



## Newsletter

1/2008



# Concluded activities and future prospects

The aim of the projects identified in the discussions held during the specific Workgroups is to improve good collaborations among partnering cross-border networks. This is particularly important given also that the future EU program for the period 2007-2013 is essentially based on these three objectives: European territorial cooperation, convergence, regional competitiveness and employment.

In order to face up to these challenges and to prepare for EU neighbouring policies, the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce has promptly worked towards improving the cohesion among regional macroareas that are geographically more interested by this process. In doing so, the Forum has practically cooperated with all the subjects of the inter-Adriatic area, also bearing in mind that soon a European Group for Territorial Cooperation (GECT – EU Commission regulation n.496, 2004) will be formed. This group is meant to help with the difficulties (in terms of legal differences and national proce-

dures discrepancies) that many States, Regions and local administrations encounter when they carry out activities of cross-border, international and interregional cooperation.

Thus, the objective is to strengthen mutual partnering skills (as it has been done already within the Forum) and to start new collaborations with new partners. This will help to guarantee the application of the EU neighbouring policies and, at the same time, to build the territorial management and sector planning know-how, in accordance with the EU partnering good practices.

This will enable each country (whether EU or non-EU) to spot new business opportunities and have greater possibilities to access a number of EU, national and regional funds – starting from 2007. We hope that the EU itself will provide some guidelines regarding the best way to access the resources required to fund activities of interregional cooperation.

## NEXT ISSUE

Brussels: AIC Forum accreditation

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### Cooperatives: strategies of territorial development for the Balkans

#### a) Know-how exchange for the Balkans

The aim of this initiative (April 2007) was to organize a professional training course, including visits to local businesses, in the food and wine sector, in order to stimulate know-how exchange amongst experts in the field and encourage the comparison of good practices amongst companies that excel in this sector and belong to a common area – the Adriatic Euroregion. During the training course a number of topics were addressed such as community planning, various available sources of renewable energy and business organization, within the framework of the new 2007-2013 programming phase of European structural funds. Training was provided to several operators who will work in the food and wine sector on the other side of the Adriatic - i.e. Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania.

#### b) Mediterranean Days of Olive Oil

The project represented an opportunity to widen and deepen the debate on issues regarding the olive oil sector and resulted in the drafting of a final document of intent, which outlines the sector's main needs. The document was signed by olive oil producers from both European and non-European countries

on the Mediterranean Sea. The Mediterranean Days of Olive Oil has already proved in its previous editions to be a particularly useful opportunity to discuss problems, exchange opinions and experiences and it testified the propensity of many Adriatic and Ionian countries, including Albania, to open up to the area and participate.

#### c) "In the sign of Green" - Territorial marketing project

The main objective of this initiative was the constitution of the European Network of Green Wines, with the aim of favouring a more widespread knowledge and the distribution of green wines produced by the two promoting countries: the Spanish Verdejo and the Italian Verdicchio. This represented a pulling factor within the overall framework for the tourist promotion of the territory based on a specific marketing strategy.

The project started in the autumn of 2006 in Valladolid (Spain) as part of the international trade show INTUR-X Feria Internacional del Turismo de Interior and gained great attention by the Italian and foreign press.

This kind of experience can become a good practice for similar initiatives carried out by the countries taking part in the Forum.



### Adriatic-Baltic Workshop

On 18th and 19th November, the Technical Secretariat of the Adriatic (SE.A) held the workshop "Looking at Neighbours", which brought together Chambers of Commerce, universities and local institutions for countries in the Baltic, Adriatic and Balkans.

It was a preparatory meeting for a larger international one held on 6 June 2006, designed to outline EC initiatives for the exchange of mutually beneficial experiences to be applied in neighbourhood countries from the next financial planning period 2007/2013 onwards, when the new EC programmes for transnational, cross-border and interregional cooperation will come into force. The key to the meeting was participation by similar structures who were able to compare notes in order to dis-

cover shared interests to form the outline for this common journey.

Since the new objective 3 on transnational cooperation will again propose (with a few amendments) the current zoning, a link between the Baltic and Adriatic region could be formed by referring to interregional cooperation, with no restrictions as to distance between territories. To overcome the obstacles hindering cross-border cooperation, the European Commission has proposed that the regional and/or local authorities of two or more member states can form a European group for cross-border cooperation, an organisation that the Adriatic Secretariat (SE.A) project is aiming to set up.

