

# Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce Forum

**T**he Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce Forum Association was born in 2001 following an agreement protocol between the Ancona Chamber of Commerce and the Split Chamber of Economy.

The Forum was created to promote economic development in the Adriatic area, strengthen relations between the Chambers of the countries on both sides of the sea and favour legal and administrative cooperation between countries.

The organization's headquarters are at the Ancona Chamber of Commerce and it coordinates 30 Chambers of Commerce on both sides of the Adriatic. The Chambers usually meet annually. Gatherings are hosted by each country member in turn: Italy, Croatia, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovenia, Greece and Albania.

The Forum Association has its own permanent management group. This group is a non-profit, trans-national voluntary association called the



The board of speakers presided over by Jadranka Radovanic, President of the Forum

“Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce Forum Association”.

The 2007 annual gathering took place in Ancona, at La Fonte Hotel in the bay of Portonovo, from the 28th to the 30th of May. Due to the importance of the topics discussed, the meeting was held under the auspi-

ces of the European Parliament. The official Sponsor of this event was Unicredit Bank for Enterprises. The VII Forum Edition was marked by the presence of many important international guests. The 2007 Forum began with a meeting of all the Forum bodies.



## Speech by the presidente of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce Giampaolo Giamapoli

### Towards european accreditation

**T**oday, close coordination between EU institutions is vital. The attention given by Europe to our association shows that this Forum represents a true example of good practice in terms of fostering economical growth in the Adriatic basin. The Forum has already started an accreditation process in Bruxelles, which will be completed in September 2007 with the official presentation of our Association to the European Parliament. This accreditation process is therefore an important benchmark towards legal recognition of the Forum. It is a strategic requirement to support what the European Union and the countries of the West Balkans are trying to build together. One of the Forum's goals

is to obtain independence when it comes to dealing with EU programs and requirements. This independence can be achieved only by obtaining full legal and jurisdictional status. In this way the Association will be able to help its countries in planning and coordinating projects on both sides of the sea, making sure that there is an agreement of intents and procedures in all member countries. This forthcoming September, at a session of the European Parliament, the Forum will be presented to the European institutions at a meeting entitled: The Euro-Adriatic Dimension. A case study of excellence: the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce Forum.

The main seminar of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce Forum VII Edition took place on the 29th of May.



The busy morning was marked by many reports and speeches by different guests. It was presented by the Croatian President of the AIC Forum **Jadranka Radovanic** together with the President of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce **Giampaolo Giampaoli** who stressed how important this event has become and outlined the European aspect of this year's Forum. As the President explained, the Association has started a process that

will be completed as it gains credit at a European level. The Mayor of Ancona, **Fabio Sturani**, talked about the experience of the Adriatic and Ionian Cities Forum. The representative of the Ancona Provincial Council, **Enzo Giancarli**, also President of the institution, stressed the Province's commitment to collaboration with the chambers in the interest of the Adriatic and Ionian area. The President of the Regional Committee **Raffaele Bucciarelli** said that the market can and must be seen as a means of cooperation and peace keeping. **Fabio Pizzino** spoke on behalf of the system of the national chambers. The Chancellor **Marco Pacetti** talked about the Uniadriion project (a network of universities in the Adriatic and Ionian Area) on behalf of the Polytechnic University of the Marche, and local town councillor **Marcolini** spoke on behalf of the Marche Region Council. Talking on the subject of "Proximity and Widening", **Luciana Sbarbati**, a Member of the European Parliament, reminded everyone of the 50th Anniversary of the treaty of Rome. She stressed that integration of the western Balkans is a challenge that Europe cannot afford to miss *"either Europe comes to terms with the fact that this train is already running and must be driven, or we will never be a geopolitically competitive continent. We need to show the world that we are as politically and economically wise as they are. Regarding the issue of the European identity of the Balkans, there are Euro-sceptics and Euro-friends"* said Sbarbati *"but what really matters is one thing only: we cannot exist on our own. Only a united and democratically strong Europe can compete at a world level and preserve its identity to face globalisation threats"*.

## THE FORUM BODIES

The Board of Directors ensures that the Association is always operative. It also makes decisions regarding the realisation of projects aimed at meeting the association's goals. It promotes co-funding which is required to activate projects and programmes.

**The Assembly:** this is the Association's directing body. It defines political and programme guidelines.

**The Board of Auditors:** this is the Association's watchdog. It ensures that work is carried out in accordance with the law, the association's standards and rules, with particular attention to the management of funds.

