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**“The Technical Secretariat for the Adriatic  
(Instrument of financial cooperation with EU Interreg IIIA funds)”**

I believe that we should refer to a few things that have already been said. Someone talked about challenges, confrontations, intelligent strategies, proximity policies and political positions.

What I would like to do is to try to understand how all these words can express the new EU program given that, as someone has highlighted before, there are important opportunities to be taken and upon which we need to have a discussion.

My presentation on the Secretariat for the Adriatic is meant to highlight the complexity of the new EU programming system, the news about them. I also intend to show how the Secretariat for the Adriatic has attempted to provide an answer to the difficulties we need to face up to.

In the slides I will show you, you will be able to see a brief description of the new European program.

With the political cohesion for the period between 2007 and 2013, the objective of the territorial cooperation has become the third column of the cohesion policy. As you will be able to see yourselves, the territorial cooperation is divided in trans-border, trans-national and interregional. What are the funds available to these three types of cooperation?

In total there are 8.5 billions Euros to be given, of which 6.44 will be spent on the trans-border cooperation, 1.83 on the trans-national cooperation and 455 million on interregional cooperation. The map in this slide shows the areas interested by this period's program. As you can see, there is a specific concentration in the North-East and Centre-East areas.

Talking about the trans-border cooperation, what are the differences in terms of topics between these two programs? There are no differences as far as the measures planned for 2006-2007, we have our focus on five priorities: promotion of entrepreneurship; risk prevention; urban and rural areas; no isolation; equipment. The same priorities are stated basically in the next program too, the trans-national one, which originally comprised four programs as shown in the slides. All four programs were concentrated in Central and South-East Europe – especially the one for our territory: the Card.

What you see now is the map of the program for South-East Europe – the Balkan area. The territories indicated by dashed lines are those in which program areas intersect and superimpose. Thus, on top of having the well known difficulties of realising these programs singularly, we also have areas in which these difficulties sum up and even double.

As I have already mentioned, there are five priorities.

The last operation was a much smaller program with a relatively smaller financial budget – 445 million Euros. Basically, this is the internal territorial cooperation to which an external territorial cooperation is associated. I will tell you about this one very quickly given that it has already been presented. The main fund is provided by the Ipa Program. This program assembles the previous five instruments. Ipa is addressed to all candidate countries to enter the EU such as Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey and also to all potential candidates such as Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia.

What is important about the pre-EU joining Ipa is that all its components are about trans-border cooperation between Ipa countries and EU member countries and amongst

Ipa countries themselves. This means that the funds destined to this second category will have to be correlated to funds made available for the trans-border cooperation – i.e. there is a tight connection between them. This is proved by the fact that when we talk about this phase we regard them as a unique instrument. This means that when we will be drafting the operative program for trans-border cooperation, we will have to make sure that the project ideas for the Italian side are shared, discussed and embraced by all partners that are located in the Eastern side of the Adriatic Sea. Therefore, there will be a much more complex sharing phase.

There will be a unique legal base and a unique base chapter with funds coming from both Fers and Ipa.

The available resources are of about 620 million Euros of which 310 million come from Ipa and the other 310 million Euros from Fers. Though the financial resources come from two programs, the rules are the same.

What I am talking about now has already been addressed by the European Commission. There are rules written by the European Commission. But if I talk about the experience we have had in these days, the reality of the situation is very different because even though the Car program should already be working by using Fers resources in terms of programs funded by Interreg, the reality is that timing, management authorities and rules are different. Thus, the international delegations that manage the Cards resources cannot easily adapt to the rules set in Brussels. The truth is that a great part of the Interreg programs, which are for extra-Adriatic partnerships, in reality struggle to obtain the co-funds granted at the time of the project's approval. On the 31st, in three days' time, we will meet in Brussels to try to resolve this issue because as you know, the current program plan closes in 2008. This means that we have very little time left to efficiently use these resources, and if these resources are not used, they will be lost forever.

This slide tells you about the allocation of Ipa funds in the 2007-2009 period. As you can see, there are sufficient resources available.

This is the area of trans-border cooperation for the period between 2007 and 2013. Please note how this area is fundamentally connected with today's meeting.

These funds can find further integration in the VII Lead Program, which different from the previous phase, has great interest in the trans-border cooperation and the four budget guidelines – people, ideas, cooperation and skills. We saw that there is a great focus, a great effort shown by the European Commissary to make sure that the Ipa resources are targetted towards international cooperation too. In this sense, the EU is willing to increase the available funds for this type of cooperation.

The VII Lead Program cooperation involves associated countries, partners, neighbouring countries and industrialised countries with different characteristics depending on the areas we talk about. Anyway, it is interesting to know that there are ten areas where it is possible to develop such cooperation, and of these ten, some are located in the Adriatic region.