The Forum took part in the workshop, highlighting its interest in analysing, studying and

researching ways to achieve greater uniformity in the various legal systems. This is in order to facilitate and promote commercial and economic exchanges between the two macro-areas, and to set up commercial initiatives to be projected towards both areas affected by the neighbourhood project.

More generally, an important comparison emerged in relation to the organisational model and business dimension of the SMEs, and their fragility in dealing with the foreign EC market and the neighbourhood project. In this context, it was suggested that initiatives be promoted designed to create common services (platforms), i.e. online services able to support economic projection on international markets, and a forum to enable traders to exchange experiences.



## Activities and projects

### **Adriatic Fishing Observatory – AFO Interreg IIIA Programme**

The project ended in December 2006 with the constitution of the Adriatic Fishing Observatory whose aim is to create a quantitative and qualitative surveying and monitoring system of environmental and economic data correlated to the fishing sector. The Marche Region together with countries such as Albania and Montenegro took part in the investigation and study activities, which also sealed the beginning of a strong collaboration amongst institutional, economic and scientific bodies. The initiative comprised the organisation of seminars and training pathways aimed at the promotion of a modern trade network for the wholesale and retail distribution of fresh fish. A network based upon strict quality, health, backtracking and food safety criteria.

The project ended with the publishing of the “Adriatic Fishing Observatory” paper, an instrument aimed at improving competitiveness and cooperation in the fishing sector by providing a detailed picture of the experience of the Marche Region in comparison with the ones of Montenegro and Albania.



### **Development of small fisheries in the area of Vlorë Regional Law no. 9/2002**

This project started in October and ended in December 2006. It favoured an exchange of opinions and information between Italian and Albanian entrepreneurs working in the fishing sector. In particular, the meetings with local fishermen and producers gave positive results both in terms of the exchange of knowledge and experience, and for the establishment of economic and trade relations for the purchase of small fisheries material and technical equipment by Albanian fishermen.

### **Development of Tourist Systems in Albania Law no. 84/2001**

This project ended in December 2006 and allowed the identification and recovery of houses to be used as tourist and accommodation facilities to meet the needs of the local realities involved.

The collaboration with the Marche Region led to the publishing of the following quality tourism guidelines “Accommodation facilities and practices: criteria and indications for quality tourism”; these guidelines have been one of the most important results of the project.

### **Observatory on Sea Traffic in the Adriatic-Ionian Region**

The organisation, financed by the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, is designed to provide institutions and traders with systematic ways of interpreting changes in sea traffic and policies affecting the Adriatic basin.

The Observatory gathers information about the traffic at main ports in the area. It carries out an annual study of the ports' competitive rankings in relation to the performance of commercial traffic, provides guidance on European and national policies on transport and infrastructure with a direct impact for the area. The initiative, launched in 2003, has already drafted several annual reports that can be viewed on the Forum's website.

### **Network of Adriatic tourist ports REPORT – Interreg IIIA**

The project ended in December 2006 with a final event in which occasion the Ancona Chamber of Commerce provide an important contribution (in collaboration with ISTAO) to the realisation of an economic and statistical reference framework for the promotion of an integrated tourist offer in the Adriatic.

Furthermore, the Ancona Chamber of Commerce organised a conference on the port of Ancona in March 2007, which represented an interesting occasion to discuss the role of the port in the Adriatic Sea and in Europe and to talk about related risks and development prospects. Greek Chambers of Commerce expressed a strong interest in this topic by participating as observers in the Workgroup on Transports, which was held in Ancona in May 2007.



### **Development Poles of Croatian Coasts Law no. 84/2001**

This project ended in December 2006 with the accomplishment of the objectives set - i.e. the promotion of local communities through self-governance and participation in planning and territorial management. The initiative aimed at strengthening the links and methods of collaboration amongst field experts and local governments by starting the construction of networks of excellencies in the Adriatic between private and public subjects. The entire activity carried out was able to promote local resources and products through responsible tourism and a newly introduced system of quality control and certification.

## Committee for Tourism Coordination



Following the set up of the Committee for Tourism Coordination, a number of preliminary meetings between the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, ISTAO and tour operators took place in 2006, with the aim of outlining the objectives to be achieved:

- creation of a single tourist system;
- development of niche sectors to create integrated tourist packages (ecotourism, tourism in protected reserves and parks in inland areas, sports tourism, religious tourism);
- carry out an in-depth study of all opportunities offered by the new European programme for the financing of projects for tourist promotion and economic development in the Adriatic macro-region.

