



AT FORT

Self Analysis Report - City of Venice

Forte Marghera





**European Union**  
European Regional Development Fund



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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The City of Venice is surrounded by an unique and complex variegated system of fortified assets and defence structures that ranges from the Middle Ages until the eve of World War One, disseminated along the lagoon (maritime defence system) and the mainland (Entrenched Camp of Mestre). In the sixties a progressive process of demise of the obsolete military structures in the Venetian territory by the Italian Army, Air Forces Navy leads to an extended abandon and decay of the assets, that on one side needs an urgent maintenance due to the vegetation colonization that boosts the already ongoing degrade, on the other side the sites become decentralized areas with issues of vandalism and concentration of social marginalism. Just from this decay process at the end of the eighties and during the nineties the civil society and the committees of citizens, getting aware and acknowledging this situation that affects the neighbouring urban areas, highlight the issue and raise the urgent need of the public acquisition, in order to set up a virtuous process of revitalization of the former military sites and the surrounding urban areas, increasing on one side the green areas of the city, and on the other side valorise a sleeping historic and architectonic site that had a relevance in the history and culture of the area. This is the background and the framework that will lead in the years 2002-2004 the City of Venice to purchase from the Italian ministry of Defence 7 out of 12 forts of the Entrenched Camp of Mestre. The process will be finalized at the end of the last decade. Forte Marghera is the most important fort from the architectonic and historic point of view and is the pivot of the Entrenched Camp of Mestre. The City of Venice has appointed Marco Polo System geie to finalize the relevant studies and future scenarios for the valorisation of Forte Marghera and the Entrenched Camp of Mestre since 2003. Furthermore Marco Polo System geie has been commissioned by the City of Venice of the task of the functional management and valorisation of Forte Marghera.

This report is a comprehensive overview and analysis of the past, present and future of Forte Marghera taking into account all the variables and the constraints and the positive effects and achievement of the ongoing process that is coordinated by the City of Venice and partly implemented by Marco Polo System geie.





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## 2. GENERAL OVERVIEW

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### 2.1 The Venetian Defence System - The Entrenched Camp of Mestre

Starting from the Middle Ages and with a continued series of progressive enlargements up to the beginning of the Twenty Century the city of Venice has been surrounded, or rather wrapped by an extraordinary complex of fortifications. Nowadays these sites, representative of a real anthology of the military architecture are around seventy, disseminated in an environment so much extraordinary that goes from the lagoon islands to the shores of Cavallino, Lido and Pellestrina, and to the mainland defence system of the Entrenched Camp of Mestre.

The fall of the Republic of Venice and the subsequent French and Austrian governments have afterwards included the Venetian territory in a potential ring linked to the military architectures of the Middle-Europa. The starting point is the building of the first fortified asset in the mainland bordering the lagoon for the defence of the city of Venice: Forte Marghera

The dry land defence system covers 153 hectares. This first-generation fort belt is located in the first urban periphery, vis-à-vis the residential zone, representing, in addition to an important historical and architectural asset, a precious green lung for the city. There are 12 sites: Fort Marghera covers 48 hectares, with 17,300m<sup>2</sup> of buildings. Fort Manin (1806-1814) has only some built remains. Three First Generation forts, from the late 19th century, cover c.50,000m<sup>2</sup>, with 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of buildings. The Second Generation forts are usually 6m high, 25m wide and 120m long, with c.90,000 m<sup>2</sup> of surrounding green area. One gunpowder magazine, called Bazzera.

The Defence system is located in Mestre and Venice and today is partly owned by the Municipality of Venice. From the 1960s, and particularly during the 70s, the Italian Army started a progressive withdrawal from these structures, deemed obsolete and located within a difficult environment. A difficult recovery work was started by a volunteer initiative and, subsequently, the Municipality administration decided to support it. The volunteer work was an original initiative, born from spontaneous teams of citizens, who cared enough to preserve this heritage from natural deterioration and vandalism. In the early stages, the main target was not material recovery. From the 80s, for over ten years, the "priority issue" for the forts was mainly to try to find out who their managing authorities were, within the complex world of army property. The citizens could not identify those responsible for the management of the structures, so re-use proposals were prepared without clarifying the ownership situation.

