

# Adriatic Ionian Macroregion

## Eusair Coordination Meetings

### Eusair Stakeholder Conference

The AIC Forum President and Secretary-General participated in this important conference, which represented the last and official moment of consultations within the framework of the EUSAIR Strategy. The conference was organised in two sessions, i.e. a plenary session and a session of theme-specific workgroups devoted to each of the 4 pillars of the EUSAIR Strategy.

The conference saw the participation of several Italian representatives and highlighted a large number of ideas, for example the modification of the pillar 4 name which changed from "Increasing regional attractiveness" to "Sustainable tourism", thereby testifying to the clear willingness to have the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion consider tourism as such as a priority sector. Following the conference, Italian regions updated their "position paper" through the work of the Italian EUSAIR Group; the document was from the very beginning immediately shared with the Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry, but also with the AIC Forum, which was called upon to reformulate its document on the EUSAIR Strategy focussing on real projects that should be based on synergies and in line with the content of the 4 pillars, as emerged from the Athens Conference.

### Meeting at the Ministry for Economic Development

On 24th February 2014 at the Italian Ministry for Economic Development, following the invitation of the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce Union came an AIC Forum representative participated in a meeting of the most important Italian stakeholders (regional authorities, universities, research centres and ministries competent for their respective sector; etc.), who were involved in the definition of the partnership agreement for the programming of 2014-2020 structural funds. The meeting aimed at consolidating synergies between the contents of the future EUSAIR Action Plan and the thematic objectives of the Partnership Agreement, i.e. a reference documents for each Italian region for the drafting of their respective operational plans on the use of structural funds. This stage for the programming of structural funds is of strategic importance for the future of the new Macroregion, as it will make it possible to better intercept resources through projects that will be shared between various regions and countries. For the system of chambers of commerce this meeting must serve as an incentive to launch shared projects starting from the main topics, which were identified in the AIC Forum Position paper in line with the Partnership Agreement thematic objectives.

### Meeting at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

On 25th February representatives of the AIC Forum took part in a meeting at the premises of the Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry for the presentation of a research study carried out by CESPI under the title "The viewpoint of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion within the Italian foreign policy – indications for the Italian EU Presidency semester". The meeting contributed to a more lively exchange of views between the various participating public and private bodies in view of the approval of the next Action Plan for the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion with a new "functional" approach that is not linked to the geographical borders of individual countries or regions, but rather to the borders, which are functional to a shared objective, i.e. social and economic cohesion. The presented study was also based on a cross-matching research activity with other existing macroregions (e.g. the Baltic Macroregion), the best practices of which were illustrated. The topics emerged during the debate included the future role of the AI (i.e. an "intergovernmental anchorage" role), the Central European Initiative (INCE, which will act as the future control body of the two Danube and Adriatic-Ionian Macroregions), as well as of other entities, like third sector entities or professional associations, which are currently considering the possibility of a coordination at a macroregional level through the setting up of specific fora.





# Ongoing Projects

## “MedDiet – Mediterranean Diet and enhancement of traditional products”



On 22nd and 23rd January 2014 Rome was the venue of two meetings, one targeting technical and scientific experts on the Mediterranean Diet (Technical Committee) and the other one bringing together project partners (Coordination meeting). The first Workgroup aimed at favouring an exchange of views and ideas between various experts from the Mediterranean countries, which are project partners on the topic of the “Mediterranean Diet” label, which will be promoted within the framework of the project involving the restaurants of the areas, where this initiative will be experimented. The second day was devoted to checking the progress of the project initiatives, in particular as regards actions for the dissemination of the nutritional values of the Mediterranean Diet in primary and secondary schools and actions in favour of consumers. The presence of the project manager for the AIC Forum was also useful to discuss with participating partners the next International Capitalization meeting for IPA countries; a change of location (from the current proposal of Ancona to Corfu, where the next edition of the AIC Forum will be held) was deemed necessary and requested and was subsequently unanimously approved by participants.



## “Innovative skills and competences for entrepreneurs in order to promote a new sustainable tourism in the Adriatic and Ionian Area”



Mostar (BIH) was the venue of the second itinerant workshop (after the Belgrade workshop held on 26th November 2013), which was organized in collaboration with the local partner Link Development Agency at the premises of the Chamber of the Economy. This second itinerant workshop concerned the promotion of the “Web Wholesaler incoming cross-border Tour operator”, i.e. a tool for the promotion and commercialization of tourist products, which thanks to this project intends to affirm itself as a reference tool for the coordination and integration of the various tourist offers of the future Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion at an international level. The web wholesaler will be activated in the following weeks and feature offers from various tourist operators that were involved thanks to a remote networking activity. These tourist packages will all come with the ADRION brand, a new updated version of which is currently being elaborated within the framework of this project and will be submitted to the AIC Forum Board of Governors. The latest step of these workshops was held in March in Tirana (Albania). The next one will take place in Greece in Corfu together with the 2014 annual edition of the AIC Forum, in particular with the Workgroup for Tourism.



