

# Green light for the Macroregion

Brussels, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2012:

Green light of the European council to the new strategy  
for the Adriatic Ionian Macroregion



The European Council entrusted the Commission to submit a "new EU strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian region" before the end of 2014. This decision is a decisive step for the creation of the future Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion and the result of the strong commitment of each country in the area. In the course of 2013 the Commission will finally enter the operational phase of the strategy and develop an Action Plan together with the regions, which will be approved in 2014 halfway between the six-month Greek and Italian Presidency. As Governor Spacca said, "this is the most authoritative European acknowledgement, as it is the expression of the highest institutional level of the European Council, as well as of the initiatives carried out by the Marche Regional Authorities alongside with the Committee of the Regions and the National Government, for the creation of this macro-regional strategy. It expresses Europe's clear confidence in our project and a firm will to invest in the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion as an area of peace and security, development and cooperation,

in the South-East European quadrant." This excellent outcome is the final result of a long series of political and institutional decisions to promote the recognition of the Macroregion. This pathway started in 2010 with the Declaration of Ancona, signed by the Ministers for foreign affairs of the Eight Member States of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative and the following Declarations of Brussels (2011) and Belgrade (2012), to then continue with the conclusions of the European Council meeting in June 2011, the unanimous approval of the opinion on the Initiative of the Committee of the Regions put forward by the Marche Region (2011), the approval by the European Parliament of the resolution on EU macroregional strategies (2012) and the meeting between European Commissioner Johannes Hahn and the Ministers for foreign affairs concerned by the Adriatic-Ionian macro-regional strategy.

The decision of the European Council is available on the AIC Forum website:  
[www.forumaic.org](http://www.forumaic.org)

## Committee of Regions: President Gian Mario Spacca heads the new Adriatic Ionian Intergruppo

On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013 in Brussels, the Marche Regional President Gian Mario Spacca was appointed by unanimous vote as the Head of the Adriatic-Ionian Intergruppo of the Committee of the Regions. The decision was made on the basis of the strong commitment shown by the President for the advancement and implementation of the macroregional strategy. This new organism, which is composed by the political groups of the European Parliament, was established to support the formalisation process of Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion within 2014. The process to achieve this goal goes through the maximum involvement and active participation of local and regional authorities, as well as Member States. The new organism will carry out several activities. One of the most important ones will be the comparison with the other existing intergroups of the Baltic and Danube Regions to fully understand the experience made by their macroregional strategies and evaluate common actions in the field of connections and transports, starting from the Baltic-Adriatic Corridor, as foreseen by the Europe Connecting Facility.

*The Adriatic Ionian Macroregion*



## AIC Forum participates in the conference “A resilient interface. The reasons of Adriatic Ionian Macroregion”.

(Macerata, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012)

The Secretary-General of the AIC Forum Michele De Vita, attended the event organized within the framework of the 55th AIG National Conference (i.e. the Italian Geography Teachers Association). The Round Table, which was organized by the University of Macerata and coordinated by the Ambassador Prof. Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, was animated by authoritative contributions by Ambassador Fabio Pigliapoco and Mr Marco Bellardi of the Secretariat of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative and Prof. Giuseppe Canullo from the Polytechnic University of the Marche Region. In his contribution, Mr De Vita specifically illustrated the prospects of the tourist sector in the wider context of the Macroregion and the most significant points of the Brindisi Declaration on “The AIC FORUM commitment towards the full acknowledgement of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion”, which was presented during the 12th edition of the AIC Forum held in Brindisi on 8th of June 2012. In this context, tourism appears to be a priority area for action, as overcoming territorial geographical boundaries can contribute to the identification of the Adriatic basin as a unique reference tourist destination



The Adrion logo, Adriatic and Ionian Lands, identifies and promotes the Adriatic Ionian area as a unique tourist destination.



## The Macroregion reaches consensus

The EU Commissioner for regional policies and the Italian Minister for foreign affairs support the fulfillment of the Adriatic Ionian Macroregion (Brussels, 19<sup>th</sup> November 2012)



EU Commissioner for Regional Policies Johannes Hahn and Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs Giulio Terzi

The outline of the future Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion has been recently reinforced by the statements uttered by the EU Commissioner for regional policies Johannes Hahn, which were expressed during the meeting with the representatives of the eight countries that promoted the initiative (Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, Montenegro and Greece). EU Commissioner Hahn acknowledged the level of cohesion proven as to the political, technical and financial engagement for the Strategy and envisaged tangible ways of collaboration with the eight Ministers for foreign affairs, as the future Macroregion may lead to a new rush for cooperation and investments. From the Italian point of view, the strong political commitment for the mandate given to the European Commission last December to develop the Strategy was renewed and the intention to work, without delays, on the preparation of the Action Plan was expressed. The Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas was also confirmed as the first pillar of a much

broader macroregional strategy. Also the Italian Minister for foreign affairs Giulio Terzi emphasized the urgency to launch the Initiative for the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion as soon as possible, in view of the next EU 2013-2020 budget. According to the Minister, this is an “extremely qualifying initiative for the creation of the infrastructures and connections between different levels of government” of the various countries of the area. According to Minister Terzi, the launch of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion is important also because the initiative sees the convinced participation of countries, which are not part of the European Union, like Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, together with three EU Countries (Italy, Greece and Slovenia) and Croatia, which is likely to join the EU in July 2013. For the AIC Forum this is an important and exacting challenge, hence a collective effort is needed in order for this strategy also to encourage Western Balkan countries and support them in their pathway towards becoming EU members.



