

TOURISM WORKGROUP

Speech by Mr Michele De Vita – Forum's General Secretary

1 Activities carried out by the tourism workgroup (May 2007- April 2008)

1.1 Collection and analysis of data on tourism demand and supply in the Adriatic - Ionian area

- **Sector research on integrated tourism** in the Adriatic - Ionian tourism (by integrated tourism we mean an offer whose destinations are in two or more countries in the Adriatic - Ionian area). The research highlighted the following issues:
 - The international tourism market will continue to grow until 2020 at very sustained rates: the countries of origin of the tourists are more and more varied. New markets are emerging with huge growth potential for tourism demand. Generally, tourist travel more frequently in one year, the growing elderly population is becoming an ever more attractive segment for the sector;
 - Tourists' behaviour and consumption profiles change: there are more and more "do it yourself" tourists who look for an active holiday (they prefer holidays which include sport activities, adventure, wellbeing and/or nature) they are sensitive to social issues, and are strongly driven by technology and pay more attention to the environment;
 - The capacity of the Adriatic - Ionian area to attract tourists on international markets differs from country to country: as far as the western Adriatic coast is concerned (the Italian regions around the Adriatic), over the last few years the arrivals trend has been quite stable. Besides this, the overall dynamics of the area are strongly influenced by the data registered by Veneto, and Venice in particular, which is a case apart as it is considered a classic tourist destination. The eastern Adriatic coast has a huge attraction capacity: Croatia (80% of international movements) followed at a significant distance by Slovenia (15%), Montenegro (3,4%), Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina (5%). Croatia, Slovenia and Greece are forecasted to register important growth rates;
 - Considerations emerging from the analysis of integrated tourist packages: a tourist offer that includes the Adriatic or Ionian areas in an extended sense, almost always includes Croatia and sometimes also other regions/countries. Only in rare cases, does the Italian Adriatic offer go together with the one of the eastern coast. Some "models" of integrated packages have been identified, each one with its own

peculiarities: some have a certain characterisation of the geographical origin, while others have a lower or higher level of integration of the area's offer.

- **A first selection of the most representative integrated packages** has been carried out and the results have been **published on the website** www.adrion.forumaic.org
- In order to collect even more significant and pertinent information for the research, some **telephone interviews with tour operators** have been carried out. The tour operators that have been interviewed already offer this type of integrated tourism products;
- In order to complement the tourist data collected last year a new **data collection action** has been implemented with the aim to obtaining the information needed to carry out a **georeferenced browsing** of the Adriatic - Ionian area on the new website.

1.2 *Creation of promotional material*

- **brochure:** some changes have been made to the first version printed last year as a first experiment; these include the addition of the new "Adrion" logo, a graphic restyling, the addition of new images with a better graphics;
- **Adrion logo:**
 - A mission and the identity of the logo have been defined;
 - The logo is being used in the material/activity destined to promote the area in an integrated way;
 - An operative manual has been created on the technical and graphic specifications (available in CD and pdf version);
 - The international registration procedure is being completed.
- **shoppers:** shoppers have been made to start circulate the logo. They will be distributed during future promotional events in the area. Yesterday, some shoppers containing promotional material (brochure and leaflet on what the "Adrion" logo is) were distributed at the end of the plenary session.
- **"Adrion" website:** the website www.adrion.forumaic.org is now online. The idea has been presented last year during the 2007 Forum in Ancona:
 - in particular, the interactivity of the website has been improved and enhanced with the inclusion of a browsing by territory by georeference mode. "Georeferenced browsing" uses satellite images of the territory and allows the geographical localisation of each tourist "attraction" and makes it possible to identify it graphically with a point of interest on the map. The research of the points of interest can be refined on more geographical levels (countries, provinces/counties, single place) or according to the tourist interest of the user (art and culture, sea and nature, sport and wellbeing, religion and food and drinks);

- the georeferenced visualisation mode has been designed also for the tourist packages whose destinations are indicated by points of interest on the map of the area;
- this choice was also driven by the results of the research on integrated tourist packages and on the characteristics of the tourist segments that seem to be more inviting for the Adriatic - Ionian market. The georeferenced mode allows "do it yourself" tourists to explore what they are interested in and lets them to organise their personalised holidays in an active way; while the segment of the "over 40s", who are more inclined to buy organised holidays, can directly check the offers of integrated packages currently on the market;
- the website is also an excellent information support for tour operators, who can take ideas and suggestions to create integrated packages;
- this type of browsing, ideally recalls the mission included in the "Adrion" logo, that is to say that it allows to present the Adriatic - Ionian area in an organic way (geographically and graphically represented on the map with the sea at its heart) enhancing the value of multiplicity and variety of the offer of the tourist area. The whole offer can be discovered by clicking on the single points of interest located on the maps. Each point of interest can contain text, contacts, links to external websites and images related to each tourist attraction;
- the basic idea was to develop a "showcase" website that presents the area's tourist offer in a complete and articulated way and refers to other sources on the web for further information so as to make website updating easier and quicker;
- in order to fully tap the huge commercial potential of this tool each participating Chamber of Commerce must be responsible for the information published about their own area. For this reason I ask those people who in each Chamber of Commerce are in charge of following the works of the Tourism Workgroup to communicate any changes, corrections and additions needed to the Secretariat of the workgroup in order to fully deploy the potential of the georeferenced browsing mode of the website and to present the tourist offer of each area in the best possible way with texts, contact details, information websites and images.