## “Adriatic Economic Cluster Club”



On 23rd and 24th January 2014 Venice was the venue of the final event of the “Adriatic Economic Cluster Club” Project, which saw the participation of all project partners and several local business players. This was the occasion to lay the foundations for a possible follow-up of the same project in view of the establishment of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion, whereby the one of the pillars of the macroregional Action Plan will be specifically devoted to the Blue growth, including the nautical and shipbuilding sector. After a few days, i.e. on 5th-6th-7th February, the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, i.e. one of the project partners, participated in the SEATEC – COMPOTEC trade show in Carrara (Tuscany) with a stand dedicated to the project, specifically to the project action plan “Development of a nautical supply chain focused on eco-design and eco-processes for environmental impact prevention and upgrading of waste recycling” and hosted a number of companies from the Ancona area. Within the framework of the Tyrrhenian area, which is competing with the Adriatic-Ionian area, this participation testified to the presence of a still lively sector, which in spite of the crisis still has leading players in terms of skills and specializations, which should be used as the stepping stone to relaunch the entire supply chain.



## “Vero TouR”



In its capacity as project partner, the AIC Forum and the lead partner Veneto Region organized their participation in the Sajam Turizma - International Fair on Tourism in Belgrade (Serbia) on 26th and 27th February with a dedicated stand.

Together with the ITB in Berlin, this trade show is one of the steps foreseen by the project for the dissemination of the theme-specific tourist products of the Venetian commercial routes that the entire project has focussed on. In March the AIC Forum furthermore organized the workshop in Tirana (Albania), which like the workshop held in Venice in December 2013 tried to raise the awareness of business players on the issue of theme-specific tourist products.

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# Participation in All Workgroup

**“Increasing the regional  
cooperation in tourism  
field between  
member states  
of All with special  
focus on Eusair”**

**Tirana, Albania 10<sup>th</sup> January**

On 10th January 2014 Tirana was the venue of the All Workgroup on Tourism, which focussed on the increase of regional cooperation in the field of tourism between the members of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, with a special focus on the European Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion. The AIC Forum was represented by the President of the Durres Chamber of Commerce and Industry Andrea Xhavara. On this occasion the proposal of the Adriatic-Ionian system of chambers of commerce for the definition of the Action Plan for the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion, which was drafted by the AIC Forum, was submitted to the participants in the All Workgroup on Tourism, i.e. Joanna Mouliou (Programme Manager of the European Commission - DG Regional and Urban Policies), Cinzia De Marzo (European Commission – DG Enterprises and Industry), Blanka Belošević (Croatian Ministry for Tourism), Antonios Fysekidis (European Commission – Expert for the EUSAIR 4th Pillar), as well as to representatives of various Albanian ministries (Ministry for Urban and Tourism Development, Ministry for Economic Development, Trade and Entrepreneurship, Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and earned itself Joanna Mouliou's commitment to integrate the AIC Forum proposal in the documents issued by the European Commission - DG Regional and Urban Policies relevant to the topic of the EUSAIR Strategy.

**Round table on transport  
and maritime  
cooperation**

**Durres, Albania  
21<sup>st</sup> February**

On 21st February Durres hosted the All Workshop on the Development of Maritime Transports and Ports within the framework of the new forms of cooperation concerning the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion.

The AIC Forum was represented by the President of the Durres Chamber of Commerce and Industry Andrea Xhavara.

The President of the Durres Chamber of Commerce and Industry believes that major investments in infrastructures, safety and security and privatizations would represent a valuable asset, capable of bringing about benefits both to SMEs and the entire regional economy. It also emerged during the workshop that the port is an economic area; hence the privatisation of its activities is expected to lead to an increase of its work volume, which should be adequately monitored by Port Authorities and the relevant ministries in each individual country. All participants agreed on the fact that the use of port assets for the expansion of enterprises and the increase of jobs can be considered one of the most challenging topics for new projects within the framework of the new geopolitical context of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion.