The following proposals emerged from the Workgroup:

- creation of a distinctive brand that can identify the macro area. This brand will have to represent a single identity for the Adriatic area as a whole and will have to be introduced in tourist catalogues of those tour operators that will take part in the initiative;
- creation of a communicative brand, which can over time become a quality brand to be monitored by a watchdog who check and evaluate the quality of the proposed services;
- set up of a political Workgroup involving other local governments and private tourist operators, in order to work towards a financial integration of the resources available from European, national and regional funds.

A brochure with a brief and general description of the reference countries, divided by topic (art, history, culture, sea, nature, well living, well being, food and wine, sport, religion), was prepared for the VII event of the Forum (Ancona 2007). Moreover, the suggestion of creating an interactive website via which every Chamber of Commerce associated to the Forum can promote the beauty of its territory was well accepted.

## Modelling Adriatic Routes Integrating Networks and Areas in the Adriatic Sea: MARINAS – Interreg IIIA

This project started in 2007 and will be finished in June 2008. Its aim is to create an integrated tourist offer in the Adriatic area, which could meet the demand for innovative services within the network, thereby strengthening its visibility and improving the standards of service provision in the entire basin.

The project includes a survey, which will be carried out in the Adriatic area to highlight its cultural, economic, naturalistic and economic re-

sources. The initiative will develop a network of Adriatic tourist ports with the task of providing high-end services through an open-source software and common meta-portal. It will also carry out experimental actions and pilot projects for the promotion of integrated tourist itineraries, i.e. coast-hinterland and coast-coast ones, through an integrated tourist offer based on a bottom-up approach. The ultimate goal of the entire activity is the promotion and animation of the network through public events.

## Second Congress of Women Entrepreneurship (Ancona, May 2007)

The second Congress of Women's Entrepreneurship took place in Ancona as part of the VII event of the Forum. Many important women guests from local and international institutions attended the congress.

The European Year for Equal Opportunities (2007) has represented a strong incentive to obtain precious opinions from a number of people about the European legal system and experiences regarding Eurochambres.

This year's event involved a number of delegations of women who play important roles in the European and Mediterranean area for the development of projects which promote the growth of a female entrepreneurial culture.

The Forum member countries analysed the legislation on the support and development of women's businesses. The Congress represented a precious opportunity of information and exchange of contacts amongst female entrepreneurs with the objective of creating a Ionian and Adriatic business network, a virtual window shop to favour their promotion.



## Actions for the support and development of cross-border partnership networks in the Adriatic area - (Law 84/2001)



This project ended in December 2006 with partnership agreements that were signed following institutional missions carried out by the Chamber of Commerce of Ancona, in collaboration with the Marche Region, in Bosnia and Herzegovina (July 2006), Montenegro (November 2006), Croatia (December 2006) and Serbia (December 2006). These agreements promoted active collaboration amongst member Chambers in line with the programme of the Technical Secretariat of the Adriatic, i.e. a coordination body thought and set up by the Marche Region in collaboration with the Ancona Chamber of Commerce whose aim is to favour shared project planning within the Adriatic Euroregion.



## Activities and projects

### Access to European Programmes – A.P.E.-NET Network

This project has been an opportunity to strengthen the participation of Chambers of Commerce in EU funding programs and provide adequate technical training to reference people working both for the Chambers and for foreign affairs who deal with international planning and cooperation, thereby promoting system planning in the relations with EU new member states or candidate ones.



Over the last few years the Chamber of Commerce of Ancona has developed good planning skills regarding projects involving the Balkan area by using Interreg IIIA cooperation programs. This has enabled the opportunity to organise training courses in line with the new 2007/2013 programme (Ancona, March 2007; Split, April 2007; Brussels, April 2007).

### Legal, commercial, conciliation and arbitration assistance services in the Adriatic area – Law no. 84/2001

During the VII event of the Forum (Ancona 2007) activities regarding the “Legal, Commercial, Conciliation and Arbitration Assistance Service in the Adriatic area” project were started. This project was proposed and won by the Ancona Chamber of Commerce as part of the fundable initiatives based on law no. 84 of 21st March 2001 that regulates the Italian participation to the process of stabilization, reconstruction and development of countries in the Balkans.