**The International Court of the Adriatic and Ionian Area:** this is an internal institution of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce Forum. It's role is to provide competent services with regard to mediation, arbitration, arbitrage and expert determinations. It is meant to help different countries to overcome mutual differences more efficiently when it comes to privacy issues.



The workshop on tourism: the Ancona Chamber of Commerce Secretary General **Michele De Vita** and President **Giampaolo Giampaoli**



## CONTRIBUTION TO THE GREEN PAPER ON THE EUROPEAN MARINE INTEGRATED POLICIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Ancona Chamber of Commerce has contributed to the Green Paper on the European Marine Integrated Policies that was presented by Michele De Vita, Forum General Secretary and General Secretary of the Ancona Chamber Body. He explained that, "The example set by Ancona with its "sea district" is of special interest as it shows the potential of

development within the female sector. In just a few years the sector has been able to change and become an excellence pole in terms of mega yacht construction and acquisition of visibility and fame within the international sector. There are 686 businesses that operate in the nautical sector and their export activity has grown very rapidly, now amounting to 354 million Euros (against 84 million Euros 5 years ago). The Ancona Chamber of Commerce has been working in this sector for years, promoting an open exchange of opinion within the institutions for production support".



The workshop on transports

An important element of each annual Forum are workshops held on various topics. This year, the representatives of as many as 30 member countries, assisted by economic and scientific experts, gathered around six different tables, which hosted workshops on: **Tourism, Transport, Agriculture, the Environment, Women's Entrepreneurship and Fishing and fish-farming.** The final reports of these sessions were presented at the end of each workshop. Many of the suggestions made during the workshops will be implemented in the forthcoming months.

An interesting initiative came out of the Tourism Workshop: *a booklet containing a brief and general description of each country and subject (Art-History-Culture-Sea-Environment-Well Being-Wine and Cuisine-Sport-Religion)* was presented.

For the first time, the attractions of the Adriatic and Ionian basin are presented in a single document which portrays the region as a whole - from Diocletian's Palace in Split, the Trojan Arch in Ancona, the remote Fonte Avellana and the Trulli in the Istria Valley. This multifaceted tourism campaign by the Adriatic and Ionian countries revolves around the sea. As suggested by the Coordination Committee of the tourism workshop, it is the sea which connects the region, which is the main attraction that tourists associate with the area.

This new idea will be an important point in marketing and promoting activities in the regions (fairs, gadgets, brochures for tour operators).

In addition, the table decided to act on a proposal to create an interactive website. The start-up of an Adriatic and Ionian Central Committee is part of the complex marketing plan. The Committee's task is to stress the importance of quality tourism in order to best use the different potential and characteristics of each country.

All proposals will be grouped in a common promotional strategy and presented to the associated Chambers.

The Chambers were invited to actively take part in the Coordination Committee by providing information, data, images and useful suggestions which will facilitate monitoring and communication in the initiation of a common promotional programme for the area.

Other plans were also made for the agricultural sector: an oil tasters training project and olive oil educational programme were formulated during the workshop. This not only provides for the training of new oil tasters but should also help to strengthen cultural and economic relations between Italian producers and those in the western Balkans. It should also facilitate and encourage the exchange of knowledge in terms of good practices between entrepreneurs on both sides of the sea. Training courses in zootechnics and its different aspects (food, the environment, society, tourism) will be offered, together with the possibility of continuous interaction between operators in the Balkan area and scientists and entrepreneurs in the Marche region.

The Workshop on Transport presented the results of the Adriatic and Ionian Maritime Traffic Observatory.

These show an overall positive trend for the traffic of passengers and goods in the Adriatic Sea - though there are slight differences for different ports. In particular, the traffic of containers has increased by 16%.

The main worry that emerged from the discussions is that increasing traffic in the Adriatic may jeopardise health and safety procedures and make it difficult to preserve the environment and coast, according to the guidelines given in the "Green Paper on European Marine Integrated Policies".

Analyses of European policies on transport show that there is a risk that the Adriatic area (and Southern Europe in general) may be marginalized in terms of main guidelines for the development of intermodal corridors and other European transport infrastructures.

Therefore, it is necessary that the Forum too should contribute to improve the potential that these areas have and should help them to be heard at a European level. This can be done by strengthening associations and growing initiatives within the European Commission.