## **2. GENERAL OVERVIEW**

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In the year 2003 seven fortifications out of 12 of the Entrenched Camp of Mestre were granted by the Italian Ministry of Defence to the City of Venice through a financial transaction of 12 million of euro. Only for the asset of Forte Marghera the burden costs by the City of Venice were of 9 million of euro

### **2.2 Forte Marghera - History**

The building of Forte Marghera starts in 1805 on the site of the old village of Marghera. It is a strategic area located at the border of the Venetian lagoon whereas the brackish waters of the lagoon meets with the low lands of the first mainland featured by a grid of small natural canals, salt-marsh and the mouth of spring waters. Until the construction of the fort the village of Marghera was featured to be the starting/arrival point to/from Venice. The military works changes the function use, but it does not change the peculiar environmental context. The area covers a space of 50 hectares, of which still nowadays are waterfronts of the lagoon that covers the belt ditches of the fortification. Very characteristic is also the northern part of the fort, in which it is still existing an external defence lunette, located inside a green-natural perimeter featured by humid areas in process of transformation into bogs which aspect remained unaltered in the last two centuries despite the strong urbanization that the city undergoes after World War Two.

Within the area of the fort, of the old village survives only the arcades of the sixteenth century of a bridge with three vaults in cooked-brick. Of the first Napoleonic-Austrian period there are two powder-houses and two block-houses built with a full brick wall with finishing in Istrian stones. Of the same period there are also four water-doors of which three with guardhouses into the bastion in bricks and tunnel vaults. Similar are also six small powder-houses. Among the historical buildings we have enlist an old wood-bridge, four bunkers in full brick walls of the end of the nineteenth century and a post for artillery battery in stone and concrete of the beginning of the nineteenth century. At the end the skeleton of a bridge with a stone basement and plain in wood beams The earth bastions have only in the external side a wall of protection in stones and bricks.

The construction of the fort is finished in 1814 and with its completed it is completely destroyed the village of Marghera. The structure is articulated in three following defence lines separated by artificial canals fed by the water of the lagoon. The most external line is constituted by three lunettes separated by the

second line of the fort by a first ditch. The second line is constituted by a island that enshrouds pincers the main body of the fort, in turn completely surrounded by the lagoon waters. The structure of the fort maintains its original structure with simple bastioned forts and few buildings in stone and bricks until the second half of the nineteenth century, undergoing in this period three sieges, of which the longest one lasted for almost a year between 1848-1849. Between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century it start to disappear the primary defence function of the fort and it undergoes its progressive transformation into a warehouse and logistic centre. This will lead in the time to the progressive addition of several volumetric increasing of poor architectonic value, but of simple operational functionality ( warehouses, offices workplaces, garages, sleeping places, services). The mix of all the above-mentioned elements provide nowadays to the fort an aspect very similar to a citadel. The Italian Army dismissed Forte Marghera in July 1996 and the asset was purchased by the City of Venice in 2003 for an amount of 9 million of euro. Only in 2010 it was finalized the handover of the property of Forte Marghera from the Ministry of Defence to the City of Venice.



### **3. FORTE MARGHERA PRESENT AND FUTURE**

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#### **3.1 1996-2010 Forte Marghera from the Italian Army to the City of Venice**

Forte Marghera was a logistic and administrative centre of the Italian Army until 30 June 1995. Until that date the Fort was a supplier and dispatcher of equipments to all the military settlements in the North-East area. Hundreds of military staff and civil employees were working in Forte Marghera since World War One, when the fort has lost its original function of fortress for the defence of the main access to Venice from the mainland. These tasks distinguished Forte Marghera from the other forts that were used only as simple warehouses. Forte Marghera was enlarged and transformed like a citadel. In fact several offices, workshops, warehouses, barracks and all the auxiliaries services functional to military logistical purposes were settled. On 1 July 1995 has took place the temporary handover of Forte Marghera to the City of Venice (the whole process of handover from the property of the Italian Ministry of Defence to the public property of the City of Venice will be finalized only in 2010). The several logistical assets of Forte Marghera were in good condition and efficient and were suitable to be used with a constant ordinary maintenance. In this context the policy makers of the City of Venice do not have a clear vision or a defined project on the use of the fort. The first idea is to assign the different spaces to single associations of volunteers, to the associations of former military staff and conscientious objectors that were employed by the City of Venice. Starting from the context of Forte Marghera and enlarged to the other demised forts of the Entrenched Camp of Mestre, the groups of volunteers, that already since the eighties were dealing and were in charge of the management of some forts and that were coordinated among themselves, decided to transform their status into the Social Cooperatives (a type of economic society foreseen by the Italian law that wan benefit of fiscal and economic facilities in order to facilitate the employment of disadvantage categories of people). The basic idea is that starting from Forte Marghera an approach of management of the assets grounded on the continuity of utilization of the buildings capable to provide an economic income suitable to bear the needs of the entire complex of Forte Marghera and to support also the activities of recovery of the other forts that were demised and were handover to the volunteers organisations. Resuming it was a process of start up of sustainable fund-raising, that starting from the situation of the 48 hectares asset of Forte Marghera, it would have been extended to the realities of the forts of Carpenedo, Gazzera, Bazzera and Tron that as a whole had more of 15.000 visitors on annual basis and also the visit of the schools that were attracted to visit for the first time these fascinating structures that were still without any support services (bathrooms, welcome areas and so on) and that were slowly upgraded with the work of the volunteers.

