



1<sup>st</sup> Joint Annual Conference, 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> October 2018, Hotel Radisson Blu, Split.

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## WORKGROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND AGRICULTURE

### FINAL DOCUMENT

*Split, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018*

#### *1. Introduction*

The Workgroup Quality of Environment and Agriculture was held in the framework of the 1st Joint Conference of the Adriatic-Ionian Chambers of Commerce, Towns and Universities on October 17 in Split, Croatia.

Coordinated by Italy and Albania, prof. Giuseppe Scarponi (Uniadriion) Politecnica delle Marche University, Odetta Thomaj (Forum AIC) Chamber of Commerce and Industry Durrës, with the support of Ana Marija Puzić, HGK Županijska Komora Split.

The topic of this year's Workgroup was "Green Macroregion", and key speaker was Giuseppe Scarponi from Università Politecnica delle Marche and moderator Ana Marija Puzić, Croatian Chamber of Economy Split.

The Workgroup brought together about 40 participants, representatives of ministries, academia, chambers of commerce, development agencies and entrepreneurs from the environmental and agriculture sector.

#### *2. Strategic Guidelines*

All the presentations of the Workgroup on Environmental Quality and Agriculture have contributed to the debate being extremely interesting and effective, and for establishing common solutions for the preservation and further protection of the Adriatic-Ionian Green Macro region.

Key speaker, Prof. dr. **Giuseppe Scarponi** from the Marche Polytechnic University, Italy, presented data obtained by analysing the snow collected in Antarctica from the last century (with a fall in concentration since the 1980s) and from seawater (reduced at the beginning of the third millennium), correlating with the decrease of lead gasoline usage. The Adriatic-Ionian macro-region shows a decrease in lead in the sea and seawater beginning in the early 2000s. The subject research is a successful example of anti-pollution kicks even at a global level. He invited all the audience to join the publication of his scientific articles in a special edition of Molecules.

**Željka Gudelj Velaga**, Head of the Sector for Implementation of the Rural Development Program at the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Croatia, spoke about the linkage and influence of agriculture to the environment and climate. It presented the main EU agricultural policy guidelines for the period 2014-2020 as well as the agro-environmental measures of the Rural Development Program for the same period

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affecting the improvement of soil properties and fertility and erosion protection, preservation of biodiversity, landscapes, traditional agricultural production, emission reduction greenhouse gases and generally human health. Ministry of Agriculture for the New Program Period 2021-2027 also plans the establishment of the AKIS (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems), which provides farmers with relevant knowledge of agricultural innovations as a contribution to the development of bio-economics with a special emphasis on smart agriculture and the application of modern information and communication technologies in agriculture.

**Marija Ščulac Domac**, Director of the Energy and Environmental Department in the Croatian Chamber of Economy, emphasized the importance of the circular economy, which today represents the biggest challenge for the business community. Identifying the right business models, aligning all business activities with the requirements of a circular package and building a sustainable society is one of the key activities of raising awareness. Building the necessary competencies and infrastructure is one of the priorities, using digital solutions and new, environmentally friendly technologies along with behavioural changes with the aim of saving as much raw material as possible and returning them to production cycles. **Dijana Varlec**, Energy and Environmental Department, spoke about the need to strengthen the waste market and to establish the Waste Exchange and IT platform of the supply and demand system of waste within the new Croatian Chamber of Economy communication platform - Digital Chamber (e-Services).

**Mirjana Miličević** from the University of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in her presentation on Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, reviewed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the impact of sustainable multi-faceted agriculture and rural development. Environmental protection must be integrated into the rural development planning process, and in particular focus on protection processes from the destruction of landscape and biodiversity, the loss of agricultural land and degradation of the environment caused by the use of inadequate and traditional agricultural practices. She emphasized the need to establish a new economic model, but also to preserve the traditional values and development of rural tourism as drivers of other economic components.

**Dragana Đorđević** from the Institute of Chemistry, Technology and Metallurgy from Belgrade, Serbia, pointed to the characteristics of atmospheric aerosols in urban and suburban areas of the central Balkans. In her exposition, she discussed the chemical composition of atmospheric aerosols that have a significant impact on human health and in general, the climate, which is also the content and the latest document of the World Health Organization entitled "Quality and Health of the Air". Research shown the damaging impact of local urban (traffic) and regional industrial sources, as well as the dust



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of marine aerosols and deserts in the central Balkan region. She presented Serbia's potential for the creation of low-carbon society, and in particular the biogas production.

**Merica Pletikosić** from company Cemex Croatia d.d., Kaštel Sućurac, Croatia, highlighted one of today's most significant challenges, which is the decarbonisation of the economy by finding new ways of producing and using energy. Significant place in such a concept of sustainable development is the establishment of a waste management system from waste reduction at the site of creation, primary selection and sorting, recycling, and in particular material and energy recovery. She presented the results of publicity and public opinion attitudes and the public concerned about the obligations of the cement industry and the impact of fossil fuels or waste fuels for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The results showed that the majority of respondents have not been informed about a topic, suggesting the need for better public preparation through incorporating the principles of sustainable development and socially responsible business in all segments of the project in order to achieve the desired consensus of all participants.

**Milan Čupić** from company A.T.I. d.o.o., Pula, Croatia, emphasized the importance of regional cooperation and announced the Energy Democracy Summit for promoting the use of its own energy sources in the framework of low-carbon development as a backbone for innovation and excellence that enables industrial growth and the advancement of science. He also announced the 1st International Conference and Exhibition on brandy called "Spirit of Rakia". It is a project involving countries from Central and South-Eastern Europe for building a higher level of scientific knowledge on fruit brandies and other strong alcoholic beverages with the aim of improving their production and promoting their tourist, gastronomic and traditional values.

### ***3. Conclusion***

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The Adriatic-Ionian Green Macro-Region, due to its specific geographic position, climate, relief and biodiversity, seeks joint sustainable solutions to preserve its wealth, stimulate, and direct further development. This process involves the use of environmentally friendly technologies and materials, the implementation of digital transformation, and generally the promotion of economies that more efficiently utilizes resources, is greener and more competitive. Just the circular economy is an economic model that ensures sustainable resource management, enhances the quality of life and the environment, alleviates climate change, and reduces their negative effects.

All roundtable participants actively participated in making conclusions that focused on the main drivers of competitiveness of the economic systems of the region - the sustainability of the environment and energy and the technological innovation of the process:

1. Focus on the strategic guidelines set out by Europe 2020 for the purpose of developing a green economy (eco-innovation, energy and environmental sustainability) and new EU packages with goals up to 2030 (energy and air, circular wagons, ).
2. The task force has the task of strengthening joint activities on the promotion and education of all environmental stakeholders, and the chambers of commerce are a key point in their association.
3. It is necessary to define joint projects in the European dimension, creating a network of cooperation with universities, research centres and technology parks for the development of new modern and innovative techniques, instruments and materials.
4. Launch projects that will promote integrated and sustainable development of rural areas and smart agriculture where information and communication technology is applied.
5. In order to strengthen the market for waste destined for recycling, create a common platform for the circular economy for the countries of the Adriatic-Ionian region. The platform should enable the exchange of information, experiences and examples of good practice and help achieve the EU's goals of the circular economy.

### ***4. Action agreed***

According to the conclusions agreed on the Workgroup Quality of Environment and Agriculture and listed in 3. Conclusion, in the forthcoming period, joint actions will be undertake for the purpose of their realization.