The project initiative aims at making economic-commercial relations amongst Italian and Balkan SMEs easier, with a special focus on Croatian, Montenegrin, Bosnian and Herzegovinian and Albanian territories by sharing knowledge and promoting the use of services for the extra-legal resolution of arguments (conciliation, arbitration, contract expertise) via the creation of an operative “network” amongst member Chambers of Commerce.

In particular, promotional events aimed at sensitising operators over conciliation and arbitration topics and organisation of specialised high-level training courses in line with the EU standards will be carried out.

### conciliazione e arbitrato in Adriatico



The Milan national and international Arbitration Chamber, Marche Union-chambers, the Polytechnic University Le Marche – CIRAB (Interdepartmental Research Centre for the Adriatic and the Balkans) and Confindustria Marche are the project's Italian partners. The Split Chamber of Economy (Split), the Sarajevo Chamber of Economy (Bosnia-Herzegovina), the Podgorica Chamber of Economy (Montenegro) and the Vlorë Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Albania) are the project's foreign partners.

The completion of the project's activities, carried out in collaboration with the promoting body and Italian and foreign partners, will contribute to the growth of an arbitration and conciliation culture in the Adriatic-Ionian area. Thus, the resolution of arguments related to negotiations in the basin, economic-commercial relations and business exchange will be favoured.

### Forum editions – Ancona VII event (May 2007)

The VII event of the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian area took place in Ancona, at the seaside resort of Portonovo, from 28th to 30th May 2007. Given the importance of the topics discussed, the 2007 Forum edition had its reward in the patronage of the President of the European Parliament.



Many Italian, Croatian, Slovenian, Bosnian, Montenegrin, Albanian and Greek representatives took part in this year's event. The initiative favoured the cooperation amongst institutions, local authorities, businesses, professional associations, banks, foundations, universities and functional autonomous bodies by offering them the possibility of an in-depth analysis and discussion of various European topics in two different sessions: “Neighbourhood and Enlargement” and “The European and Adriatic System of Chambers of Commerce: a network for the support of SMEs”. The two sessions were followed by theme-specific Workgroups (Agriculture, Environment, Women's Entrepreneurship, Fishing and Aquaculture, Transports, Tourism) and by those Workgroups indicated to the Adriatic and Ionian International Court.

Important personalities of the European Commission and the European Parliament presented the current and future trends of EU policies and helped during the Workgroups by responding to specific questions raised.

## Activities and projects

### Start of the Retaj Project

The Forum was granted a fund given by the Marche Region for a project promoted by the Tourism Workgroup and presented in accordance with the regional law on cooperation (Law 9/2002 – dispensation of funds for micro-projects of international solidarity and cooperation to growth). The initiative called “The Adriatic Euroregion as a base for the start-up of an Adriatic-Ionian tourist region” aims at monitoring the tourist offer and demand of countries in the Adriatic-Ionian area. It is also meant to spot the peculiarities and attractions of a single territory in order to increase their tourist potential following a specific logic.

The Split Chamber of Economy (Croatia), the Pula Chamber of Economy (Croatia), the Montenegro Chamber of Economy, the Durrës Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Albania), the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Chamber of Economy (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the Koper Chamber of Commerce (Slovenia) have all joined



this initiative. Amongst the Italian partners that will actively take part in the projects, a special role will go to the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, the Brindisi Chamber of Commerce and the national representatives of Assonautica (Rome).

The main objectives of this initiative are the qualitative, environmental and economic improvement of the tourist offer in the Adriatic basin and the strengthening of the technical-professional competencies of the tour operators via a number of training courses.

The project is in line with the framework of interventions and sector initiatives already carried out in the Adriatic basin by a number of institutional, public and private subjects. This could be done also thanks to the instruments of financial support provided by the EU and the Italian State which were recently utilised in this area.

### Innovation Technology for Adriatic Competitiveness - ITAC



The project was officially started in the first months of 2007 (Ancona, Venice and Split). Its goal is to find forms of cross-border aggregation amongst SMEs, with the aim of planning, experimenting and developing new products, processes or services.

Chambers of Commerce will act as institutional supports in bringing supply and demand for technological innovation closer. In this way, they will be able to coordinate and aggregate groups of businesses in the entire Adriatic area.

### HOW TO JOIN THE ASSOCIATION



**JOINED BY THE SEA**  
Adriatic and Ionian Chambers Forum

Bodies and Organizations can join the Association as fixed in art. 2, par.3 of the Charter, by forwarding the Application Form through post, fax or e-mail, accompanied by the relevant decision of the competent body.