



REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN AREA

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It is with great satisfaction that I can today present the important initiatives that the Adriatic and Ionian International Court has developed during this year's activities and which, in the meeting held the day before yesterday, on 26th May, it decided to implement in 2010 in order to ensure a strong development of conciliation and arbitration within the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region.

As you know, the Court offers alternative dispute resolution services – conciliation, arbitration, arbitrage and contractual surveying services – for a more rapid and smoother settlement of disputes between operators in the various countries in the Adriatic-Ionian basin. We are in fact convinced that, in international circles, these tools are preferable to the ways of ordinary justice, which very often proves inadequate and unsuitable for the requirements of the entrepreneurial system, due to its great formality and firm anchorage to the statute reality it expresses.

Moreover, conciliation and arbitration also carry out another, and perhaps more important, function: they contribute to an increased learning about each other and to an intercultural dialogue between legal families and different geographical areas. *The Court is positive proof of this*, in confirmation of the close cooperative links which exist between our countries, looking out onto just one sea. On this sea our nations have always sailed in the search for that friendship, which can be further increased and reinforced by the use of shared practices and legal relations.

Since its establishment in 2004, the Court has devoted itself strategically on two fronts to spreading awareness of both the tools of *alternative dispute resolution* in general and the A.D.R. services specifically offered by the Arbitration Court itself.

- training;
- promotion.

With reference to the first aspect, it is with great satisfaction that I would like to bring to your attention the fact that the Court is promoting a well-defined and organised international training project in the awareness that training plays an extraordinarily important role in the development of the expertise needed to supply effective and efficient services. This will thus increase the trust of the operators and consumers, creating a heritage of common knowledge within the Adriatic region. In 2008, the first phase of this journey took place, through organising a meeting of Chamber officials of four countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Greece. That day was organised in Zagreb, at the Croatian Chamber of the Economy and it was a useful occasion for discussion and comparison of experiences of conciliation and arbitration in each country. It was possible to have a profitable exchange of knowledge and procedures, resulting in a mutual enhancement of expertise and professionalism. The aim was to supply the chamber officials with the basic legal technical ideas on conciliation and arbitration, so that economic and trade operators (businesses, consumers...) can avail themselves, at the Chambers of Commerce of the various Countries participating in the Court, of effective assistance in identifying the most suitable tool to resolve the problems which actually occur in the business world. In addition, they can also avail themselves of efficient assistance in suggesting conciliation or arbitration from the Court or else appeal to other instruments of justice, according to the features of the case.

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In 2010 we shall continue this project, organising training for officials and professionals from Greece, so that the Court can also, in that area, explain its own services and actively begin its own work for the benefit of cross-border operators and all users who want quick and efficient justice but at the same time want it to be skilled and of an excellent standard. Also in this instance, as has already happened in Albania, the training activity will combine in-depth coverage of theoretical notions with practical management of cases and resolution of the most recurrent problems in an international context. To reach this objective, lecturers will be taken from professionals with proven experience and a high scientific profile, guaranteeing teaching through discussion and comparison between the participants.

With reference to the second aspect, that of promotion, in the last few years we have worked so that the institution presents unusual perspectives and features compared with other arbitration and conciliation institutions operating on the international scene; in particular we have tried to convey the peculiarity of the Adriatic-Ionian area, the specificity of the economic fabric of the macro-region in it and in its regulations, so that it can supply a "made to measure" response to the needs of the businesses and consumers who turn to it. Because of this there are three official languages of the Court and not just one: Italian, Croatian and English and all the promotional material has been prepared in each of these languages: our aim is to show that the Court can be trusted to resolve difficult situations, disputes which can paralyse the life of a business all the more so if operating on an international level; our objective is to show that the Court is an "honest broker" in which one can place one's trust because it is "near" everyone, beginning with the language.

Under the design, in all the Court's promotional material (brochure, Regulations, manuals...) there is a multicoloured bridge connecting the two shores of the Adriatic Sea, signifying that the Court intends to stand forwards as a tool to unite the operators of the region, a means of promoting economic relations and exchanges, facilitating the development of traffic and setting out that element of competitiveness and added value for the whole area.

In the meeting on 26th May we decided to organise a new promotional campaign so that the Court can explain its own services and introduce itself to places where it is not yet known. Communication operations will continue throughout 2010 and will make use of the most appropriate media for each Country. We are available for all who want information or clarification, and will explain, to any interested party, this important project in which we believe so strongly. We hope that with the help of everyone, including you, our clauses can become even more widespread and used and our services represent a practical help for those in difficulty, an efficient and worthy response in a period – like now, which is precarious and complicated by international crises. We therefore believe the commitment of the individual Chambers of Commerce to be fundamental in suggesting the Court as an excellent tool for resolving commercial controversies between subjects belonging to different countries in the Adriatic-Ionian area.

This is what we are committing ourselves to in the months to come, on the "assumption" that our work will help promote the process of achieving an Adriatic Euroregion, a homogeneous territorial and maritime area, and will enable opportunities for growth in all the countries of the region.

I would like to thank all the members of the Court for their professionalism and great dedication in these past months in their endeavours to construct a solid and reliable organisation. A particular thank you also to the President of the Forum, Mrs. Radovanic, who, during these years of activity has worked with great enthusiasm for the Court to gain effective international prestige, sharing our commitment; finally a thank you to the Court Secretariat, set up in the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, which has worked tirelessly over the years and is still working now to allow the Court to function properly and to be an increasingly skilled point of reference on the international scene.

The Court is a growing entity; it is growing strongly and constantly: thanks to the attention paid to training both by the officials in charge of the Secretariat and by those registered with the list of arbitrators and conciliators; thanks to the attention paid to promotion through targeted actions carried out in all the countries in the area; thanks to the attention paid to the spread of awareness of the services of conciliation and arbitration which are an extraordinarily valuable resource.