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The first project planned the use of the restored barracks during the eighties as youth hostel in consideration of the high demand of these type of structures in the city of Venice and the lack of this type of accommodation; furthermore it was foreseen the utilization of the mess areas, suitable to host more than 100 persons and its kitchen for a new restaurant and the reactivation of the inner bar in advantage of the visitors. It was a minimalist vision with regards to the potentialities of the fort, but we must take into account with the patrimonial condition of the fort, that still was not in “complete” availability of the City of Venice, it was only in custody. Between 1995 and 1996 the first activities aimed to the public opening of the fort and its fruition take place in coordination with the volunteers and their social cooperative in collaboration with the local administration. It is relevant to mention in 1996 the hosting of an operational base of a work camp of the “International Civil Service” that tank also to the security service of the social cooperative will allow the stay in Forte Marghera of more than 60 volunteers coming from abroad that will carry out activities of recovery and restoration of Forte Marghera and of the other forts. In parallel, with the financial contribution of the City of Venice, several artistic cultural performances are organized in Forte Marghera, that in combination with the International presence of the volunteers, it disseminates the awareness of the unique unexploited potentialities of the fort. Also the local policy makers start to consider Forte Marghera as an area and an asset of general strategic valence. Veneto Region, in consideration of the imminent decommission of Forte Marghera, already in February 1995 had enlisted the fort as one of the priorities for the funding interventions within the European funding of the Project Konver 1994-97 for the conversion to civil use of the former military areas. With the adhesion of the City of Venice to this project, it is completed a more comprehensive planning that encompasses also the future “Parco San Giuliano<sup>2</sup> that will be the biggest green area of Mestre facing the lagoon of Venice. In the framework of the Konver project, there are scheduled demolition of the minor relevant buildings (warehouses, small work office and so on) with the recovery of their volumes with functional buildings to the neighbouring green park, and also with the service activities to the enterprises linked to the new born Scientific and Technologic Park of Port Marghera and the related cultural activities and support to the didactical and research activities of the University. But at this stage the situation evolves into a bottleneck that will last for ten years. Forte Marghera was included in a law part of the annual financial law of the government, law 662 of 1996, where is empowered the law that the Ministry of Defence was allowed to handover the asset only with a sale according to the market prices. This constriction has lead to the definition of a sale price of 9 million of euro, amount that for long time the City of Venice tries to negotiate, but at the same time it has blocked any immediate perspective of

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reuse of the fort. The immediate consequence was the “compulsory” immobilization of all the activities in Forte Marghera and of all the related planning and project activities focused to its recovery and restoration of the fort. Only in 2007, when there was the perspective of the finalization of the negotiations of the purchase of the fort, the resigned City of Venice decided to bear the 9 million euro transaction. Following the strategic vision of the Konver project, the Veneto Region from 1997 will finance two projects of territorial marketing finalised to promote the area of Forte Marghera as Pole of Regional Development that will achieve also the settlement of the Centre of Documentation on the Military Architectures, which function is to provide an unique tool of lecture, of knowledge and valorisation of the entire system of regional defence of which Forte Marghera is one of the pivots for the Venetian area that together with the Defence System of Verona and the border fortified system were the north eastern defence deployment of the kingdom of Italy. Forte Marghera was undergoing a fast decay with the loss of several buildings, the City of Venice could not bear any extraordinary maintenance costs.



