

Adriatic Ionian Macroregion: launch of the EUSAIR Strategy

AIC Forum delegation took part in the Launch Conference of the Strategy (Brussels, 18th November 2014)

It ended on Tuesday November 18 in Brussels the Launch Conference of the European Strategy EUSAIR in which an AIC Forum delegation took part together with some Association's members, in particular the Chambers of Commerce of: Ancona, Split, Pula, Dubrovnik, Dusseldorf, Ferrara and the Director of Unioncamere Veneto.

Important institutional speakers from the European Commission and the 8 Macroregion Member States participated to the event. In the first part of the day they focused on the important path achieved so far and on the opportunities that from this point forward could be offered to the different territories within the issues of security, environmental conservation, economic development and employment growth. The afternoon was instead devoted to in-depth analysis on more practical issues, with the direct involvement of many stakeholders who were attended the event.

It was discussed together with the National EUSAIR Coordinators (Ex National Contact Points) of the eight

Countries and through the Dg Regio - European Commission input, on the need of actualise a new Governance able to implement the EUSAIR Strategy, specifically the Action Plan approved in June the last, to devise development strategies and to put them into practise. It may be possible through a better use of available financial resources of this Area starting from the structural funds and European investment referring to the Programming Period 2014-2020. As indicated by the European Commission in the "Commission Report COM (2014) 284 final" of the 20th May 2014, it should be a new "streamlined governance and management architecture for the EUSAIR" in which is officially required to operate in 3 levels by involving the stakeholders:

- political leadership and ownership
- coordination
- implementation

This meant to be a Governance model that, actually, has been already planned by the National Coordinators of



the 8 countries together with the EU Commission, as required by the European Council through an appropriate document signed in the same date on the occasion of the Launch Conference. This document, among the other commitments, specifically shows the involvement of the main and considerable society stakeholders at national, regional and local levels in each implementation phase of the Strategy. By examining this document the AIC Forum will guarantee its engagement in the forthcoming months both when is required and through its involvement.

For further information please visit the NEW EUSAIR Strategy website: <http://adriatic-ionic.eu/>

The four pillars of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion's Strategy



LAUNCH CONFERENCE OF THE EU STRATEGY
FOR THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN REGION
18 NOVEMBER 2014, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM





Forum of the Adriatic Ionian cities: projects and governance of the strategy

(XIV session, Pescara, 12th-13th December 2014)



The sixteenth edition of the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities was held in Pescara on December 12-13, 2014. Following the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion Launch Conference, and the adoption of the Joint Statement and the Guidelines for the management of EUSAIR, the Forum of Cities focused this year on "projects and governance of the strategy of Macroregion Adriatic - Ionian Initiative and the commitment to the Forum member cities". The event was organized in two working days. The President of the Abruzzo Region, Luciano D'Alfonso, the Ambassador Pigliapoco of the Permanent Secretariat of the IAI and the President of the Forum AIC, Rodolfo Giampieri were of the impression that the first day was mainly oriented to discussions on opportunities offered by the Adriatic Ionian Macroregion. The second part was dedicated to organization and representation of the needs and demands of the cities and territories identifying the role of governance of Fora at macroregional level. The reports of the three regional Fora on the Adriatic Ionian Macroregion were given, along with the report of the representative of the Commission for the Environment and Transport of the European Parliament. On Saturday, December 13, Ludovico Ghepardi and Claudio Polignano, representatives of the managing authorities for Territorial Adriatic Ionian Cooperation Programme 2014-2020, and the managing authorities of the IPA CBC Programme Italy / Montenegro / Albania 2014-2020, provided the technical aspects oriented to implementation of the topic addressed to the Macroregion. The conference ended with the plenary session and the General Assembly, that presented the new members of the statutory bodies of the Forum of the Cities.