# Award to the Forum in Malta

Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean conferred the award for 12 years of activity (Malta, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012)



*Rodolfo Giampieri, Vice President of Forum the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce*

The Vice-President of the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area Rodolfo Giampieri received in Malta the award conferred by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean as an acknowledgement of the foresight shown by the Ancona and Split Chambers of Commerce of Ancona and Split in setting up the AIC Forum network comprising 37 chambers of commerce, which has brought together the chambers of commerce of the territories of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion since 2001.

For well twelve years the AIC Forum has pursued the priority objective of promoting economic and social cohesion of the territories by strengthening relations between countries from the area, by promoting the comparison of common problems and by creating joint programmes of cooperation for the development of the Adriatic-Ionian basin. As a real network, the Forum supports Eastern Balkans countries in their process towards the EU by encouraging a higher degree of economic, legal and administrative integration between its members and coordinating the activities of the Chambers of Commerce.

The activities carried out over the past twelve years have made it possible to obtain valuable recognitions from European Institutions, among which the membership in EUROCHAMBRES, which is a prestigious network of national European chambers of commerce. The reason for the awarding the prize to the Forum lies in its activity of "promotion of the ideals of the Mediterranean and coordination of the coastal regions of the Adriatic and Ionian seas within the framework of a joint promotion of culture, traditions, landscapes, artistic and natural assets in line with the values promoted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, such as promoting dialogue and collaboration between countries, strengthening peace, developing initiatives of economic development and protecting our common environment". Rodolfo Giampieri stressed that the international award conferred by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean is a great recognition for the AIC Forum, which reinforces the central role of the Adriatic-Ionian area within the Mediterranean basin and helps make a precious step in the process of recognition of the future Macroregion.



## Forum participates in the two-year exhibition "Habitat 2012"

(Roma, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2012)

The Vice President of the AIC Forum Rodolfo Giampieri, attended the opening conference of the two-year exhibition Habitat 2012. This is an international event that sees the participation of fifteen Eastern and Western Adriatic cities in an open discussion on important issues related to the sustainable development of transboundary territories. The project presented is an ambitious challenge, a research laboratory and the enhancement of the economic social and cultural heritage of the Adriatic-Ionian area, i.e. a "HABITAT" of great historical value, which deserves attention and recognition.

## Meeting of the coordination boards of the three Adriatic Ionian networks

(Ancona, 4<sup>th</sup> September 2012)

The meeting of the three Networks (Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns and Network of Universities Uniadriion) represented a useful opportunity to further strengthen possible forms of collaboration on common issues, rationalize local measures and initiatives on the Macroregion, create a more powerful critical mass towards the Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament, as well as present common opinions with regards to regional and community institutions.

## Visit of Slovenian Ambassador to All

The new Slovenian Ambassador Iztok Mirošič met the President of the Marche Regional Authorities Gian Mario Spacca in Ancona to discuss the accomplishments of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion. The meeting, whose positive results are an encouragement to move on along the path started long time ago in compliance with the macroregional strategy, was preceded by a meeting at the All Permanent Secretariat at the presence of Ambassador Fabio Pigliapoco, representatives of the 3 Adriatic-Ionian networks, i.e. the Forum of Chambers of Commerce, the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns and the Forum of Universities – Uniadrión, as well as the Marche Regional Councillor Adriano Cardogna and the President of the 6th European Affairs Commission. The meetings helped emphasize the constant and synergic commitment by the three networks within the Adriatic and Ionian area and provided an update of the activities and the projects already accomplished and those planned for 2012 within the Macroregional framework. The President of the Chamber of Commerce of Ancona and the Vice President of the Forum, Rodolfo Giampieri expressed the hope for a rapid recognition of the future Macroregion and pointed out that the macroregional strategy is particularly important for the companies of the area, not only from an economic and commercial viewpoint, though important, but also as a mode of cooperation, because it strengthens the coherence and the coordination of actions, rationalizes the involvement of financial resources and values the role of the local authorities with a more comprehensive involvement of civil society. Ambassador Mirošič guaranteed his interest in supporting this strategy, ensuring the commitment of Slovenia in addressing a definitely big and demanding challenge that will have to be dealt with jointly and with the utmost unity of intents between Member States, all the institutions involved and stakeholders, thereby initiating a widespread information and involvement campaign to help obtain the maximum support possible for this project. By way of conclusion, the Ambassador reported that the European Commissioner for regional policy Johannes Hahn is convincingly supporting the project and will meet the Ministers for foreign affairs of eight All countries within a relatively short period of time in order to discuss the action plan to be approved by the 27 EU Member States.



## Committee of All Senior Officials

Representatives of the eight governments of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative met in Ancona (22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012)

The headquarters of the Chamber of Commerce in Ancona was the venue of a meeting of the representatives of the eight governments of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012. The meeting was chaired by the representative of Slovenia (as Ljubljana holds the annual Presidency of the Organization) and coordinated by the Secretary-General of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative Ambassador Pigliapoco. The creation of the future Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion and its demanding process of approval by the European Union have been the focus of discussions, which have made it possible to take stock of the situation a few days after the 19<sup>th</sup> November meeting in Brussels between the Ministers for foreign affairs of the eight countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) and European Commissioner Hahn and in view of the December European Council, which then approved the mandate for the action plan. In this regard, the representatives of the eight governments satisfactorily acknowledged the positive evolution and results of the meeting of the Ministers for foreign affairs with the EU Commissioner for regional policy Johannes Hahn, who recognized the value of macroregional experiences and in particular of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion, also in terms of the political stability of the south eastern area of the European Union. All eight Ministers, on their side, expressed the common will to proceed along the pathway undertaken in 2010 and their belief that the December European Council would give mandate to the European Commission to draw up the Action Plan, which is the fundamental document for the approval of the strategy by 2014. In order to involve an increasingly high number of players from the civil society to the integration process, which will have a positive impact on the future of the basin of the two seas, the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative also approved the co-financing of 9 regional cooperation projects, which will include entities and institutions of all