In the workshop on fishing and fish-farming professional training was discussed. This will be done by introducing



represent a sort of interface and, at the same time, would commit to find new funds at local, national and European level for all the proposed activities.

Sharing the same sea means also trying to protect this important habitat.

For this reason, the Workshop on the Environment proposed the creation of an Italo-Croatian permanent technical body, which in the future would also include other chambers belonging to the Forum.

The body will be supported by a team of experts. This body will have the task of coordinating environmental information between different counties regarding current legislation and the main critical issues.

One of the main issues is the delicate problem of refuse management in port areas with the creation of a network of all the ports in the Adriatic and Ionian area.

The importance of Women's entrepreneurship in the Adriatic basin, was marked by The Congress of Women's Entrepreneurship of the Adriatic and Ionian Sea that followed the Forum and took place in Portonovo (Ancona) on the 30th and 31st of May 2007 (a year of equal opportunities). Photo of women's entrepreneurship workshop.

At the end of the workshop on Women's Entrepreneurship (an initiative that was born two years ago from the table of work dedicated to this topic), the female entrepreneurs of the region finalised a new common means of exchange and promotion: "Shop Show: The Women's Entrepreneurship Network, a portal of all female enterprises of the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea.

This is aimed at offering opportunities for establishing contacts and exchanging information and knowledge between associations and enterprises on both sides of the sea.

The "Shop Show" portal is an area in the Forum's website [www.womeninbusiness.forumaic.org](http://www.womeninbusiness.forumaic.org) created following a suggestion made by the Ancona Committee, chaired by Cristina Gorajski, which has its headquarters in the Ancona Chamber.



*The workshop on women entrepreneurship presided over by Jodranka Radovanic and Cristina Gorajski*

new concepts of safety and quality standards and by guaranteeing a constant, efficient monitoring of the whole Adriatic Area, especially when it comes to fish markets and fishing techniques.

A further proposal made during the workshop was to organise a meeting of fishery sector representatives of the European Community and representatives of East-Adriatic countries (PAO countries); Slovenia and the Italian Adriatic Regions (IAR Regions) in order to discuss fishing operations in the Adriatic. The Chambers of Commerce Forum would

## FUTURE EVENTS

- **September 2007:** Short meeting of the European Parliament: "The Euro-Adriatic Dimension. A case history of excellence: the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce Forum": presentation of the Forum to the European institution;
- **May 2008:** Split: VIII Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce Forum;
- **Period 2007/2013:** The Forum will actively contribute to create conditions and the means to allow a future coordination structure (GECT- European Territorial Cooperation Group) to realise activities in the Adriatic area following the key principles of good partnership explained in the Financial Perspectives 2007-2013 act, approved by the European Union.

## THE FORUM AT THE CENTRE OF THE ADRIATIC EUROREGION with the presence of the Secretariat of the Adriatic Sea

The political proposal made by the Forum is to systematically contribute to the formation of the Adriatic Euro-region, which would represent a number of territories with a complex and wide geopolitical dimension.

Bearing this in mind, it is believed that the most appropriate technical body to activate and supervise projects within the Euro-Mediterranean area is the Secretariat for the Adriatic.

This body is already operative and is intended to facilitate the activation of public or private project plans for local development and territorial cooperation.

The idea of having a Secretariat came out of the "Conference for the Development and Security of the Adriatic" which took place in Ancona in 2000 as part of the "Adriatic-Ionian Initiative" sponsored by the Italian Government.

The Secretariat is also strongly supported by the Marches Regional Council as a means of guaranteeing stability, cohesion, security and sustainable growth in our area, as stated in paragraph 9 of the "Ancona Statement".

Partners of the Secretariat for the Adriatic comprise the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce Forum, the Uniadriion university network and the Cities of the Adriatic Forum".

## PROJECT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR JURIDICAL ASSISTANCE

The 2007 Forum edition was important also in terms of setting up a number of activities regarding a project for the development of services of juridical, commercial and cooperative assistance in the Adriatic area.

This initiative, which was awarded to the Ancona Chamber of Commerce and funded by national funds (l. 84/01) will help to harmonize procedures amongst the countries located around the Adriatic Sea.

The aim of this initiative is to create a network system amongst the Chambers of Commerce and Economy of the Adriatic area in order to help the sharing of information and knowledge regarding the available instruments for the resolution of extra-judicial controversy (A.D.R. conciliation, refereeing).



## CONTACTS

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