Adriatic Ionian Strategy: the bridge to the EU

The Adriatic Ionian Macroregion: an important priority for the EU Italian Presidency



Rimini, 10th December 2014

The conference entitled "EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region: the bridge to Europe" was held in Rimini on December 10, 2014, following the launch conference of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion, held on November 18, 2014. The Rimini event was organized in the closing phase of the European Semester presided by the Italian Presidency, and it was promoted by the Undersecretary of State for European Affairs, Sandro Gozi. Honorable Mr. Gozi declared, that the Italian EU Presidency considers the Macroregion to be the topic of highest priority. The conference was divided in three sessions dedicated to sharing ideas on political membership, building identity networks, and implementation of Action Plan. The conference has brought

together major institutional and other stakeholders of the Strategy, such as: national governments, regions, European entities, representatives of other countries, chambers of commerce, universities and other bodies. The Conference was attended by distinguished speakers like Silvia Velo, Undersecretary for the Environment, Gentian Elezi, Deputy Minister for European Integration of Albania, Gian Mario Spacca, President of the Marche Region, Franco Iacop, President of the Regional Council of the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia. The Chairman of the Forum AIC Rodolfo Giampieri was invited to participate along with the Secretary General Michele De Vita. The conclusive remarks were expressed by Benedetto Della Vedova, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs.

Ongoing Projects

The Workgroup on EU Project Management constituted by the Forum AIC, continued with various project activities involving the association, in the year 2014. Those are, in particular:

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



(co-funded by the Adriatic Ionian Initiative - Regional Cooperation Programme - Call for Proposals 2012)

The project ended on June 30, with the last educational initiative on sustainable tourism, organized for Greek tourist operators, and comprised one-to-one meetings between local institutions and tourist operators. It was supported by the Round table for tourism of the AIC Forum, that met at the sixteenth annual edition of the AIC Forum held in Corfu.

The project has left significant results in terms of strengthening the skills of professionals on issues of new European policy on tourism, which is particularly oriented to environmental and social sustainability, but also in terms of business opportunities for tourist operators, that were offered the opportunity to commercialise tourist packages and to promote them through the project, on the portal www.adrion-tourism.eu, representing a tool of the official, and operational website - ADRIION.

In the coming months, the integration and updating of the two portals will take place, aiming at promoting and commercializing tourist packages, along with the development of the brand ADRIION.

After the budget of the project had been presented and the project closed, it was very much appreciated by its funder (Adriatic-Ionian Initiative), that requested from the Forum AIC to present the main project outputs at the Round table IAI, dedicated to SMEs in Sarajevo, which was attended by Ms Željana Bevanda with the Chamber of Economy of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ms Amela Becirovic, with the Development Agency LINK in Mostar (the latter as a partner of the project) illustrating the achieved results.

"Vero TouR - Venetian routes: enhancing a shared European multi-cultural sustainable tourism"



(co-financed by the EU DG Entrepreneurs and Industry - Support to transnational thematic tourism products as means of enhancing competitiveness and sustainability of European tourism)

The project VeroTour, in which the Forum AIC participated as a partner, ended on October 30, 2014. The AIC Forum was strongly involved in implementation of project activities, along with other administrative and accounting activities, aimed at presenting the final report. Those are, as follows:
- Participation in the 3rd Partnership Meeting, held in Chania (Crete) 27-29 / 08/2014. On occasion, the decision to nominate the itinerary of "Venetian Trade Routes" recognized by the European Council, as European Cultural Itinerary, was officially adopted. This is a very important itinerary that should, in the years to come, open to the involved partners, opportunities of collaboration, not only in tourist, but

also in other sectors, as well as to enable the promotion of their territories.

- Organization of the 3rd and last technical meeting oriented to tour operators, was held in Kotor (Montenegro) on 09/18/2014. The AIC Forum organized this event in collaboration with the tour operator Montenegrin "Adventure Travel" and with the project partner Art Kontakt. The final project conference was held in Turkey (Bodrum / Istanbul) on October 8-9, 2014. The Director of Unioncamere Veneto, Mr. Gian Angelo Bellati took part in the event in the capacity of the project partner, and on behalf of the Forum AIC, as well.

Mr. Bellati presented project activities of the Forum AIC, and highlighted in particular the last activity aimed at realization of an App for Smartphone, focused on the itinerary "Venetian Trade Routes", to be added as the project output to promotional guides made by the Veneto Region and the partner Amatori Group from Ancona.