the eight countries and focus on topics related to tourism, cooperation between universities, the protection of quality agricultural produce and the protection of the marine environment. Furthermore, connections and contacts targeted to the creation of parliamentary delegations at the All continue at parliamentary level. Said delegations will act as a useful interlocutor for governments in the view of the creation of the Macroregion and its positive implications in the social context of Adriatic-Ionian territories. Although the All is still under the mandate of the Slovenian Presidency, the Secretary-General has already established contacts with the Albanian Government, which will hold the future Presidency of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative starting from June 2013, whereby 2013 will be a particularly delicate year in view of the final approval of the Macroregion in 2014. A delegation of the Permanent Secretariat of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative will be among the official guests invited to the celebration of the Centenary of the Albanian Independence, on 28<sup>th</sup> November. The renewed visit of Ambassador Pigliapoco to the Albanian capital will be held shortly after his last meeting with the Albanian Minister for foreign affairs Panariti on 5<sup>th</sup> October last. Alongside diplomats, the meeting saw the participation of the representatives of the three networks of the Adriatic – Ionian civil societies, also with headquarters in Ancona (the Chancellor of the Marche Region Polytechnic University Marco Pacetti for Uniadrión, the President of the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce Rodolfo Giampieri and Councillor Michele Brisighelli on behalf of the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns), who held speeches on regional cooperation activities supporting the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion. The meeting of Senior Officials was the occasion to announce the passage of the rotating presidency of the Uniadrión university network from the chancellor of the Marche Region Polytechnic University to the chancellor of the Slovenian University "Primorska" of Koper.



# Fruit & Vegetables project: Focus Group

Project's technical meeting "Project for the development of the fruit and vegetable sector"

(Split - Croatia, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2012)



*Focus group of the project "Project for the development of the fruit and vegetable sector", Law no. 84/2001 of the Italian Ministry for Economic Development (Split, 10th October 2012)*

On 10th October 2012 Split was the venue of a meeting among experts of the Italian and Croatian fruit and vegetable markets within the framework of the "Project for the development of the fruit and vegetable market sector", which has been financed with Law no. 84/2001 of the Italian Ministry for economic development.

The meeting saw the participation of Italian experts thanks to involvement of the "Centro Estero Abruzzo" project partner, as well as of representatives of some Croatian chambers of the economy with the assistance of experts and people working in the field. Besides serving as the kick-off event of the project, the meeting aimed at defining the areas of main interest for the Croatian fruit and vegetable production, as well as outlining the problems and needs of the

sector on the Croatian territory in order to build and develop a training pathway always between the project targeted to business players of the Croatian fruit and vegetable market (to be held from October 2012 to February 2013).

The meeting was particularly important also in view of the study tour of the Croatian delegation in Italy, which will take place in Pescara (Italy) on 18th and 19th February 2013. This will be a real visit by Croatian business players who will have the opportunity to visit one of the best structured Italian wholesale markets, with particular attention to refrigeration, storage and shipping.

The entire initiative sees the involvement of the AIC Forum as project partner and coordinator of the activities, which will be carried out in Croatia in cooperation with the Split Chamber of the Economy.

## Meeting with corresponding members of Eurochambres

(Zagreb - Croatia, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2012)

The President of Forum, Jadranka Radovanic, took part in the meeting held in Zagreb which was dedicated to the corresponding members, as the AIC Forum is part of said association. The initiative represented an important occasion to illustrate the path and the activities accomplished by the Association and its role within the framework of the future Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion.

## Eurochambres meeting

(Brussels, 18-19th October 2012)

The participation of the AIC Forum in the works of the Eurochambres General Meeting provided the Forum with important information on the following: 1. identification of Henri Malosse as future EESC President for the 2013-2015 period. This appointment is particularly relevant for the European system of chambers of commerce, given Mr. Malosse's previous multiannual experience with the French system of chambers of commerce as Director of European Affairs within ACFCI (Assemblée des Chambres Françaises de Commerce et d'Industrie); 2. the Chambers of Commerce of the Republic of San Marino have submitted a formal application for membership to Eurochambres in 2013; 3. the election of the Board of Directors 2013. The representatives of the 27 EU Member States were confirmed, while among the Eurochambres members coming from EU third countries the President of the Chambers of Commerce of Bosnia-Herzegovina Bruno Bojic was elected following the indications emerged during the meeting of the affiliated and correspondent members of Eurochambres; 4. meeting calendar 2013 next plenary meetings scheduled for 24th May and 17th October 2013. The third edition of EPE, previously scheduled for 18th October 2012, has been scheduled on 16th October 2013.

# Conference “The fish-food supply chain of the Marche and SMEs cooperation in the Balkans”

(Ancona,  
23<sup>rd</sup> November 2012)

On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2012, the Ancona Chamber of Commerce was the venue of the kick-off event of the project entitled “Clusters and business networks for the development of food and fishing supply chain”, which is co-financed by the Italian Ministry for economic development and Unioncamere within the framework of Italian law no. 84/2001). The project involves chambers of commerce from the Marche Region, like Fermo (lead partner), Macerata and Ascoli Piceno, as well as the Ancona Chamber of Commerce through the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce; other partners are the Croatian Chamber of the Economy of Dubrovnik (Croatia) and the Chamber of the Economy of Montenegro. The meeting was an opportunity to explain local stakeholders the project activities that will be developed during 2013, as well as to exchange views between institutions, business players and their representatives on real possibilities of collaboration between the two shores of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, with special reference to the enterprises of the agricultural and fishing sector (i.e. businesses active in the fishing, processing and marketing of agricultural produce and fish) of the Marche Region, Croatia and Montenegro. The event also saw the participation of the Marche Regional President Gian Mario Spacca and the Secretary-General of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative Ambassador Fabio Pigliapoco, who both agreed on the importance of the contribution that this cross-border economic cooperation project will provide to the more complex and strategic process leading to the setting-up of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion, which has been recently formally approved in the Communication of the European Commission under the title “A Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas” of 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2012.



