sustainability” in our actions, which is measures in terms of each country’s *carbon footprint*. This environmental accounting tool shows us exactly what and how much we consume of the natural resources at our disposal.

The issue of the environment will be more important than ever. Soon nature will not be enough to supply our needs. The President of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen, has listed the environment as one of the fundamental issues in her political programme. The Italian government is thinking of introducing tax breaks for companies that invest in safeguarding the environment. In his encyclical, the Pope has also called on the countries of the world to focus more on the environment and has criticized the insufficient international agreements signed at international summits in the last 20 years.

And what is the role of trenchless technologies in this context? I'd say they are major players. The special feature of these technologies is precisely their low environmental impact. It's no accident that when discussing public works in Italy the Minister for Infrastructure and Transportation called them "*low environmental impact technologies*."

Trenchless technologies are undoubtedly *green*, but can we quantify that? Can we liken the impact of our work techniques to the closure of a plant run on fossil fuels? Maybe we can. Authoritative studies have shown that using trenchless technologies to lay down water, sewer, gas or telecommunications lines drastically reduces CO₂ emissions and energy consumption compared to traditional open digs.

For example? Using TOC to lay a line for 1 km reduces emissions, compared to a traditional dig, by 66,808 kg of CO₂, which is the equivalent of the CO₂ produced by 70 families with an average electrical consumption of 2700 kw/h or by 30 petroleum-powered cars travelling 10,000 km a year with emissions of 230 g/kmCO. We should also add that, according to studies carried out in Italy by INAIL, the use of such systems would also reduce up to 70% of construction site accidents.

How many km of infrastructure needs to be laid or restored?

So, we need to change attitudes all over the world.

We've achieved high levels of knowledge in all areas and yet many fields of study have become increasingly specialized. This has a positive impact on our lives and health, but we've also lost sight of the big picture. Separation has become a deep-seated trait of our thought – separating individual from collective interests, separating citizens from the state, separating what we can achieve today from what we'll have tomorrow, separating different fields of study, and so on.

The environmental disaster that has long been underway in the world is a striking example of this attitude. Everyone pursues their own individual plans to achieve wealth, health and well-being, but at the same time we've taken the road that is leading the world into decline. We've lost sight of the overall picture. We need to go back to having a “holistic” approach towards the world, goods and life. Every single element has a fundamental role in the sum. Every single little positive action has an impact on other actions.

In this sense I'm sure that trenchless technologies are already making a difference and will do so more and more. But without a true vision of the whole it will be difficult to perceive the difference, assess it and measure it.

Italian Prime Minister Conte has said that “the productive system will have to be directed towards socially responsible practices and be based on a circular economy that engenders the culture of recycling and definitively distances itself from a culture of waste.” We’re facing changes of epochal proportions that make this “ecological transition” essential if we don’t want to compromise the quality of life of future generations. Consequently, we fervently expect that the Italian “green new deal” – worth approximately €50 billion over 15 years – will also include the use of trenchless technologies. IATT will certainly work towards that objective and will propose the same actions to other European associations so that the green new deal becomes international.

The world of trenchless technology is ready to accept this challenge and Florence can be the cradle of a new Renaissance featuring green technologies.

Welcome to the 37th International No Dig.