The solution was the utilization of the buildings that were still in good condition for exhibitions and events, assuring the ordinary maintenance of the buildings and at the same time disseminate the awareness of the great potentialities of the site. In the year 2009 the City of Venice will publish a tender for the urban/architectonic

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valorisation of the entire area of the fort. 12 applications were submitted by either private or combined public/private organizations. The tender requires a commitment of 60 million of euro for the physic recovery of the structure with relevant uncertainty on the drainage works. An analysis of the proposals highlights a overwhelming pre-eminence of the private interests focused to realize premium leisure premises to the detriment of a social use of the asset, that is an increased demand of the local civil society. Facing the two different perspectives (preeminent public utilization versus an increasing demand of public and social use) in the frame work of the activities developed by Marco Polo System geie on behalf of the City of Venice within the project ACT4PPP, we manage to finalize a tool of economic definition capable to assess the real possibility of sustainability of the private interventions in the fort according to the PPP schemes. The final result is the unfeasible economic returns in a reasonable time , unless there are in force derogation in favour of the private investors on bindings of historic, architectonic, environmental and landscape features. This experience highlights the urgent need to find a balance among the sensitive issues between private and public stakeholders.

#### **3.2 Applied methodologies and approach in the roadmap of Forte Marghera**

Marco Polo System g.e.i.e., as a mission is strongly committed to the peaceful reuse of historic fortified heritage. It has started to perform the management of Forte Marghera since 2004, after the accomplishment of the the study and promotion of fortified heritage. Over the years it has developed a number of principles and methodologies that it was possible to refine and improve through a shared and participatory approach with the local authorities, with the world of scientific research and with the civil society.

As pillar for the sustainable development (valorisation) of the historic forts, it has been placed the recognition of their cultural values and of the relationships that make them part of a territorial system, once a time with defensive tasks and now reconsidered taking into account the cultural, social and economic profile. Valorisation and sustainability are two key words that are used with a remarkable range of meanings. Therefore it is appropriate to clarify the meaning that we intend to provide it (using the most appropriate expressions from the scientific point of view.)



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The Italian legal order defines the valorisation of cultural heritage as the performance of the duties and the discipline of all those activities aimed at promoting awareness of the heritage and to ensure the best conditions for the use and fruition of the same heritage, suitable for all audiences in order to foster the development of the culture. The valorisation also includes educational goals closely linked with the heritage, in order to improve their knowledge and to improve its fruition. Also the promotion and the support of interventions of conservation of cultural heritage are part of the concept of valorisation. Valorisation and sustainability refer to the definition of the concepts of value and valuation of the cultural assets.

#### Value

Cultural assets are able to generate both economic value and cultural value. The cultural property may also be used, then bought and sold like a commodity. The cultural capital, finally, is also a good for which the utility that receives each consumer increases with the number of consumers: it increases the importance of a cultural asset as more as this is known.

The evaluation of the cultural value of an asset occurs taking into consideration the aesthetics quality (beauty, harmony, form, etc.), The spiritual value (universal or shared by particular groups of individuals), the social value (aggregating of collective identity and relationships between individuals), the historical value (witness of the age in which it was created, continuity with the present), the symbolic value (the meaning and the values that the assets communicates), and finally the value of authenticity.

#### Sustainability

Are considered sustainable the actions that: produce tangible and intangible benefits, which respect the principle of inter-generational equity and intra-generational equity , that does not entails irreversible changes, and finally, that takes into account the interdependence of cultural systems.

On this basis, our work has sought an answer to the questions:

- What is the fortified heritage?
- How you can reuse?
- What resources (economic, cultural) is produced and consumed
- What to restore?
- How?
- With which resources?



### **3. FORTE MARGHERA PRESENT AND FUTURE**

A definition of the modern and contemporary fortified heritage a set of forts and batteries composed of buildings, land architecture and layout of the surrounding territory, that through functional relationships and infrastructure constitutes a complex territorial system set up to defend against a potential armed aggression.

At first glance, this definition seems to allow a clear definition of the subject. But on closer inspection it requires a wide spectrum of skills ranging from history to architecture, planning, landscape architecture and to the natural sciences. And even beyond.

Even the management of these assets also needs to use different skills: economic, sociological, administrative, relational, financial (...)

Reuse of heritage fortified  
In most cases, there are abandoned structures that difficult to adapt to new tasks, but they have the duty to continue to witness to their past. The end of their military use has an important symbolic meaning, as well as their possible new civilian use.