## E-Tourism

Innovative technology for trans-national European cultural routes



*Euphrasian basilica of Porec (Croatia), beautiful example of Istrian bizantin art*

The TechTour (Technology and Tourism) project, which was presented by the Union of Chambers of Commerce of the Veneto Region Unioncamere Veneto within the framework of the “Trans-national cooperation projects on European Cultural Routes” call for projects (23/G/ENT/CIP/B/N02S008), was approved by the European Commission on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and foresees the involvement of the AIC Forum as a partner. The initiative, which was launched on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2012, aims at promoting the two European transnational cultural itineraries through the application of innovative technologies, such as the implementation of systems for mobile phones, web sites and geo-localisation. These are virtual itineraries linking places and attractions, united by the historical and cultural heritage of the Roman and Byzantine periods. The first Roman itinerary departs from Aquileia and continues towards central Europe and the Balkan area through Slovenia and Serbia. The second Byzantine route, which is linked to the historical events of the Eastern Roman Empire, crosses Italy and Croatia and touches the coasts of Venice, Istria and Dalmatia. On the occasion of the kick-off meeting of the project, a workgroup comprising the various representatives of the partners involved was set up, specifically: Veneto Region, Marco Polo

System, Aquileia Foundation, Centre for Urban Development (Serbia), Live-ViewStudio (Serbia), Municipal Museum of Ljubljana (Slovenia), Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Ljubljana (Slovenia), City of Rijeka (Croatia), Archaeological Museum of Istria (Croatia), City of Rovinj (Croatia). The workgroup, which has recently met in Rijeka, is currently engaged in the definition of a model of ICT Governance, the definition of promotional tools and the preparation of a tourist guide in view of the official presentation of the two itineraries at the international workshops scheduled in Venice and Ljubljana in the first few months of 2013. The AIC Forum, which attaches great importance to culture as an element of attraction and understands it as the combination of tangible and intangible assets, knowledge, traditions and experiences able to enhance the extraordinary heritage that characterizes the Adriatic-Ionian area, participates in the project by promoting its widespread diffusion and the dissemination of its results. The Forum will involve its member chambers, in particular the ones of the territories concerned by the two historical-cultural tourist routes, and streamline all the experiences and outstanding features identified so far in the tourist sector in order to strengthen the image of the entire area and all its forms of cultural tourism.

# The Blue Economy growth

Conference “Setting an agenda for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth from the Adriatic and Ionian seas” organized by the DG mare and the Croatian Ministry for Maritime Affairs with the collaboration of other Adriatic Ionian Countries

(Zagreb, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2012)

The conference was centred on specific axes: optimizing the blue economy potential, maritime spatial planning, integrated management of coastal zones and terrestrial pollution safety, a cleaner and safer maritime area, as well as sustainable and responsible fishing.

Six working groups have enriched the discussion by developing a number of topics of great interest.

A few of them are listed below:

- growth factors, such as innovation, skill requirements, maritime clusters, smart infrastructures and skilled labour force to strengthen the competitiveness of the area in the world market and promote connections between Adriatic and Ionian countries;
- the role of islands, improving connections and tourist offer opportunities;
- sustainability and territorial planning, preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of coastal areas and the seabed, tourist promotion, common identities and best practices adopted;
- maritime spatial planning as a key tool to improve decision making processes balancing sector-based interests and contributes to the sustainable use of the marine zones;
- fight against marine waste, stronger involvement of local communities to deal with this issue, approaching the EU acquis in the field of marine environment protection, improving the sharing of information on maritime traffic, on the pollution due to intense maritime transport, and identification of shared prevention tools;
- sustainable development of aquaculture, research and scientific cooperation,

fisheries management and involvement of stakeholders at the level of sea basin, including management of protected areas.

The conference, which also saw the participation of the Marche Polytechnic University with a project on the “Blue Economy”, was an extremely significant and qualified event, also thanks to the official launch of the new Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Sea by the European Commission.

The text of the strategy also contains a number of suggestions by the Forum on the subject of maritime and coastal tourism, like the area brand “Adrion”, which intends to promote the entire Adriatic-Ionian basin as a single set of tourist destinations in international circuits to affirm a common identity.

The European Commissioner for maritime affairs and fishing Maria Damanaki has declared that “given the European perspective of Western Balkan countries, the movement of people, goods and services through the Adriatic and Ionian Seas is bound to increase.

Preserving the marine habitats and ensuring the sustainable development of the region will be challenging – and it is a challenge that we need to prepare for. I look forward to the input of all interested parties on this and to developing together a detailed plan for future action”.

*The new Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas is available on the AIC Forum website*

[www.forumaic.org](http://www.forumaic.org)



## XIV edition of the Forum of the Adriatic Ionian Cities and Towns

(Pescara, 28-29-30<sup>th</sup> November 2012)

The 14th plenary session of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns was held in Pescara, the mayor of which took over the presidency of the same Forum for the next two years.

The event was attended by numerous representatives of the seven nations that are part of the Forum, i.e. Italy, Slovenia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Albania and Greece, and was the occasion to deal with institutional, technical and administrative topics, compare new strategies and new projects in line with the supporting pillars of the future Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion. This year's edition, too, featured a session devoted to young people and focussing on “The communities of the Mediterranean: bridges between seas, bridges between generations”.

The Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce participated in the works by presenting the International Court, i.e. an organism that is an integral part of the AIC Forum and offers services such as arbitration, mediation, arbitrage and contractual expertise to facilitate the settlement of disputes between enterprises active in the Adriatic-Ionian area. At the end of the works, the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns reaffirmed in its final declaration its commitment in favour of the future Macroregion.

