

WORKGROUP ON WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

FINAL DOCUMENT

Ancona, 14th June 2016

1. *Introduction*

The Workgroup on women's entrepreneurship took place as part of the 16th Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce on June 14th in Ancona, Italy.

30 business women, women entrepreneurs and representatives of Institutions/ Organizations from Italy, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, took actively part in the meeting. The Workgroup was coordinated by the president of the CCE County Chamber Split, Katija Buličić, by Mariella Moschione, president of the Committee of women's entrepreneurship at the Udine Chamber of Commerce.

The theme of this year's Workgroup was "Leveraging networked business training to improve women's entrepreneurship in the Adriatic and Ionian Region: the role of the Chambers of Commerce in facilitating innovation and SMEs development", and the key speaker was Mrs. Elena Terenziani, project manager EU Project Department, IFOA Institute for business training, Reggio Emilia, Italy.

2. *Strategic outlines*

According to the 16th Forum theme, dedicated to SMEs support through innovative services and new challenges, the Workgroup on Women's entrepreneurship believes that following projects could respond to overall needs:

-1. Center for the development of women's entrepreneurship, proposed by the Chamber of Commerce of Udine - Italy. The project has been introduced by Mariella Moschione and presented in its technical aspects by IFOA. It aims to strengthen the presence of women in the business creation (existing enterprises, start-ups, would-be enterprises) and in the management. It could act as a strong support mechanism for the regional economic growth. The specific aims are intended to be: supporting to the creation of new enterprises by women; strengthening the positioning of new business run by women; supporting the managerial skills of women in business; encouraging an entrepreneurial culture in general (schools, teachers, general public). The main features of the proposed common project, which were detailed by Elena Terenziani, IFOA keynote speaker, include the creation of a center which leverages on two central aspects: the valorization of the resources of the territory, in particular those close to the network of the Chambers of Commerce in the Adriatic and Ionian Region, and the use of information technology for education and training. Target groups are: women would-be entrepreneurs or new entrepreneurs in the Adriatic and Ionian Region; women company managers or executives. Examples of the proposed activities are: training courses, mentoring actions, support on internationalization, etc. The activity is in line with potential EU financing Program ADRION,

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priority Axis I. Innovative and smart regions (especially developing and adopting a model of support to female entrepreneurship), but also further ones, like cross-border programs or Erasmus+, COSME, EASI.

-2. Project proposal presented by Terezina Orlić, President of the Dubrovnik Chamber of Commerce - Croatia, aiming at supporting unemployed women in rural area (close to Dubrovnik) by training them to enhance the quality of handicraft production and commercialization: i.e. souvenirs, wellness products made by using herbs, gastronomic products, and their commercialization. Tourism is an additional sector where training activities could help raising the quality of services. The area shows 65% of businesses in the services in tourism, with a strong presence of women. A group of women has set up locally a cooperative business, but there is still need to scale-up with specialized competences. Common projects could take advantage of the high level of competence in the tourism sector developed in Italy for example, by making use of funding programs targeting the Adriatic and Ionian Macro region, as for example the area represented in today's workgroup: Croatia-Italy- Albania and Montenegro.

-3. Project proposal of the Association „Penelope: women in the fishing sector “- Ancona – Italy, regarding the enhancement of women's role in managing family businesses in the fishing sector. Training activities are intended to be a strategic advantage to the growth of competences (for example the optimization made possible by ICT), as well as to the improvement of the awareness of the identity and role as women entrepreneurs.

Additional experiences and best practices added a significant value to the proposals:

Patrizia Tiranti, president of the Committee for female entrepreneurship of the Macerata Chamber of Commerce: „Projects presentation in the field of culture“. Presentation of the projects: Enjoy your wellfood (Adriatic IPA), support services for access to credit, and „Award Donne Impresa“ aiming at recognizing the value of female entrepreneurship. Events and activities are organized in the field of culture and food valorization, as well as training activities both on line and off-line (classroom training).

Katarina Sekelez, Aplikat 28 d.o.o. Business incubator of CCE County Chamber Split – Croatia - for start-ups of women entrepreneurs: „Educational project on Intellectual Capital Management (ICM) in Women's Entrepreneurship“. ICM is a project developed from the cooperation of the Split County Chamber (Croatia) and the Croatian Association of Business Women (Split branch) which is focused on intangible assets offering workshop activities for example on how to materialize innovative techniques and processes.

Regarding the proposal made by the Chamber of Commerce of Udine and IFOA, the specific sectors which could benefit of the training programs are for example tourism and agriculture. Moreover, the Erasmus Young Entrepreneurs could act as a useful complementary tool.

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Alessandra Micozzi, Polytechnic University of the Region Marche – Italy - and entrepreneur: „Experience as a researcher and entrepreneur“. Mrs. Alessandra Micozzi, who is researcher at Marche Polytechnic University, since 2008 has been organizing teaching modules for the post-graduate courses in business administration and marketing run by ISTAO (Istituto Adriano Olivetti) of Ancona and she works for the Centre of Innovation and Entrepreneurship of Marche Polytechnic University.

