



WORKGROUP ON ENVIRONMENT

FINAL DOCUMENT

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Problems

The Adriatic Sea has specific characteristics: it is a narrow shallow sea with strong currents, wind and sensitive waters, with these features posing continuous threats to the Adriatic, also due to the increase in traffic and transports of the vessels threatening the health of both the Adriatic and the Ionian.

Objectives:

- ✓ Support to the institutions in charge of notification and registration by the vessels navigating in the Adriatic-Ionian basin;
- ✓ Definition of the routes by reinforcing the navigation direction control system;
- ✓ Acknowledgment of the Adriatic as a sensitive sea;
- ✓ Best-practices: actions and measures implemented in the Baltic Sea.

The procedure requires the involvement of national governments, which will have to present their proposal to the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The collaboration between Adriatic regions and counties is furthermore very important to start a dialogue with national governments on the actions that should be carried out on the territory and on the types of measures to implement.

The President adds that in the Rijeka county a series of measures is currently being planned aimed at evaluating risks and needs. Against this background, the CRISES (Common Management of Sea Risk and Sea Safety in the Adriatic Euro Region) project should be noted – the project has been promoted by Apulia as lead partner within the IPA programme and will involve all Ionian and Adriatic areas in a time span of 36 months for an overall expenditure of 5 million Euros.

The President asks the AIC Forum member chambers to participate in the project. The Chamber of Commerce of Ancona reserves the right to join the project only after a careful evaluation.

The President then leaves the floor to Ms. Frontini, who reports on the agreement protocol signed with the Agency for Environmental Protection of the Marche Region ARPAM. The protocol will be sent to the President.

Discussion follows

Paolo Dal Buono reports on the activity carried out by the Italian Leisure Boat Association Assonautica, established in 1974 and present in the Adriatic Sea with 40 sailing boats, all respecting the environment and complying with safety norms. The ecological conditions of the Adriatic Sea have changed over time and have shown pollution problems, with pollution being caused also by the increase in the number of large tonnage vessels and by the disappearance of endemic species (mussels and cetaceans) due to the spill of bilge waters from the vessels to the sea.

Over time users' awareness and safety behaviours have improved, also thanks to the use of appropriate and environmentally friendly equipment.

Paolo Dal Buono suggests that the 2009 results are presented in an ad hoc meeting to be held in Rijeka. He also suggests that their annual boat race becomes an official AIC Forum event.



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The President invites Mr. Dal Buono to put forward his proposal to the AIC Forum secretariat, who will in turn illustrate it to the Forum President for her opinion on the matter.

Psilias Panagiotis, Secretary-General of the Chamber of Commerce of Aetoloakarnania, illustrates the landscape highlights of his territory, which has the two largest lakes in Greece, and expresses the wish that renewable sources of energy are increasingly used in the future to contribute to reduce pollution. To this end, he suggests that awareness-raising actions are taken, specifically through lifelong training on the issue of a correct environmental management.

The enterprises present produce waste waters, which are disposed of by entrepreneurs in an incorrect way. The use of biomasses is therefore worth wishing for, as they can help produce alternative energy that is useful for the territory.

Furthermore, the use of depuration plants to make Greek beaches accessible for bathing has awarded them the international "Blue Flag" award by the FEE *Foundation for Environmental Education*, which certifies the quality of Greek.

The Secretary-General of the Chamber of Commerce of Aetoloakarnania goes on saying that the urban waste and its recycling have been the subject of a pilot project carried out in Germany, which has made it possible to put in place tax and financial incentives in favour of citizens and will certainly lead to an increase in the rate of separate waste collection in people's homes. This project will be implemented in the Aetoloakarnania region, too. In the future it will therefore be fundamental to promote training on environmental management also in schools.

The Secretary-General of the Chamber of Commerce of Aetoloakarnania proposes participants a number of measures for the enhancement and use of renewables from alternative energy sources, which could be easily implemented on the Adriatic-Ionian coast, and reminds participants of the peculiar features of the coast, i.e. strong wind and stream generated by the tide, which could make it possible to produce wind energy and thus replace the previous energy production systems that create harm to the environment.

He also reminds participants of the possibility to use natural gas in Greece thanks to the presence of gas pipelines and gasification plants, which make it possible to pass from the liquefied natural gas in liquid state (LNG) used in sea transport to the gas needed for road and railway transport and for final consumption. Regasification plants can be installed onshore or on special offshore facilities, or alternatively on board of special FSRU (Floating Storage & Regasification Unit) vessels.

Over time and after natural gas was started being used for civil purposes too, much more attention has been paid to the safety of gas pipelines coming from Russia. The speaker also works as EMAS auditor for the famous consultancy firm TÜV, therefore he fully understands the difficulties linked to the diffusion of environmental management systems. He therefore expresses the wish that the ISO 14001:2004 standard is more frequently used, at least in an initial stage, as the EMAS management system is too complex to apply.

As regards the safety of vessel hulls, the speaker expresses the wish to collaborate with the DG ENVIRONMENT of the European Union in order to draft a common system for ship management and safety. Current safety certification systems are not enough to protect ourselves from modern vessels, therefore the speaker urges all competent authorities to impose sanctions on all polluters.

On behalf of the Educational Institution of Patras, Kaplanis Sokratis illustrates the activities carried out by the institute as regards studies on renewables. His presentation will be sent to all participants.

A project on photovoltaic solar collectors is then presented – the collectors are currently being experimented within the framework of the CRYSTAL project, promoted by the "Synergy & Development on Renewable Energy System based on Holistic Approach" FP 5-6-7. The project involves several Western Greek regions and combines the experience with solar collectors with the growth of microorganisms for the development of energy from biomasses. The development of solar panels in Greece has increased, together with the diffusion of systems of air conditioning obtained through the production of gas from biogas, which is able to convert chemical energy into electricity.

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Conclusions

The Workgroup for the Environment agrees to accept the following proposals:

- Evaluation of the **CRISES** project: expressions of interest in joining the project by AIC Forum chambers are highly wished for.
- Assonautica request to promote the “Boat Race” and request by the Chamber of Commerce of Aetelokarnania to check the feasibility of training initiatives on environmental issues.
- Feasibility and planning study by the Technical Institute for Education of Patras for the use of renewables also in sensitive areas.

In conclusion of the meeting, the President thanks all participants in the Workgroup on Environment for their contributions and presentations, which have all been extremely interesting and of notable scientific profile.