*The final declaration is available on the AIC Forum website [www.forumaic.org](http://www.forumaic.org)*

*Pescara (Italy)*





# “Days of Tourism Kupres 2012”

Kupres (Bosnia-Herzegovina)  
30<sup>th</sup> November - 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012



*Kupres (Bosnia-Herzegovina)*

The Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area was the co-organizer of the “Days of Tourism – Kupres 2012”, an initiative held in Kupres (Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina) from 30<sup>th</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012 and promoted by the “Attivo” Business Association. As part of the event, the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on “Tourism and Rural Development” was held as well as the traditional fair “Homemade traditional products and tourism”. The organizers aimed at enriching this traditional fair of homemade traditional products, which has been organized for many years during the winter tourism season in Kupres, with information conferences on the subject of tourism in rural areas, so that tourism can be recognized as one of the leading driving engines for rural development. The event was supported by representatives of the Bosnia-Herzegovina authorities, the Prime Minister of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Nermin Nikšić, who officially opened the conference, and, among others, the Minister for environmental protection and tourism Branka Đurić. The event was strongly supported also by the Croatian chambers of commerce member to the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, i.e. the Chambers

of Commerce of Pula, Šibenik, Split and Dubrovnik, whose representatives actively participated in the conference. The Secretary-General CCC Martina Velić Župić greeted participants on behalf of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce and emphasized the importance of institutions in their help and support to the various economic initiatives. The President of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce and President of the Split County Chamber of Commerce Jadranka Radovanić greeted attendees on behalf of the AIC Forum. Mrs Radovanić reminded the activities carried out and the results obtained by the AIC Forum, as well as the congresses of women entrepreneurs in the area and the activities that followed them. In 2011 during the eleventh edition of the Forum held in Montenegro, the second prize in the competition for innovative women-owned businesses in the Adriatic and Ionian was assigned to Ružica Curkovic of “Attivo”, the main organizer of the conference in Kupres. Ms Curkovic promoted the days of tourism during the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of Women's Enterprises of the Adriatic and Ionian Area, which was held on 15<sup>th</sup> October in Tirana (Albania). President Jadranka Radovanić concluded by stressing that women's potential for the economy

should not be underestimated, also in view of the fact that women make up for a significant share of the electorate. The effects expected from the event, that participants hope will be the first of a long series of other events, will result in the future in a network of contacts between the representatives of chambers of commerce and the tourist boards of neighbouring countries, in particular of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion that the AIC Forum is working on, thus making it possible for Kupres and FBiH in general to participate in cross-border cooperation joint projects. The tourist agency “Maestral” from Split (Croatia) also presented tangible projects for the establishment of connections within the Adriatic-Ionian area. Speakers' presentations on active holidays, mountain biking and Nordic walking have shown that Kupres has all the natural resources to develop selective forms of tourism and active holidays in nature and that it could offer highly demanded facilities through additional higher investments.

Lecturers from Croatia illustrated these special forms of tourism in a picturesque and interesting way and pointed out the prejudices often associated with them. One of them is that active tourism is preferred only by young people, while research in fact shows that it is actually demanded by people who are aged around 45, educated and with higher income than average and excellent consumers.

The conclusions emerged from the conference emphasised that rural tourism in Kupres and Bosnia-Herzegovina has an enormous untapped potential and that the current tradition must therefore be complemented with new alternative forms of tourism. Finally, as Jadranka Radovanić pointed out, this area should be recognized as a top destination for adventure tourism. To achieve this objective, a synergy of all facilities, as well as the support of institutions to the work on the field and the correct dissemination of information to end users are strongly needed.

On the second day of the event a fair of homemade products was held, where participants could taste local dishes and beverages. The initiative also saw the participation of the Vice Prime Minister of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Minister for agriculture, water and forestry Jerko Lijanović.



# Women entrepreneurship in Croatia

Project's final conference  
(Zagreb - Croatia, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2012)



Participants to the conference

The final results of the two year project EntrepreneurSHEp Croatia "Women Entrepreneurs in Croatia", which was implemented within the European Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors and coordinated by the Croatian Chamber of the Economy, were presented at the closing conference of the project held at the Croatian Chamber of the Economy in Zagreb on 27th November 2012.

The project of the European Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors, which involved 10 countries in its first stage, started in 2009. Croatia was involved in the project in 2012 together with other twelve new countries. The goal of this project was to promote women's entrepreneurial spirit through the creation of a Network of Women Ambassadors, i.e. expert women entrepreneurs who could provide their example in the implementation of a business idea and convey other female beginner entrepreneurs their personal experiences in the field of business practice. At the end of the project, which is co-financed by the

European Union within the CIP named "Specific Action EU Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors" (ENT-CIP-09-E-N08S00), 30 women entrepreneurs were appointed as ambassadors in Croatia.

In 2011, 10 motivational seminars involving 408 women and 5 start-up workshops involving 215 women and their mentors were; during the project 41 business plans were drafted.

Croatian ambassadors also participated in several conferences in Brussels, Warsaw, Malta, the Job Meeting in Zagreb and a meeting with local entrepreneurs from Carinthia.

At the end of the project, 3 new companies and 4 sole businesses were set up, all of which run by women.

On the occasion of the final conference held in Zagreb, contributions were given by the Vice-President for the economy, European integration and the EU of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce Ms Vesna Trnokok Tanta, the Director of the Office for Gender Equality in Croatia Ms Helena Štimac Radin, the Project Ma-

nager of the EntrepreneurSHEp project Ms Vesna Torbarina and the President of the Croatian Chamber of the Economy of the Split County, of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce and of the Croatian Association of Business Women Krug Mrs Jadranka Radovanić.

