CONNECTING THE REGION WORKGROUP

FINAL DOCUMENT

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1. Facts

The 2016 Connecting the Region Workgroup has been characterised by the presentation of various interesting EU projects that have been developed by some Port Authorities of the Adriatic and Ionian area.

The first panellist has been Mr Antonio Cancian, President of RAM (Rete Autostrade Mediterranee), who said that money is not the issue - good projects is - and that small projects hardly can be financed. Integrability and sustainability are the 2 main prerequisites for future projects together with a particular interest on environmental protection. The tool for the future projects is PPP - Public Private Participation - plus a general simplification of the financial blending.

Projects that connect the East with the West will be a priority. Hubs are important and interports too.

Adriatic MoS, Intermodadria and Easyconnecting are 3 projects that were presented as capitalization tools which have been implemented in the CARICA project. The delivered message from CARICA project is that intermodality is a key issue for transports and for the existence of ports and also that infrastructures between ports and hinterland is always very important.

One program - 2 countries - 3 ports; Greece and Italy; Ports of Igoumenitsa, Ancona and Trieste are cooperating to strengthen the Adriatic Ionian intermodal corridor. These 3 ports are aiming at strengthening MoS services and to take away all bottlenecks possible. The project includes the building of a freight village for the port of Igoumenitsa whose role as a port has been upgraded due to the national infrastructure of Greece (i.e Egnatia Odos).

New technologies are used to ensure security which has now become one of the most crucial factors for port planning.

CAPTAIN project was presented verifying that intermodality, infrastructure which connects appropriately ports and the hinterland, capitalization of past projects are the crucial factors for a port to survive and function correctly.


Total passengers including Ro-pax and cruising decreased at a rate of -4,8% while variation between 2011 and 2015 has been -21,5%. All the principal major ports such as Venice, Ancona and Bari are dropping while the less big ports seem to be more steady.

Cruise market. After a long period of growth, during the last 2 years we are facing a reduction (-2,7% in 2015, bigger in 2014). The total amount of cruise passengers is 3,5 million (4,5 million
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including Kotor and Corfu and with them the general trend inverts and last year closed with a growth of 2,5%.

Venice, Dubrovnik are the 2 major ports of the Adriatic and Ionian area but they have lost 9% of cruise movement in 2015; also Bari, the third biggest port, faced a strong reduction of cruise passengers movements in 2015, while other minor ports as Brindisi, Trieste and Split grows even if their movements are under the line of 200.000.
The average passengers for each call increased from 848 in 2000 to 2.066 in 2015 as a consequence of the introduction of bigger and bigger vessels.
Main reason for the decrease of cruise passengers is the inability of some ports to host such big ships; big investments on sea banks should be made for cruise to continue to grow in ancient cities such as Venice and Dubrovnik where there is a huge sustainable environmental impact.
On the contrary to passenger drop, there was an increase of 6,4% in freight traffic in the region. The main ports that have contributed to this growth are Venice and Koper but more or less all ports had an increase except for Taranto.
Container in the Adriatic and Ionian Region increased by 8% and remains the most dynamic segment of freight movement. Since 2001 there has been an increase from 1 million teus to 2,7million TEUS. Koper, Venice and Trieste are increasing rapidly while the other ports are still increasing but at a lower rate and pace.

3. Project Proposal

The enrichment of secondary routes as well as the enlargement of the use of infrastructure in the trans-European networks seems to be the powerful prerequisite for the increase of trade, transports and in general of the financial activity in the Macroregion.
Europe asks from the Chambers proposals for trans country projects of importance; the powerful advantage of the ADRION Region is the direct proximity with the markets of Asia. Adriatic and Ionian Macrroregion is the natural end of the present Silk Route while we are at the entrance road of Europe for the Sea transports from Asia and the Middle East, a large size of the commercial volume ends in South Turkey and Izmir.
The quickest and less expensive way, thus the most effective, is the connection of North West Turkey with the port of Lavrio and from there a route towards the ports of Patras and Igoumenitsa with next station the ports of Italy or Croatia so that the merchandise wins half to 1 and ½ day until the final European destinations; it seems to be a strategic request for the macrroregion the establishment of systematic lines from South and West Turkey towards Lavrio in Greece.
It is evident that Turkey plays a strategic role as the crossroad between East and West. Turkey is among the top 20 cargo ports and just in 2014 it handled almost 379 million tonnes of goods. Turkey is preparing its ports for bigger vessels.
China is a whole huge market which has agreed with Turkey to increase economic cooperation and now their bilateral annual trade rates 100 billion USD.
The Silk Road from China through Turkey, Greece and then Italy and the rest of the world is a whole new proposal which gives a wider image of the way that transports should and could work taking AI Macrroregion steps up as cost could be eliminated, time would be substantially decreased and some of the non or semi connected regions would finally be connected.