At the same time, the possibility of assigning a new function to decommissioned forts, lead the interested stakeholders to project almost unconsciously, their aspirations and their individual preferences. Instead, it is necessary to draw the attention our attention, to set in the center a deep knowledge of the subject and the values it embodies or that can express, that afterwards to be set in relation to the cultural and social context, and finally with the level of available resources (financial and others). The choice between using and not using an asset, including no action, reconstruct or demolish should be made taking into account all these factors.

Therefore, the necessary tools are the research and the scientific analysis (historical, architectural, nature, landscape, etc.) for the understanding of the object, whilst for its development and valorisation, we also need the elements of the cultural and territorial marketing, and of the strategic management and finally, the adoption of criteria for measuring and evaluating the results, which in addition to monetary aspects and numerical, also has to include quality parameters, such as the satisfaction of users and the ability to improve the daily operational activities.

The whole of these tools should be used with the aim of activating a virtuous circle:

starting from the knowledge of the fort and of the defence system to which it belongs, accomplish an effective promotion that creates and reinforces a widespread awareness of its importance, which increases their value by making better access to resources (both private and public) to invest for improve the asset

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and its knowledge (this can be done through the restoration, new scientific research activities or new marketing and outreach) ... and so on.

In this process it is important to enable the comparison on the definition of the project of reuse and its related resources with the interested stakeholders: the different levels of local government, property, citizens, the private companies of the territory, the potential users, etc. ..

#### The management of Forte Marghera

In 2004 Marco Polo System G.E.I.E. was appointed by the City of Venice for the non-exclusive management of Forte Marghera. At the first stage there were performed events aimed to the recovery of the historical identity of the place, that were funded by the European project Vivilforte (Interreg Italy - Slovenia). The annual opening days open to the public were only 20, but from the following year onwards initiatives have intensified exponentially and the open days have increased up to the current daily opening of the fort.

Open the gate and allow citizens free entry to the fort was a result that Marco Polo System EEIG has strongly and painfully achieved. It was the beginning of a new life to this place, after two centuries of closure, it began to assume the status of a monument in the imagination of the community. At the same time the City of Venice started to assess a roadmap to realize the recovery of the assets of the fort and to achieve the full reuse. At this stage the administration of the City of Venice thought that the easiest way was the sale to a private use area in return of the realization of the building restoration. Instead Marco Polo System G.E.I.E. has launched a process of analysis, public debate and experimentation, which has led to other roadmaps.

Despite the mandate to manage the fort was temporary, precarious and almost without economic coverage, the activities were launched through collaborations with private, public and associations. In the first phase, in return for use of the single buildings, it sought the maintenance of the same and the delivery of cultural services and performances to the visitors that were previously agreed. These activities have enabled the verification of their compatibility with the place, the strength of demand that the cultural and artistic could express, as well as contributing also to produce a new image of the fort to the public and to the institutions. The Self Funding of these activities has emphasized that it was possible a profound rethinking of the dynamics of management, as well as economic and financial, assume for the future of the fort.

After the first years, essentially pioneering, there were outlined the functions that could express the complete restoration of the fort to the city while respecting and enhancing the historical, environmental, architectural endorsed values : for its

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quality and for its location, the fort can be the centre of study and of the tourist fruition of the Venetian fortification system, because of its amphibious dimension it can be the cultural centre of the mainland dedicated to the lagoon and its history of small traditional boats, because of its size, in addition to the services required by the previous activities, it can host qualified cultural and educational activities, the loss of the military functions can be replaced by new symbolic meanings of products from contemporary art, providing a functional connection from one side to the mainland production, on the other side with Venice, the great showcase ' art.

Marco Polo System G.E.I.E. has developed and tested this hypothesis, implementing a series of projects funded mainly by the European Union or by the Veneto Region, which also allowed us to create a centre of Documentation of Venetian, Italian and European heritage, there were finalized guidelines for the reuse of the Entrenched Camp of Mestre, with in-depth studies on the energy sustainability and renewable sources, they were developed territorial marketing tools, international networks of cooperation and deepen economic and financial aspects especially related to the dynamics of partnership between the public and private actors. In this regard, one of the results achieved is the proof that the recovery of Forte Marghera without the intervention of public funds it is advantageous for a private investor only on condition of making almost no public functions. This scenario in open contradiction to the increasing the demand of citizens and thus making the investment more risky.