Mrs Radovanić emphasised the role of the Association and the Croatian Chamber of the Economy in the development of women's entrepreneurship in Croatia, as well as the activities and the results achieved through the activities of the Workgroup of women's entrepreneurship of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce. President Radovanić reminded that the Workgroup of women's entrepreneurship of the AIC Forum organized seven congresses of Women Entrepreneurs of the Adriatic-Ionian region with the aim of promoting transnational networking and collaboration. In 2013 the eighth edition of the congress will be held in Dubrovnik (Croatia) and focus on the proposed subject of "Banks and interest rates in financing women's entrepreneurship".

**"Promote the women's entrepreneurial spirit through the creation of a Network of Women Ambassadors, i.e. expert women entrepreneurs who could provide their example in the implementation of a business idea"**

In 2002, the percentage of enterprises run by women in Croatia was only 8% as against the total, while the number of registered women's businesses in 2011 in the country is significantly higher (out of all enterprises, 24% are companies and 33 % one-person businesses).

The conference emphasised that the trend to develop enterprises run by women in Croatia is good and that Croatia is one of the few countries with a strategy for the promotion and development of women's entrepreneurship. A number of good and qualified projects are expected in the future and new opportunities will also open up with Croatia joining the European Union.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of Women Enterprises of the Adriatic and Ionian Area

(Tirana, 15 ottobre 2012)

On the occasion of the 2012 European SME Week the Workgroup on Women's Entrepreneurship of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce and the Association of Professional & Business Women & Handicrafts Association (SHGPAZ) organized the 7th Congress of Women's Enterprises of the Adriatic and Ionian Area. The event under the title "Women's Entrepreneurship: a successful challenge for the Albanian economy" dealt with a very topical subject and was attended by a large number of enterprises run by women and indeed saw the participation of about two hundred businesses coming from all the countries of the Adriatic-Ionian Area: Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Italy, Serbia, Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo. Such a large number of attendees gives sense to the strong commitments and efforts on the topics of women's emancipation, on the need, which has now become unavoidable, for women to become aware of their peculiarities and give value to their thought. Furthermore, the highest national, regional and local authorities, who were present in a large number, and their testimony, legitimated the works of this Congress, which marks an important step ahead from all the actions implemented by the Forum in 2012, also in favour of the future Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion.

*Tirana (Albania)*



# Women entrepreneurship in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Tuzla - Bosnia-Herzegovina, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2012



*Conference in Tuzla (Bosnia-Herzegovina)*

Mrs Jadranka Radovanić the President of the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce and coordinator of the workgroup for women's entrepreneurship, attended the Conference on "Women's entrepreneurship in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Current and future prospects". The conference, which was organized by the Microcredit Regarding the Women Entrepreneurship Week, on the occasion of the Week on Women's Entrepreneurship through the "Women's networking in business" project, dealt with the topic of supporting entrepreneurship with a special focus on enterprises run by women. Given the current situation, Croatia is the country that has so far made the biggest steps forward when it comes to the role that women have in business because of the fact that it has set up an observatory and carried out a mapping of women's enterprises. During the conference, Mrs Radovanić presented the "Krug" Croatian association of business women, which she herself represents, as well as the results of the workgroup for women's entrepreneurship of the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area. In her speech, she emphasized the importance of having one national umbrella association of woman entrepreneurs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which would bring together women entrepreneurs, women managers as well as successful women in politics and decision-making positions to lay the foundations for enterprise development. Furthermore, the President spoke from the Croatian viewpoint and invited her colleagues from Bosnia-Herzegovina

to work on carrying on a strategy for women's entrepreneurship and an action plan, thereby working on the basis of Croatian experience and adapting it to their requirements. The emphasis should be, in any case, on the creation of a database of enterprises run by women. This mapping activity will therefore be implemented also in Bosnia-Herzegovina with the help of GTF. Mrs Radovanić also underlined the importance of networking between associations and institutions and distributed participants a CD with the activities of Krug and the Croatian Chamber of the Economy. She furthermore suggested that participants chose the best business woman/manager to promote both women's entrepreneurship and quality. At the same time, she invited participants to participate in the future editions of the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area, which will be the occasion to introduce the best business women and managers coming from the countries member to the AIC Forum. The situation of women's enterprises in Bosnia-Herzegovina was also described during the conference, whereby the "Women's networking in business" project will help support female entrepreneurship in the country. The wife of the U.S. Ambassador of Bosnia-Herzegovina Mrs Danuta Moon participated in the conference. In her speech she offered support to women's entrepreneurship in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as did the representatives of the Leader Group World Women Banking, which is based in New York and is the only microcredit network that focuses exclusively on women.



## THE STATE OF THE ART

The Forum AIC Secretariat together with the Workgroup on EU Project Management and the Workgroup on Tourism has been involved during the 2012 in management and implementation of numerous initiatives which started between 2011 and beginning of 2012. Participation in projects, as partner and lead partner, as it is known, requires a significant commitment in terms of management and implementation linked to specific project activities. Also a financial capacity must ensure that implementation of individual projects is in line with the principles of co-financing and reimbursement of the European project management. Therefore, the 2012 represented an important moment of awareness concerning the necessary efforts to enable the Forum AIC in applying for projects financed with extraordinary European, national or regional funds.

An adequate financial capacity and full operation are the basis of a serious and fruitful commitment of international networks, such as the Forum AIC within the framework of European management. The current initiatives were possible thanks to the concrete contribution of experts who were provided by several Chambers of Commerce associated to the network, as well as to financial capacity able to cope with commitments undertaken in single projects. It has required and still requires significant efforts, especially from the Forum's founders. Continually increasing commitment of the Association in the field must include also an accurate analysis of compatibility of this commitment with regular activities of the Forum AIC as well as commitment of the Forum's members and supporters whose efforts may be required in project initiatives. The planning and management of projects financed by the EU funds will still be possible in future in the face of a wide collaboration among the Chambers of Commerce concerning individual projects and commitments as required by the role of associated member. These efforts are aiming to continuous growth of the network and of its members, especially in view of important increase of European resources in framework of future Adriatic and Ionian Macro Region.

