



## OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF CASALE MONFERRATO

Casale Monferrato refuses the settlement offered by the Swiss 'Now we can go on with the National Government at our side'

The City Council of Casale Monferrato convened at 11 am has put an end to the long drawn discussions of the past few weeks on whether to accept the 18.3 M€ offer made by the Swiss defendant Stephan Schmidheiny as a settlement in the Eternit trial.

With just over a week to go to the verdict (Feb 13th), the City Council has decided to turn down the offer presented by Becon AG on behalf of SS. The City has decided to pursue the programme outlined by the national government, the Minister of Health Mr Renato Balduzzi and the Minister of the Environment as outlined in the course of a meeting held in Rome on January the 26th 2012. The aim is to reach a framework agreement between the State and the local Authorities to solve the Casale Emergency.

'This City Council was faced with a difficult and especially complex decision –is Mayor Demezzi's comment and we decided with responsibility and rationally, in spite of the very strong emotions which our situation stirs. We always sought the best for the present and for the future of our city, and we acted to give our community a possibility a new outlook, wishing to eliminate all the environmentally critical spots and to favour research in health''

Two reasons led us to consider S. Schmidheiny's offer ' the Mayor recalls- : the absolute uncertainty on the time and on the sums which may be awarded in the course of civil proceedings and the fact that in any case justice would be sought. However, we never stopped seeking alternative solutions to offer sufferers and those who are at risk a practical solution to our problems, without allowing controversies and the instrumentalisation of feelings of such a wounded community to take over. Quite the opposite: the support and the constant encouragement of the City Council and the Councillors of the governing majority were instrumental in assessing each and every proposal, so that we were able to jointly outline each step of the way'.

'Mayor Demezzi continues: 'We were and are committed to the fact that the emergency which has been afflicting our city for such a long time should once again become the centre of the debate. This was the spirit that led us in the meeting with Minister Balduzzi: the national government's comprehensive undertaking and programme to deal with Casale Monferrato's environmental and health emergency made it possible for us to reconsider our position vis a vis Schmidheiny's offer'

'The National Government's renewed commitment starts a new era in Casale – continues Mayor Demezzi - which looks far beyond decontamination and the funds required to build a new asbestos landfill. As for research, prevention and treatment of mesothelioma, the pilot project of the National Centre for the prevention and control of diseases (CCM) will focus on health monitoring in asbestos exposed workers and communities, to increase disease monitoring and action. Furthermore, thanks to the role of the Regional Centre for Research, Monitoring and Prevention of Asbestos related Risks (CRA) of the Alessandria Health District, the national network of related facilities at a national and international level will be developed to promote cutting ground breaking research on the disease'.

Our behaviour has been consistent with the citizens we represent and with our approach –concludes Mayor Demezzi - and this is the feeling the City Council would like to convey. The landscape has changed, not our aims, the latter being that of keeping Casale Monferrato at the centre of attention. We will not let the emergency be forgotten now the offer has been turned down and when the verdict of the (lower) court. This Council will endeavour to promote research and decontamination, to constantly remind the national government of their commitments (programmes aimed at developing, promoting and favouring new opportunities for prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of mesothelioma, and to reclaim and redevelop our community. We will never forget our past but the time has come to look to the future. This Council can do so with the pride of those who have always fought and will always fight for life'.

Casale Monferrato, 03/02/2012

TRANSLATION BY VICTORIA FRANZINETTI