This tool can be downloaded for free from all the App stores available online (for Apple, Android and Windows). It is definitely an added value to the project, in terms of visibility and practical usability of the product. Moreover, the AIC Forum, has also realized several plates with QR code to be posted at the premises of the main tour operators involved in the project, to promote the maximum disclosure of the realized ICT product.

"Meddiet - Mediterranean Diet and Enhancement of Traditional Products"



(co-financed by the ENPI MED CBC Program)

The project activities that include the Forum AIC have continued in the

WORKGROUP ON EU PROJECT MANAGEMENT



second semester, as well.

As highlighted at the last Partnership meeting held in Alexandria on October 13-14, 2014, the project is focusing the activities on the following:

- on the dissemination of tools (toolkit) products under the project for schools and local authorities;

- on development of pilot activities with some restaurants in various partners countries;

- on creating info-points to be placed at headquarters of some partners, with the objective to promote the Mediterranean diet in various areas, but also its economic and cultural benefits. Currently, the requests are being collected for setting up the info-points on localities that will have to ensure the dissemination service once the project has ended, as well.

- on the communication campaign to the benefit of potential stakeholders, that will constantly be monitored by each partner through the data collection procedure, and will also be activated by the AIC Forum.

Activities 2015

Considering the activities upcoming in 2015, the Forum AIC could be invited to collaborate with the National Unioncamere (project leader) regarding the initiatives related to EXPO 2015. The topics related to the Mediterranean diet, in view of the upcoming European calls, will be carried out at macroregional level, as well.

New Project Period

The new 2014-2020 programming period has been launched with the invitation for the first Calls, oriented towards several new European Programs.

The Workgroup on EU Project Management of the Forum AIC is following the start-up phase, waiting for the new Calls to be announced in relation to European Territorial Cooperation (the cross-border bilateral Italy / Croatia and the Trilateral Italy-Albania-Monte-

negro, the transnational ADRION, the new MED, MED ENI, the new Interreg Europe), expected not before March 1, 2015.

The Group intends to strengthen the European perspective, regarding the new approach that the Strategy EUSAIR requires from the stakeholders on the territory, particularly in terms of strategic planning and greater macroregional impact.

The goal is to develop the new Forum AIC "position paper" on implementation of Action Plan of EUSAIR Strategy, consistent with operational and prioritized proposals of all the member chambers, with an investigation on possible European Programs suitable to finance such projects.

At the moment, there are no new projects being proposed on specific open calls.

Contact the AIC Forum

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FOCUS

ON

ALBANIA:

SCHULZ'S CALL TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

On 9 December, European Parliament President Martin Schulz called for negotiations to be opened with Albania and for negotiation chapters "as soon as possible".

Albania obtained its candidate status on 27 June 2014 but no date has been set for opening the negotiations - which will depend on progress in reforms in five priority areas. Rama stated that Albania would continue to make progress in all the directions that the EU wants - the rule of law, the fight against organised crime and corruption, and modernisation.

MONTENEGRO:

HAHN CALLS FOR REFORMS TO CONTINUE

During a visit to Montenegro on Friday 21 November, the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy, Johannes Hahn, who is also in charge of accession negotiations, called for the country to continue its reforms.

The Commissioner emphasised that, "economic performance is not only about money. It is also about important reforms..."

Legal certainty, a functioning independent judicial system and fundamental rights like property rights (who is the real owner of a piece of land) are preconditions to attract investors and to stimulate economic growth and jobs". Hahn also indicated that the Commission had flagged up an early warning on chapter 23 (judicial system and fundamental rights) and 24 (freedom, security and justice) without, however, activating it.

He also highlighted the need to make progress on the question of funding political parties, lobbying, the code of ethics for parliamentary members, legislation on tackling corruption and the law on the Special Prosecutor's office but also explained that, "adoption of legislation is not a panacea..."

But, their adoption and enforcement will lead to establishing a credible track record of investigations, prosecutions and final convictions in corruption cases, including high-level corruption".