

## CUTTING COSTS WITHOUT LAYOFFS

To the Assessors  
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and for information to the  
groups of the South Tyrolean  
Parliament

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In the press conference of 20.06.2013, the Autonomous Province of Bolzano, Department of Health and the Consortium of Municipalities embraced their commitment by introducing free and open source software in the public administration.

On this basis, the Province has decided to migrate all of its workstations (about 7000) to LibreOffice within three years, thus ensuring that the exchange of documents between the public administration and citizens are in an open format namely ODF (Open Document Format). This choice eliminates the need for anyone to buy expensive software in order to communicate with the public sector where today the use of these tools have become indispensable.

This is the second phase that began in 2005 with the launch of a project called FUSS. This project has resulted in all Italian schools (about 2,500 workstations ) that have established the transference of the teaching concerning free software in classrooms and within families.

The benefits of these choices have much farther reaching implications than just cost savings for the administrations involved and goes beyond the computer: access to information becomes a truly sustainable and democratic state for all, the behavioural model released by Free Software completely revolutionizes the right to access knowledge. It exceeds the so-called "digital divide".

Administrations in Europe have successfully taken the same route and are now reaping the benefits from their decisions. For a long time in France, the Working Group MIMO, which brings together the ministries of Agriculture, Culture and Communication, Defence, Education, Energy, Finance, Interior and Justice, with a total of 500,000 users have certified the use of LibreOffice for the deployment on all workstations. At the same time, the Alliance OSB has joined the efforts of German and Swiss cities and communities as a

sponsor for the development of the code base for LibreOffice. The Spanish region of Valencia has recently completed the migration to LibreOffice for all of its 120,000 workstations, schools and courts included. The city of Munich in southern Germany, the region of Copenhagen, the Umbria Region, the provinces of Cremona and Macerata and many others are convinced that this is the best way forward.

Public administrations are called upon to invest public money in software products that are made available to the community at no additional cost. The development of the LibreOffice suite, firmly coordinated by the non-profit organization called the "The Document Foundation", is a good example of how the synergy between public resources, private and voluntary organizations have led to the creation of a quality product that originated in Europe and that is now fully operational.

Now government agencies and businesses in the province of Bolzano have the opportunity to become an active part of a centre of innovative development at a European level or even become the core driving force.

We therefore call on our elected representatives to actively engage in all areas in the description provided above. This consists of the following: extending the use of free software to schools in German and Ladin, publishing all the documents addressed to businesses and citizens in an open format and actively supporting the improvement and development of the LibreOffice suite.

We hereby expect the definition of a plan / roadmap, that outlines long term goals that are clear and transparent, shared among the different departments and that can be verified by the public at any time.

Unfortunately and much to our disappointment, we found that the German Office of Education has published on 21.01.2014 a tender for a Microsoft "Open Value Academic Subscription" in a unspecified contract. This call for an amount of € 1.6 million disregards the provisions of the aforementioned decisions, specifically not the Decision No 1301 of 02.09.2013 of the State Government, which provides control of current expenses in favour of expenditure on capital account.

This, when one considers the statements by Carlo Daffara at the SFSCon Conference in 2012 which was held at the TIS in Bolzano: In total, unfortunately 86% of the money spent for Microsoft licenses are lost investments for the local market . 86% of the totals going exclusively to the U.S. GDP and the consolidated Microsoft benefit and not the local economy.

Unfortunately, the above mentioned € 1.6 million is only the tip of the iceberg: According to the information portal for public contracts from 2010 to 2013 contracts that were purchased solely by the public administrations of the province of Bolzano amounted to a total of more than € 9,000,000 directly or indirectly for products of the Microsoft group of companies .

In order to finally reach an exit strategy from this very costly dependency ratio - for which

free alternatives exist - we expect an announcement for a long-term, clear and understandable strategy plan (like a roadmap) which is shared by the various Assessors of the provincial administration and the citizens, a roadmap that is implementable and verifiable. Its implementation is not only for all public administrations in South Tyrol, but also for all schools, corporations and companies according to the existing statutory rules of conduct for the digital management (Codice dell'Amministrazione Digitale - CAD) that have been provided .

We practice the right to publish this letter and the subsequent replies to ensure openness and transparency.

As the LUGBZ we would like to show our support by making ourselves available during the migration process. We strongly believe that the Province can make the transition successfully and will give the Province all the help that we possibly can.

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President of the LUGBZ

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