She underlines that one of the barriers for women entrepreneurs is the lack of entrepreneurial culture. So, one of the first objectives is the spreading of such culture, also by making use of best practices. With this aim, she coordinates a lab of contamination at the University. She is member of BIO-erg promoters' and administrators, which is a biotechnology company which successfully launched the first crowdfunding campaign in the Region Marche.

Michela Cecotti, entrepreneur in the nautical sector, Council member of the Gorizia Chamber of Commerce – Italy and of the Committee for female entrepreneurship: „Proposals of cooperation in the field of training“. The experience of the business incubator in the Split Chamber of Commerce is particularly valuable, also for existing enterprises. Also, the classroom training is very important, since it allows the exchange of best practices and the creation of network activities. She proposes to keep the courses in English and to stress on alternative ways of funding (crowdfunding for example as experienced by Bioerg).

Dragana Šofranac, the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro. The experience reported regards the support given to new business ideas through basic training and selection of the best projects which were assisted through advice support. Nevertheless, women's presence in business is weak as there is a lack in competences and in locations suitable to common activities in the field of handicraft and agritourism for example.

Worth reporting is a project developed by 20 women in Montenegro involving a cross border area with Bosnia, Kosovo and Croatia, where the Municipality has put at disposal the facility for the commercialization of sustainable agrifood products.

A combination of training and advice services is suggested to be the most suitable approach for future women entrepreneurs.

Blerina Xhabija, member of SHGPAZ. The project which she briefly introduces is linked with a patent (registered in Italy) on sustainable energy usable all over the coast areas. She is looking for partners.

Flutura Xhabija, president of the Association for women's entrepreneurship of Albania. She underlines the importance of developing services aiming at raising the standards and innovation of businesses.

Erjola Xheko, Member of the board of directors of Durres Chamber of Commerce – Albania. Focus on activities and services aiming at reducing the energy consumption means a bigger mission than doing business for profit. She highlights that the Chamber of Commerce of Durres

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gives global assistance to enterprises as *one stop shop*, as well as in the preparation of a business plan.

Laura Galassi, vice-president of the Committee for female entrepreneurship of the Pesaro and Urbino Chamber of Commerce - Italy: „The Award Valore Donna International“. Lunched 10 years ago by AIDDA (Association of women entrepreneurs and corporate executives) and the Committee, the Award recognizes women entrepreneurs who stand out in the international context. Steady relationships have been established by the Association in Serbia. Successful experience is reported with reference to the Expo 2015 where projects and products have been presented to foreign delegations (China in particular).

Paola Petrucci, Council member for equal opportunity of Ascoli Piceno - Italy: "Azione Donna: training and mentoring activities for women's participation in political, economic, social life“. The idea was born in 1999 to support women who intended to present themselves as candidate. The actions include: self-assessment, self-motivation, tools and techniques for self-employment and to the fulfilment of the business idea (from the idea to the project), marketing and management techniques, evaluations of the project idea, business plan, mentoring, start-up launch, follow up and ongoing / ex post check. Additionally, meetings and debates were successfully experienced (Focus on conciliation between family and business management activities). The project represented an applicable model for young.

Francesca Gironi, president of the Committee for women's entrepreneurship of Ancona - Italy. The set-up of a data bank of women enterprises in the whole area potentially involved is a fundamental aspect; exchange of good practices, study visits can be highly effective.

Orietta Baldelli, president of the Committee for women's entrepreneurship of Fermo - Italy. Regarding the Center for the development of women's entrepreneurship, a virtual center could represent a distinctive feature in women's entrepreneurship.

Meri Marziali, president of the Commission for equal opportunities of the Region Marche - Italy. The experience of the project „Network Donne d' Impresa“ is reported: it aims at setting up a network of women entrepreneurs, at supporting, facilitating and promoting women's entrepreneurship, by introducing innovative tools and methods related to the organization of the work. About 100 women entrepreneurs have taken part in training activities regarding marketing, management and organizational models, with the aim to sustain their personal professional path and support product's /service's strategical commercialization, mainly by making use of the innovative advantages of social network. Fundamental aspect is the model of classroom training which allows sharing of experiences, network activities. An extension to all professions is beneficial. Project's Partners: regional Ombudsman and the Committee for women's entrepreneurship of the 5 Chambers of Commerce in the region Marche.

3. *Conclusions*



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Conclusions were made by the President of the Split Chamber of Economy, Katija Buličić, who moderated the workgroup, and the President of the Committee for women's entrepreneurship of the Chamber of Commerce of Udine, Mariella Moschione:

Next to the large-scale project „Center for the development of women's entrepreneurship, proposed by the Chamber of Commerce of Udine - Italy, the project presented by Terezina Orlić, President of the Dubrovnik Chamber of Commerce - Croatia, aiming at supporting unemployed women in rural area and the project proposal of the Association „Penelope: women in the fishing sector“ Ancona – Italy, regarding the enhancement of women's role in managing family businesses in the fishing sector, could both represent first areas of interest within the same objective or specific targeted actions within smaller project proposals.

These three proposals will be briefly introduced in the Workgroup on EU project management as conclusions of the Workgroup on women's entrepreneurship.