# Projects in progress

## Project: “Adriatic Economic Cluster Club”



The project, which is coordinated by the Unioncamere Veneto, started the activities during the 2012 by involving various partners, among which also the following Chambers associated to the Forum AIC: Chamber of Commerce of Ancona, Campobasso, Brindisi, Chamber of Economy of Rijeka (Croatia) and Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tirana (Albania). Among the main activities implemented during the year the following are highlighted:

- Participation to the Boat Show in Venice (Italy) the 20th of April 2012 where a BtoB and a BtoCredit meetings were held with involvement of approximately 120 entrepreneurs from all project partner regions.

- Participation to the Boat Show in Pula (Croatia) held on the 18th of October 2012 with the participation of approximately 170 enterprises also involved in a BtoB meetings.

The past year has seen continuity in enterprises mapping of enterprises centres of excellence involved or potentially interested in the organization among clusters of the nautical sector, which will be achieved with the follow up of the project.

It has been planned for beginning of the 2013 the 1st Adriatic Clusters Conference – Strategies and services to promote excellence and competitiveness of nautical industry and its related sectors in the Adriatic area.



## Project: WELLFOOD “Promoting Food Innovation for Wellness in Adriatic”



The project was approved in the 2012 by the Management Authority of the IPA CBC Programme. The proposal was submitted by the Province of Forlì-Cesena and it sees Forum AIC involved as associated partner. The partnership also involves the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro. The initiative aims at promoting of innovative capacity of the Adriatic regions in agricultural and food sector by encouraging of relationships among manufacturing enterprises and research centres.

The Forum AIC will be committed to follow the project activities, and it will be in charge of giving the maximum visibility to the initiative and therefore to results it will produce.

## Project: “The tourism sector: the cooperation between Emilia Romagna and Marche, with Albania, Croatia and Montenegro” (Legge 84/2001)



The Forum AIC is involved in the project as associated partner together with the Chamber of Economy of Rijeka (Croatia), the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro (Montenegro) and the Chamber of Commerce of Durres (Albania). The project has been implemented during the year. Afterwards the kick-off meeting, held in Bologna on the 6th of March, a two training courses were organized in June in Montenegro and in Croatia. In



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this occasion the exchange of best practices among catering schools from Italy, Croatia and Montenegro took place. In October 2012 the two "Road shows" have been carried out in the Emilia Romagna Region. They took place in Modena and Rimini. This initiative represented an opportunity for representatives of the Chambers of Croatia, Montenegro and Albania for presentation to the Italian entrepreneurs and local institutions of main business' opportunities of these countries.

### Project: "Clusters and business networks for the development of the agricultural and fishing industry chain" (Law 84/2001)



The project was officially launched during the year 2012 and after a several coordination meetings, the kick-off meeting was held in Ancona on the 23th of November 2012. The Chamber of Commerce of Ancona (Italy), the Croatian Chamber of Economy of Dubrovnik (Croatia) and the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro are involved in the project as partners thanks to their membership in the Forum AIC network. The project will be an important occasion of comparison among institutions, economic operators and their representatives on the actual opportunities of collaboration between the two Adriatic shores, with particular reference to enterprises from the Marche Region, Croatia and Montenegro from agricultural and fishing sectors (such as production, processing and trading of agricultural products and fish).

### Project "Development of the fruit and vegetables sector" (Law 84/2001)



The project sees the Unioncamere Nazionale together with the Mondimpresa as lead partners and the Forum AIC as

associated partner. Thanks to the latter, the Chamber of Commerce of Split, Dubrovnik and Osijek (not a member of the Forum AIC but recognized as an area of particular interest for purpose of finalization of the project) will be involved. The project aims at improving the productive/organizational capacities of the entire fruit and vegetables supply chain in Croatia and transferring of Italian know-how related to entire path which enables products to reach a final consumers, with particular reference to organization of relative services.

In the course of 2012 important activities have already taken place, such as:

- mapping of areas where production of fruit and vegetables in Croatia is concentrated,
- analysis of supply chain with identification of specific needs of Croatian operators in the sector,
- technical meeting of experts held in Split on 10th October 2012.

Currently activities are based on organization of series of training courses in Croatia addressed to local operators and of a Study Visit in Italy that aims fostering of meetings between Italian and Croatian operators. The project will last 12 months.

### Project: MedDiet – Mediterranean Diet and enhancement of traditional products"



The project, officially approved in the first half of 2012, will be coordinated by the Network of Italian Chambers of Commerce that are members of the ASCAME. The Forum AIC participates as a partner of the project and has a strategic role in dissemination of project's results and in exchange of good practices.

Project aims to raise awareness of schools and local authorities on specific topic referred to advantages of Mediterranean Diet, with particular attention to young consumers. Therefore, the project will support a Chambers of Commerce and professional associations in order to encourage the economic operators in

promotion of Mediterranean Diet. The project, coordinated by Unioncamere Nazionale (lead partner), will be an important occasion for discussion of specific topic among the Forum AIC and the Chambers of Commerce members of the ASCAME, from which the project itself took origins.

The kick off meeting of is scheduled for the beginning of the year 2013.

