

ENVIRONMENT: WASTE, JAPAN CHOOSES EUROPEAN TECHNOLOGY ANSA

7 mega plants constructed on the model of a demonstration plant in Italy

(Roberto Maggi).

(ANSA) - TOKYO, 13th May – Incredible but true: in order to solve the waste emergency, Japan has recently chosen to build seven mega ecological plants for the recycling of wastes, the same as a demonstration plant which was built in Italy, Fondotoce in 1992 by the German Company THERMOSELECT, which is however no longer in operation as it was used for Testing only .

"We have chosen the THERMOSELECT-Technology because it enables to recycle all kinds of wastes, domestic and industrial wastes, transforming the caloric energy contained in the wastes into synthesis gas with similar characteristics to that of natural gas, without emissions of toxic substances, like dioxins and furans.

We are fully satisfied with the performances of the plants" stated today Sumio Yamada, vice president of the Environmental Division of the group 'JFE', number two of the steel industry in Japan, resulting from the merger of two big iron and steel companies, 'Kawasaki Steel' and 'Nippon Kokan', which purchased in 1997 the THERMOSELECT-technology, when it still was 'Kawasaki Steel'.

"Right today – goes on Yamada – we have obtained validation of the government for three new plants. There are presently 5 plants in operation with full approval. The sixth plant should be commissioned next month and the seventh, at the moment under advanced construction phase, will be ready in 2006.

"This event counted on the presence of a THERMOSELECT-Delegation, with head-office in Locarno, Switzerland, led by the Managing Director, Jürgen Riegel, who explains. "Our first plant in Japan, in Chiba, which has been in operation for six years disposes of 300 tons of wastes a day – Another one, recently commissioned in Kurashiki, has a daily capacity of 556 tons and the others have similar dimensions".

We wonder why such a technology has not taken root in Italy, which, contrary to traditional disposal plants, enables the gasification of wastes transforming its organic components into synthesis gas to be used as raw material in the chemical industry or as an energy source like natural gas; into water and hydrogen to be used for example in fuel cells and inorganic components into metals and minerals, which can be used in various fields, for example in the building industry.

Even more surprising is that the first THERMOSELECT-demonstration plant on an industrial scale with a disposal capacity of daily 100 tons of wastes has been constructed right in Italy, in Fondotoce, Verbania.

"The reasons remain a mystery to us as well – commented J. Riegel – Italy has been living in a condition of waste-emergency for years and especially in some regions, like Campania. Our technology works, it has been proved in Japan and even before it has been proved in Fondotoce, a test-facility closed when our first commercial plant went into operation in Karlsruhe in 1999. It's a highly flexible technology and,

as here in Japan, can directly dispose of all kinds of wastes, domestic, industrial or special wastes including the hospital wastes or can for example use RDF (Refuse Derived Fuel) arisen from wastes produced in Italy. RDF has a calorific content which is higher than that of the wastes before treatment. Our plants would be able to produce a larger quantity of energy, in the form of synthesis gas. I believe that in Italy the real problem is the political goodwill, involving both central government and local authorities". "Who visited the THERMOSELECT-plant in Chiba, Japan, in the Bay of Tokyo, inside of a huge iron and steel complex of the group 'JFE', noticed a great cleanliness, noiselessness, and the absence of bad smells".

Even more surprising and consequently unpleasant:

"many of the mechanical and electronic components of the plant, are made in Italy", "we have chosen them because of their superior quality" said Hironari Marushima, president of the 'Japan Recycling Corporation" a company controlled by 'JFE' which operates the plant, bewildered in hearing that in Italy such a plant for the disposal of wastes still does not exist. (ANSA).

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