



The ASPO-Italy conference in Torino

Posted by [Ugo Bardi](#) on May 9, 2008 - 9:45am in [The Oil Drum: Europe](#)

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*The logo of the ASPOItaly-2 conference. It shows, superimposed to the classic ASPO peak, the mythical "**post peak car**", the battery powered, retrofitted Fiat 500*

Conference report, many links and some pictures below the fold.

The second national conference of the Italian section of ASPO, ASPO-Italy, was held in Torino on May 3rd. Among the speakers, many were well known to readers of TOD. We had Euan Mearns as guest of honor, but also Ugo Bardi, Pietro Cambi, Marco Pagani and Eugenio Saraceno; all of them have signed posts on The Oil Drum.

The conference's language was mainly Italian. It is a general problem: a lot of good work on depletion is being done in many non-English speaking countries. However, translations are expensive and time consuming; so the interaction with the rest of the world is limited. The best that I can do here is summarizing what was said so that you can have a feeling of what is being done in Italy and how the situation is here.

First, something about ASPO-Italy. It is not so much geology-centered as ASPO international is. It is mostly a group of technology-minded people, several are specialists in renewable energy. They have quickly understood the question of the peak and they have derived from it a sensation of urgency that something is to be done, and fast. It was for this reason that we chose as logo of the conference not just the traditional ASPO peak, but also the "post peak car", the retrofitted, battery powered, Fiat 500 created by Pietro Cambi. This little car has become a sort of symbol of the emphasis of ASPO-Italy for solutions.

ASPOItaly-2 was perhaps the first post-peak ASPO conference in the world. Recognizing that crude oil may be already in decline, we chose to focus on natural gas with the help of Euan Mearns, from The Oil Drum, who spoke about the security of European gas supply. I think I don't have to say that the picture that emerged out of the several talks on depletion was not optimistic.

The second part of the conference was dedicated to solutions, with a presentation on what we might call the Italian answer to peak oil: high altitude wind power (<http://www.kitegen.com>) developed by Massimo Ippolito. It is a very promising idea but still in the early prototyping stage.

How about impact? Well, we had some but, despite crude at 120 \$/barrel, peak oil is not mainstream news in Italy. We were interviewed in TV, something appeared in the newspapers, something more will appear in the coming days. On the whole, however, in Italy people are ignoring peak oil and everything that has to do with resource depletion; just as the rest of the world is doing. The day after the conference, going back home, we saw the A1 highway packed with cars: a long parking lot: hundreds of kilometers. It should not be a surprise: if we are at the production peak it is the historical moment of the largest amount of oil available. The point is for how long.

But it may well be that Italy will be the first industrialized country in the world to experience peak oil for real. Economically weak, strongly dependent on fossil fuels, Italy, despite being known as the "Sun Country", has done nothing exploit renewable energy to weaken her addiction to oil. Italy may well be the miners' canary of peak oil. The national carrier, Alitalia, may be the first major airline in the world to go bankrupt because of high oil prices. Not just Alitalia, but the whole country may go bankrupt if a major supply crisis arrives. It will be an interesting story; stay tuned!

Visit [ASPO Italy](#) (mainly in Italian) or the [ASPO Italy Blog](#) (all in Italian).

ASPO Italy members have been active in writing guest posts for The Oil Drum. Here is a list:

[Peak Minerals](#) by Ugo Bardi and Marco Pagani

[The Post Peak car](#) by Ugo Bardi and Pietro Cambi.

[Peak Water in Saudi Arabia](#) by Ugo Bardi.

[Peak Oil and the limits to growth](#) by Ugo Bardi

[France and Italy: is nuclear energy the way to energy independence?](#) by Eugenio Saraceno

[Cassandra's curse](#) by Ugo Bardi

An extended abstract of Euan's talk is available [here](#) (in Italian) and a [pdf of the abstract in English](#) can be downloaded from the TOD server.



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