In terms of promotion and dissemination, we must remember the many publications produced by Marco Polo System EEIG: a collection dedicated to the Venetian heritage in the Mediterranean, a series of books dedicated to the Forts, and a series of photographic research that has produced what is perhaps the first work that includes the entire defensive system of Venice, seen through the lens of an artist.

#### **3.3 Added Value of Forte Marghera**

The history of Forte Marghera represents a milestone in the history of Venice for the nineteenth and twentieth century. Forte Marghera built after the fall of the Republic of Venice represents a paradigmatic element of the transformation of the relation between the city and its territory. The development of the shooting range of the artilleries put to an end the natural protection of which has benefit for centuries the city, nowadays exposed also to possible attacks from the mainland. Forte Marghera represents the emblem of the end of the isolation of the city.

With regards to the relevance in the national history, the events of Forte Marghera between 1848/49 assume a relevant importance. Here they gather together to fight for the defence of the Venetian freedom and in perspective for the future political

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union of the Italian State, volunteers and fighters for the freedom coming not only Italy, but also from abroad. These events are common heritage and strongly felt by the citizen's population. Much toponymy inside the city, streets, squares remember still nowadays events and persons of that time. Strong of this relevant historical past and of in-doubt environmental features that nowadays distinguishes it, the fort is since several years destination of persons, groups, scholarships that ask the possibility to visit it and to discover it. In many abandoned places left in the several buildings of the military, many association are finding important point of support for their leisure, cultural, social, activities, but also of micro non-profit economical activities. On the other hand the ongoing urban and territorial transformations of Venice and its mainland surrounding metropolitan areas, has as milestone of the process also the disposal of Forte Marghera and the design of his new life.

#### **3.4 Threats to the asset of Forte Marghera**

The decades abandon of most of the buildings has lead to a rapid degradation of single structures and incontrovertible in its physicality leading to the collapse of roofs and main walls of several buildings. Furthermore, there is also the anthropic degradation due to pollution, for the residuals of the military activities in the fort. This state of art leads also to security issues and social decay, which often characterize negatively the peripheral areas of urban centres, close to industrial areas, including major roads, which represent an economic cost as well as social. The lack of public transportation close to the fort and the inadequacy of parking places empathise this barrier.

#### **3.5 Current Challenges**

Nowadays the lack of public resources represents the first relevant issue to tackle in the context of a path of full recovery of Forte Marghera as barycentre pivot of defence system composed by other 11 forts built around and nowadays lost inside the city. The process of purchase of Forte Marghera and of other six historical forts of the Entrenched Camp of Mestre has considerably drained the financial possibilities of the Municipality of Venice and with this the immediate possibilities of relevant infrastructures investments for the recovery of the fort where many buildings as a consequence of the long abandon are nowadays affected by a serious state of instability. These difficulties has lead to find effective solutions in

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the context of PPP paths which not always can find convergence with the more general public expectations. The relevant costs for restoration and reclamation intervention make strong risks of exclusion of a predictable process of public re-acquisition of this important monument, which value it is not only in its even important history, but also in being the barycentre of a defence system of the city of Venice that with its waterfront and its land-front results to be composed by more than one hundred architectonic-military structures, a real open-air anthology of the military architectures between the Modern age until the end of World War One.

#### **3.6 Latest achievements in Forte Marghera**

Purchase of Forte Marghera by the City of Venice from the Ministry of Defence 2003

The Decision 394 of 23 July 2004 of the City of Venice, iterated for the part concerning the management also in 2005 and 2006, has appointed the Marco Polo System G.E.I.E. of the ordinary maintenance of the areas of the forts and of the accomplishment of activities related to the set up of a widespread museum of the Entrenched Camp.

The Decision 394 of the City of Venice, appoints the Marco Polo System to write a study for the utilization and the valorisation of the forts “ inside a framework of involvement of public and private bodies” (Decision n. 2512 of 19/10/2004).

In the field of the activities of valorisation, promotion and recovery of Forte Marghera and of the other forts of the ECM, starting from the year 2004 it was implemented the project Vivilforte, that has linked in a network the activities and the cultural performances in Forte Marghera with similar initiatives of other European Union partners (Slovenia, Hungary and the Netherlands). The initiative is implemented in a cycle of theatre and musical performances proposed in the summer season on a common program finalized to provide an European dimension to the recovery process of the abandoned military structures.

