

## WORKGROUP ON TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENT FINAL DOCUMENT



Corfu, 11th June 2014

### **Introduction**

The participation of the AIC Forum (Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area) in the consultation process in the context of the EUSAIR Strategy (EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region) which took place in the final months of 2013, enabled the Chamber of Commerce system to prepare an appropriate contribution, officially presented on 13 December 2013 and which, with particular reference to pillar 4 devoted to sustainable tourism, expressly references the Adrion logo.

Today, Adrion is considered best practice by the EU following the inclusion in Communication no. 713 of 30.11.2012 of "A Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic Sea and the Ionian Sea", and by the Marshes Region (responsible for coordinating the Italian Regions in the EUSAIR Strategy consultation process), which has on several occasions proposed and referenced it in connection with the work of the Intergroup Adriatic Ionian Committee of the Regions, of which the Region currently holds the Presidency.

These factors represent an important basis upon which the Workgroup on Tourism can launch proposals (pilot projects) for the Action Plan, starting out from what has been achieved in recent months, briefly mentioned here for the sake of completeness.

- the adoption and updating of a suitable system to ensure the functionality and proper use of the trademark itself, in line with the new guidelines laid down by EUSAIR;
- the promotion and creation of tourism products with transnational themes, in coherence with the European Cultural Routes Programme of the Council of Europe, enabled by the involvement of the AIC Forum as a partner in the project VeroTour (Venetian trade routes);
- the creation of a web wholesaler incoming cross-border tour operator with funding from the Adriatic Ionian Initiative as a promotional tool through the use of new technologies;
- the creation and management of workshops devoted to SMEs in the tourism sector, etc.

Precisely in order to reaffirm the work done to date, therefore, in response to the suggested actions related to Pillar 4 of the Consultation of Stakeholders in Athens on 6-7 February 2014 (an event which the AIC Forum participated in), the Workgroup on Tourism 2014 presents a number of shared proposals to ensure that Adrion is embraced as a tool of mutual interest in the creation of a coordinated branding policy, and that it is functional to other recent European provisions of primary importance, such as: "The European strategy for the promotion of coastal and maritime tourism (Communication no. 86/2014)".

### **The Workgroup on Tourism 2014 for each suggested action proposes as follows:**

#### *Suggested action 1: diversified products for tourism*

Supporting and promoting, also through the use of new technologies, the important experiments underway (Mirabilia project of the Chamber of Commerce of Matera, the project VeroTour "Venetian Trade Routes", Amphitheatres in Greece etc.) in order to highlight the identity values of the Adriatic Community,



so that the plurality of types of tourism can affirm and promote a single shared mosaic founded on common historical and cultural roots, and identify an integrated tourist product of common interest for a potential European Cultural Route (Council of Europe Programme).

*Suggested action 2: quality, standardisation and certification*

Defining a more extended, shared system of quality certification and performance measurement that is based on existing best practices (e.g. supporting the launch of a project "Adriatic Ionian Hospitality" that can be inspired by the successes associated with "Italian Hospitality" achieved by the Italian Tourism Research Institute (ISNART) and the Italian Chamber of Commerce system. In this context, an updated Adrion regulation also goes in this direction in order to emphasise the potential of the trademark (e.g. thematic packages, not only multi-country, to foster joint promotion by national tourism promotion bodies, to promote investment in training, to create consortia among "wholesaler model" operators, to develop a broader application of the logo by extending it not only to tour operators, but also to the whole tourism chain if characterised by common Adriatic historical-cultural roots).

*Suggested action 3: Management of tourism destinations*

Promoting experimentation, on a voluntary basis, with pilot destinations for dissemination of the new system for measuring the sustainability performance of tourist destinations - the European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS) - also including management models tested by NECSTouR.

In this context the project "Adriatic Innovative Factory" should be mentioned, financed by the Marches Region which promotes new creative enterprises and professional figures linked to innovative services for the development, management, and promotion of natural and cultural heritage for tourism purposes in the Macroregion. This process could lead to the birth of a genuine district/cluster to be developed through incubators for the creation of cultural and creative enterprises at the macro-regional level.

*Suggested action 4: accessibility: "Accessible tourism for all"*

Launching and implementing an innovative tool to promote the marketing of thematic tourism products typical to the Adriatic-Ionian area, based on the "digital multilanguage web wholesaler" model i.e. an online portal where traders from all over the area can promote their operations online and directly sell tourism products).

***In relation to the Workgroup on Environment:***

President Vujic, for the development of tourism in the Adriatic, has focused attention on the importance of two aspects: environment and nature protection based on four E's: 1) Economically competitive, 2) Energy safe and renewable, 3) Ecologically Sustainable 4) Esthetically attractive for tourists and inhabitants.

What is important for an individual Region is important for all areas because air, water, climate have no boundaries. It is therefore important to define common objectives and priorities on issues related to compliance with water, sea, air and land quality. The Workgroup on Environment therefore proposes:

- to use the "Adrion" trademark in the context of sustainability
- to set up an Adrion Eco Academy based in Opatija
- to implement joint projects on environmental protection issues



### **Concluding considerations**

Given the Macroregion's very characteristics and the various types of tourism intrinsic to an area of such diversity, planning must integrate a variety of different realities, territories and expectations of entities representing them, in order to put together the various pieces that form the mosaic of cultural identity intrinsic to the Macroregion.

The commitment is to define and propose shared plans and projects, to project them into a European dimension, putting together skills in order to create a single unique tourist destination, identifiable by the same mark.

The Adriatic community must be given strength and a sense of identity also in tourism-cultural terms, and 2014 offers us a unique opportunity to relaunch the future of this area, in Italy and in Europe, to be the first step of a broader Mediterranean strategy: the coincidence between the start of the new programming, on the one hand, and the sought-after acknowledgement of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion on the other hand, actually means that all local players and therefore also the Chambers of Commerce should make a joint effort to implement targeted actions to support the economic-entrepreneurial system, with high added value for the development and social cohesion of the Macroregion in an increasingly European and international context.

To date, therefore:

- the existence of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Tourism Ministries of the countries of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative, which came into effect in November 2010;
- the inclusion of Adrion in European Communication no. 713 of 30.11.2012;
- participation of the AIC Forum, through the Workgroup on Tourism, in the consultation held in Athens on February 6-7, 2014;
- the updating of the Adrion regulation.

The launch of tangible tools for tour operators (webwholesalers and smartphone apps) allows the Workgroup on Tourism to propose a branding policy to share with all Ministries of Tourism and tourism promotion bodies of the States of the Area, so that annual tourism promotion plans and Regional Operational Plans can reference the unified brand policy on the Adriono model.

Therefore, one seeks and welcomes a strong commitment by all of the associated Chambers of Commerce to the local institutions in their respective territories, to ensure the widespread dissemination of the "Adrion" mark throughout the area and the extensive involvement of the tourism operators concerned.

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