*Dures, anfiteatre*





## “Mirabilia: European Network of Unesco Sites”

Matera, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2013

The AIC Forum President participated in “Mirabilia”, i.e. the international symposium on cultural tourism and B2B, which took place from 25th to 27th November 2013 in Matera within the framework of the plenary session specifically dedicated to tourism where he illustrated the best practice of the Adriatic logo. Through the action of chambers of commerce, the Mirabilia project strengthens the promotion of itineraries linked to UNESCO sites. The event was a valuable occasion for institutions and tourist operators to exchange views and ideas and offered the representatives of European institutions the change to give their contribution to highlight the importance to promote transnational cultural tourism as a lever to generate economic repercussions and effects at a local level.



## Workgroup on Crossborder Tourism in the Macroregion

Ancona, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2013



On 9th December the Ancona Chamber of Commerce hosted a workshop on crossborder tourism in the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion, with a special focus on the development of cultural and social tourism within the framework of the Macroregion, which is about to be established. The seminar was organized by Biennale Habitat 2012, i.e. an international initiative on the sustainable development of the Adriatic-Ionian area, in collaboration with the AIC Forum and the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, and saw the participation of representatives from the Marche Region, the Adriatic Protected Coastal Areas Network ADRIAPAN, the Conero Natural Park, FEDERPARCHI Marche, the Brindisi Chamber of Commerce and Assonautica. The Seminar ended with the signature of the “Declaration of interest” by participating associations with the aim of identifying an action plan and joint project activity to support the development of ADRIAN, i.e. the AIC Forum umbrella label symbolizing the union of the Adriatic-Ionian macro-area.

## Eurometing NECsTour

Brussels, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2013



On 12th and 13th December 2013 the reference person of the AIC Forum Workgroup on EU Project Management participated in the following initiatives organized by the NECSTouR network: - NECSTouR “internal meetings”; - NECSTouR “Indicators Task Force meeting”, during which the state of the art of ongoing experiments carried out by some members of the NECSTouR network in their respective territories on the tourist destinations quality indicators (ETIS) promoted by the European Commission. - NECSTouR “Blue Growth and Tourism& Landscape Task Forces meeting”, which set the stage for an internal discussion among members on the contribution, which will have to be provided in short to the European Commission in view of the publication of the next Communication on European maritime and coastal tourism. On 13th December, during the 13th Eurometing on tourism, which was organized by Tuscany and the Committee of the Regions, worth mentioning is the contribution by the representative of the DG Enterprises - Tourism Unit, who spoke on the European Commission's next activities and initiatives with a special focus on the 2014-2020 programming period for the EU budget.

# 14<sup>th</sup> Edition of the AIC Forum

Corfù, 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> June 2014

The 14th Edition of the AIC Forum will take place from the 10th to the 12th of June in Greece, in Corfù in collaboration with the Corfu Chamber of Commerce. The AIC Forum, as one of the major stakeholders of the recent EUSAIR consultation path and following the recent Stakeholders Conference EUSAIR held in Athens on the 6th and 7th February 2014, considered worthwhile to devote its 14th Annual Edition to the topic “**The Adriatic and Ionian Macroregion: the role of Chambers of Commerce in the new economic scenario**”. In this way the AIC Forum and the numerous Chambers

of Commerce of the Area intend to mark strongly their commitment.

The choice to organize the Event in Greece (Corfu) on the next 10th-12th June 2014, during the Greek Presidency of the European Union and few days before the publication of the Adriatic and Ionian Macroregion's Action Plan (expected within the end of June), aims to focus more attention on the course in act also in view of the Italian Presidency when the Adriatic and Ionian Macroregion will be definitively enacted.

Besides the Plenary Session dedicated to the above-mentioned topic, even during this Edition, the second day will be dedicated to the meetings of the

AIC Forum thematic Workgroups. Since they are consistent with the 4 pillars on which the whole EUSAIR consultation phase and the post-Athens “Summary report” are focused, the Workgroups will deal with the same pillars (one for each Workgroup) in order to propose operative actions and projects as required by the European Commission in the “suggested actions” of the post-Athens “Summary report”.

The Corfu Event will represent for the Chambers of Commerce and other interested stakeholders an occasion to examine in depth and to consider how to deal with new challenges of the Macroregion: new EU Programme for structural funds 2014-2020 dedicated to the UE Member States, other European financial resources for the next years (i.e. national IPA Programme, new programmes for cross-border territorial cooperation, etc.) and new strategies and suggestions for local development policies and in particular for SMEs.