This is a practical example of how to enter the VII Lead Program. There are already projects currently being realised or just completed in the Interreg IIIA and Interreg IIIB, especially in the scientific and technological research sectors. For these projects, a partnership amongst various parties has been created. For instance, the Itac Project (Technological Innovation for the Competitiveness in the Adriatic) of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce. There is already the possibility of being a candidate for the next VII Lead Program bids.

How did Le Marche Regional Council organise themselves in this context? This is not a recent decision. This was a decision made at the beginning of 2000 when we began to realise that this set of EU rules and opportunities in the Adriatic would have found us very unprepared had we not organised ourselves structurally. I would like to remind you that at this moment there are about 500 projects which are being carried out in the Adriatic and

funded by the EU, World Bank and other institutions. Therefore, you can appreciate with what chaos we would have to deal with.

Why did we create a Secretariat for the Adriatic Sea? Because we were adamant that we were in front of a complex territorial cooperation program. These territories are very different in terms of development. There is a great difficulty in analysing and finding structural partners that shares strong topic components.

In this situation, we highlighted the main issues and tried to give them an answer. There were not adequate partnerships to undertake the project. Thus, we have created a coordination between the existing networks and others that had the right requirements to sustain the topic components we were looking at. The impact of these projects is weak but, at the same time, the necessity to look for similar projects. Thus, the answer was to highlight the responsibilities of each partner and make them clear to all.

The impact of some projects is not taken into account. When I decide to realise a project I should ask myself which sort of impact this project will have on the territories? There is the necessity to better define the impact indicators currently stated in the Lisbon Strategy. During the undertaking of the project there is a need of receiving technical assistance and therefore, the necessity of creating well defined communication means. There is a lack of coordination with public and private resources and a difficulty of identifying of how to realise broad projects. I would like to give you an example here. Before leaving Valona after the Kosovo crisis in 2000, Le Marche Regional Council signed an agreement with the then governor of the Valona Region about going back there and realising some projects aimed at developing its territory. Two years later, thanks to the cooperation resources, Le Marche Region launched a project for the treatment of waste. This project was firstly supported by Unops. Together with Unops, we completed a big project on waste treatment and realised the first in-situ treatment of waste. Then, together with Unops and Valona Region we participated in a major bid funded by the World Bank for the planning of a rubbish tip. This bid was won and the project for the design of Valona rubbish tip for urban waste was completed. Recently, Valona Region asked Le Marche Region to be their partner in the bid for the construction of the rubbish tip. This project too will be sponsored by the World Bank. As you can see, we started from a small fund of about 150,000 Euros provided by Le Marche Region and scored major investments for millions of Euros. This was possible thanks to shared rules during our cooperation work which meant an integration of all funds at national, European and international level.

Another problem is the project's capability to generate structural policies within the territory as a result of the realisation of these projects. These projects should favour the exchange of good practices so that we could interchange the locations where we are working. This activity is generated by a structure that is essentially formed by two branches: the first branch is the direct participation in the programs management, whether national, international or European; the second branch is mainly dedicated to the planning of the territory and on the territory, together with single partners.

The Secretariat for the Adriatic: which instruments has it used and what are the outputs? I remind you that the Secretariat for the Adriatic has obtained double funding: the funding from the Law 84 recently integrated with Interred funding.

A database of output and best practices for their territorial actions was created. A database for all organisations located in the area catalogued by specialisations has been recently refined. We currently have the map of all projects carried out in the Adriatic region. We also have a map of valid indicators for all partner territories. We have created a permanent network for all parties involved in the project planning. We have created a roster/database for the project planners.

These are the main activities which the Secretariat has been working on since January 2007.

We bid for a project sponsored by the World Bank for the creation of a tourism master plan and a plan for the South Coast of Albania. The project was led by a company from Rome with Le Marche Region as its partner.

Together with the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce, we launched a training laboratory on project management planning techniques.

Skipping a few items, we have a number of proposals and participations for the assistance to the presentation of a number of projects funded by Interred IIIA.

In brief, these are the activities of the Secretariat. However, I think it is useful to say that the Secretariat is not simply one of the things you have heard about this morning. The Secretariat is the key and operative instrument via which these opportunities can be realised. The basic belief is: the Secretariat is governed by the territories. This means that the territories are the ones that show interest in some activities and then work with the Secretariat to work on possible solutions. When these solutions are clear, they can then be negotiated with organisations at a higher level. It is not a coincidence that, for instance, the evaluation of all the completed interventions with Law 84 funding ("Reconstruction of the Balkan area") will be done by Le Marche Region together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is because we are regarded for our positive capability of making things happen.

I thank you for your attention.