1.3 Meetings and operational activities

- At the end of December a **preliminary meeting** was held. The meeting saw the participation of the staff of the Tourism workgroup in order to consider the activities in view of the 2008 Forum;
- On January 21st, the **Kick off meeting** of the Tourism workgroup was held. The meeting was the occasion to officially launch the activities of the workgroup. The invitation to participate was extended to the partner Chambers of Commerce, the members of the technical steering committee, some tour operators and other actors who are carrying out projects in line with the activity of the Tourism workgroup aiming at analysing the promotion and the tourism offer of the Adriatic - Ionian area. During the meeting the work plan for 2008 was presented and shared;
- A **convention for the cooperation with the PadmaLab** project was signed with the Università Politecnica delle Marche, which is the leading institution for this project;

- The guidelines for the adoption of the Adrion logo by institutions and private organisations were also established.

1.4 Research for community funds

The Chamber of Commerce of Ancona, representing the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic - Ionian area, presented a project to obtain community funds to be used for the tourist promotion of the Adriatic - Ionian area. If the proposal is accepted, these resources will be used to carry out the activities of the Tourism Workgroup in the period 2008 - 2009 with special focus on the intervention areas indicated in the project which are Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania.

The project presented, called "Adrlon Tour", has as its main aim the enhancement of the tourist offers of the areas which are currently marginal in the international tourist market through the development of an organic image of the Basin which can be identified with the ADRION area trademark.

The specific aims are:

- To build a standardised system of rules shared among the institutions and the private operators able to coordinate the tourist offer of the Basin in order to encourage the use of the Adrion trademark;
- To stimulate the local institutions to promote, at an international level, their territories in an integrated way according to the standards of the area trademark;
- To define the communication tools needed to promote the image of the areas of the Basin as a whole;
- To favour the development of knowledge and competences among the operators of the sector on issues concerning the international tourist system, the creation and management of a tourist package, the development of a quality system and territorial marketing respecting sustainable tourism and eco-tourism forms through training and assistance in the creation of (experimental) packages containing more than one destination in different countries of the Basin;

the project will carry out the following activities:

- Formulation and realisation of a **specifications document** for the area (Adrlon);
- Definition of an **integrated communication plan** and promotion plan for the area trademark (Adrlon);
- **Implementation of communication tools** regarding the Adrion area trademark (publications, merchandising, advertisements, multimedia tools);
- **educational tour** through the realisation of an incoming event of foreign operators in the Eastern Adriatic Countries with tour operators and journalists from specialised international magazines;

- **training and assistance** to tourist operators for the development of integrated tourist packages.

2 Guidelines for future activities (2008-2009)

2.1 Completion of the tourist information of the “Adrion” website

- The “Adrion” website will become one of the basic tools for the communication activity of the area. In order to fully tap its potential, with the help and the cooperation of the partner Chambers, it will be complemented with the tourist attractions of the areas that are currently not in the website and with other interesting destinations for those areas that are currently featured in the website;
- An **enlargement of the section on integrated tourist packages** so as to be able to insert more packages allowing the georeferenced display of the destinations featured in them.

2.2 Activity for the development of the integrated offer and for the promotion of the area

- The partner Chambers of Commerce and the operators will receive the **guidelines for the adoption of the Adrion logo** in order to make the aims of the project known to as many organisations as possible and so that the intentions of the projects can be shared;
- The Chambers of Commerce which are partners in the Forum will be invited to **search and contact in their territory, tour operators and local agents that offer integrated tourist packages** and inform them about the activity of the Tourism Workgroup, the contents and functioning of the website, the promotional aims of the area so that they can be notified about the promotional activities of the Adriatic - Ionian area;
- In the next few months a **meeting with the tour operators, agencies, experts and other institutions involved in the tourism sector** is planned. This meeting intends to:
 - Determine the promotional and communication actions;
 - Present concrete proposals of integrated tourist packages to be launched into the international promotional circuit as experiments of integrated offers to be promoted through the “Adrion” website;
 - Discuss the contents of a future agreement/convention among the partners of the Forum and private operators on the common commitment to adopt and circulate the material created (brochure, logo, website).
- The partner **Chambers of Commerce will take part in the second workshop** to be held in July. This workshop will focus on:

- The presentation and evaluation of the proposals for integrated tourist packages to be launched into the international promotional circuit which emerged from the meeting with the tour operators;
 - The presentation of an agreement/convention among the partners of the Forum and private operators for the common commitment to adopt and circulate the material created and the Adrion logo;
 - The definition of promotional and communication activities to be implemented.
- In the event that the "**Adrion Tour**" project proposal is approved, the following activities will be carried out:
 - Training and assistance activities to tourist operators in the countries involved in the project so that they can be learn to create and launch into the market integrated tourist packages for the area;
 - The organisation of promotional events such as educational tours, incoming events and the possible participation in an international fair where these integrated products can be promoted;
 - The planning and realisation of a specifications document of the area (Adrion);
 - The definition of an integrated communication and promotional plan of the area trademark (Adrion);
 - The activation of communication tools about the Adrion area trademark (publications, merchandising, advertisements, multimedia tools).