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### Trans-national cooperation projects on European Cultural Routes

### Project: TECH-TOUR Technology and Tourism: augmented reality for the promotion of the Roman and Bizantine itineraries"



Tech-tour is one of the projects approved during the 2012 and currently in progress. It is coordinated by the Eurospertello Veneto (lead partner) and it aims at creating of a map of two cultural paths that are connection between Venice and Aquileia and, the second one, between Croatia and Slovenia. The paths will be based on the Roman and Byzantine historic and cultural heritage by applying of innovative technologies.

Venezia (Italy)





The project activities are concentrated on defining and implementing of the ICT Governance model, on applying of innovative technologies such as systems of applications for mobile phones, web sites and geo-localisation, in view of official presentation of the two thematic cultural itineraries within the international tourist circuits of reference. The Forum AIC is involved as a partner of the project in charge to monitor dissemination and spreading of results. The duration of the project is 12 months.

## Possible collaborations in other projects

The Forum AIC has recently started to collaborate with the Odyssey, the European Group of Territorial Cooperation and associated member of the network NecsTouR (Necstour represents the first network already recognized as the European Cultural Itinerary on Mediterranean based on a model of territorial sustainable development related to ports and to relative rural territories). Odyssey was founded in 2008 with the seat in Marseille and it has the strategic delegation called "Union for the Mediterranean". Its headquarter is in Barcelona and its operative offices in Rome and Paris. It is recognised by the European Commission - Tourism Unity as one of the best practices. There are no special operative activities currently undertaken in context of the two initiatives, the MACHER (Material Culture Heritage of European Renaissance) and the ARCHEO.S, with whom occurred recently collaboration and information exchange. The MACHER is promoted by the Network of Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Cities, and the ARCHEO.S. by the Pugliese Public Theatre.

*Mediterranean area*



## New Projects

During the 2012 the Forum AIC was involved also in new projects under different new European tenders. In particular the following candidatures have been submitted:

*Tender: Adriatic and Ionian Initiative – Regional Cooperation Call for proposals*

**Project: "Innovative skills and competences for entrepreneurs in order to promote a new sustainable approach to the tourism offer in the Adriatic and Ionian Area"**



The project, officially approved in the first half of 2012, will be coordinated by the Network of Italian Chambers of Commerce that are members of the ASCAME. The Forum AIC participates as a partner of the project and has a strategic role in dissemination of project's results and in exchange of good practices. Project aims to raise awareness of schools and local authorities on specific topic referred to advantages of Mediterranean Diet, with particular attention to young consumers. Therefore, the project will support a Chambers of Commerce and professional associations in order to encourage the economic operators in promotion of Mediterranean Diet. The project, coordinated by Unioncamere Nazionale (lead partner), will be an important occasion for discussion of specific topic among the Forum AIC and the Chambers of Commerce members of the ASCAME, from which the project itself took origins. The kick off meeting of is scheduled for the beginning of the year 2013.

*Call for proposals: DG Enterprises and Industry – Support to transnational thematic tourism products as means of enhancing competitiveness and sustainability of European tourism*

**Project: VEROTOUR – Venetian routes: enhancing a shared European multi-cultural sustainable tourism"**

The project, submitted by the Veneto Region on 25/7/2012, aims at identifying of thematic trans-national tourist itinerary based on historic and cultural heritage of Venetian commercial routes. The project intends to implement the Program of the Cultural European Itineraries of the Council of Europe whose topic will be of primary interest for the European Commission in next planning period 2007/2014. The Forum AIC is involved as a partner. Recently, the preliminary phase has been closed and the notification of official approval has been received.

*Tender: EAC Pilot projects for the development of Sector Skills Alliance*

**Project: TOUR – ICT: Information & communication technologies for Tourism Operators Unified Roles"**

The project, presented on the 16th of August 2012, aims to improve economic competitiveness of European and national tourism through enhancement of education and innovative training on E-tourism. In particular, the specific activities are planned aiming to increase awareness of European tourism operators on actual level of competences requires by the sector, to share new tool on the European level such

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as a sort of E-Tourism CV (as a standard of quality) and innovative ways of promoting politics of education, training and strategies related to the national level and to improve competences of operators through e-learning tools. The project, coordinated by the Swiss-Italian University, is currently in phase of evaluation and the Forum AIC is involved as partner together with other experts of training field from Spain, Finland, Greece and the United Kingdom.

*Tender: European Multistakeholder platforms on Corporate Social Responsibility in relevant business sector*

### Project: SHARE & ISPIRE

The project, promoted by the Italian Centre of Superior Studies on Tourism and on Tourist Promotion of Assisi in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce of Tirana, sees the Forum AIC as a partner. The project, submitted on the 3rd of September 2012, is currently in phase of evaluation and it aims to foster the operators in tourism sector on the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) topic, also by creating of a multi-stakeholder platform based on tourism CSRTN (Corporate Social Responsibility in Tourism Network).

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It is considered worthwhile to mention a negative results of some applications of the Forum AIC or of other Chambers associated to the network in quality of partner. In particular, the following projects haven't been approved: BRAND – "Business Relations for Adriatic koiné as a New Tourist Destination"; NACE – "Network of Adriatic Creative Enterprises"; PRESA – "Promoting Energy economy and Saving in the Adriatic"; Project ARMACHULE – Arsenal and maritime Cultural Heritage: landmarks of sustainable tourism"; Project BARSnet – Ballast Waters Network; Project CORE: Cultural Business Energies; "Matter of Mod –MATERials and Tools for Energy Refurbishment of the MODern building stock" "ECONAUTIC-MED" and "ODYSSEA TOUR IN MED".

## How to join the Association Forum AIC

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 email, accompanied by the relevant decision of the competent body.

### CONTACTS:

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**FORUM**

delle Camere di Commercio dell'Adriatico e dello Ionio  
of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce  
Gospodarskih Komora Jadransko-jonskog područja

## Workgroup on UE Project Management

For further information and details regarding above mentioned projects please contact:

Workgroup on EU project management

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