Forte Marghera - the new Pole of Regional Development - Establishment of a Centre of Excellence of Veneto of the Dismissed Military Heritage. With the decision n. 4237 of the Regional government dated 28.12.2006 it has been appointed Marco Polo System of the task to define a project focused on Forte Marghera for supporting intervention for the promotion and the development of project initiatives in the field of infrastructures in order to improve the offer of the

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territory and foster the investments of private partners. The study has promoted actions of territorial marketing and a preliminary planning grounded on principles of bio-architecture and the utilization of renewable sources.

On 31 July 2007 Marco Polo System has delivered the "Guidelines for the Reuse and Recovery of the Entrenched Camp of Mestre (ETM)", providing a methodological approach finalized to the recovery of each single fort, in a framework of a general vision of the ETM.

With the Decree n.376 of 13 June 2008 of the City of Venice, Marco Polo System geie has been appointed by the City of Venice of the task of the unique management of Forte Marghera until the fort will be assigned to a new third part

Masterplan for the urban recovery of Forte Marghera funded by the Central Europe Programme project ACT4PPP 2008-2011. The preliminary studies and policy guidelines were finalized to assess the economic feasibility of PPP solutions with the techniques of the project finance. The consideration of the different scenarios (conservative towards innovative) with different degrees of transformation and hypothesis of utilization has led to the evident conclusion of their economic un-feasibility. The following analysis of further scenarios without elements of financial economy, that requires the absolute certainty of relevant capital gains and quick time of transformation, has allowed to determine alternative paths grounded on elements of real economy, self-recovery and public commitment.

2009 - Contemporary Art - Krossing - Collateral event of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Biennale of Venice.

In April 2009 it was opened the Centre of Study and Documentation on the Venetian, National and European Defence Systems. The Centre provides a wide bibliographic review on the fortified heritage in Europe and is in phase of preparation of a digital archive.

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#### **3.7 Multi-functional use of Forte Marghera**

One of the main reasons for the participation of the City of Venice in the project AT-FORT is the exchange of experiences and relevant achievements related to the implementation and enforcement of innovative new economic functions on the fortified assets, with a specific focus on the processes of virtuous generation of revenues for self-maintenance. Within this framework it is important to highlight the ongoing experience of the project Performa in Forte Marghera. Since the year 2006 Performa is setting up pilot experiences suitable to the reuse of the single assets and structures of Forte Marghera, targeted to verify the quantitative and qualitative consistency of the demand of areas for cultural productions. As a result of this approach there is the test of the functionality and the usage of the single assets, that will assess the effective utility that the actors can benefit, in particular for what concerns the geographical positioning and the co-habitation with other partners, either suppliers or customers, with whom set up together the specific field of the cultural industry competitive productive networks, featured by a strong interdependence among the single organizations.

So far the combined analysis of the studies performed and the achievements of the management of Forte Marghera have highlighted that the management and the recovery of the area must tackle with the intrinsic themes that the “fortified asset as ensemble” represents. More precisely, the following themes:

- Of the culture and of the traditions of the Venetian territory and of the mainland;
- the valorisation of the historical fortified heritage;
- the development of creative productions
- free time and leisure;
- the historical and environmental education of the eaves system

Marco Polo System in charge of the management of the fort is pursuing the following goals

- maximum enlargement of the number of subjects that uses the areas of Forte Marghera,
- progressive recovery and re-use of single assets that are currently unfit for use;
- improvement of the services for the visitors
- Economic self-sustainability of the management and of the recovery of the fort

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The latter point is the most sensitive issue that will be deepened with the implementation of the activities of the AT FORT in an approach of mutual sharing of experiences, best practices and constraints of the management, of the valorisation and recovery of the fortified assets.

Forte Marghera 2011 - 2013

utilizzo degli immobili

Uffici

Magazzini

Spazi espositivi

Laboratori

Soggetti esterni

Immobili crollati  
o inagibili

Aree aperte al pubblico



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The further evolution of the Performa project is the so called “ Parco del Contemporaneo” (Contemporary Park) that is the ensemble of the combined laboratory- performing and exhibiting activities in the field of contemporary arts. In parallel since the year 2010 in Forte Marghera it has been developed a “Museum of traditional Boats”, that is also an inter-active live-laboratory of building of traditional Venetian boats, with the added value of traditional boats in the canals of the fort and a collection of unique masterpieces of old traditional boats built even more than one hundred years ago.