

A Zagreb to promote the AI Macroregion

Conference organised by the Croatian Chamber of Economy



Event of the Chamber of the Croatian Economy, new AIC Forum member

In Zagreb, at the Croatian Chamber of Economy – a recent addition to the associative structure of the Forum as an ordinary member – the conference was held entitled “Adriatic Ionian Macroregion: new opportunities for development and cooperation. The role of the Chamber of Commerce and of other stakeholders” with the participation of eminent international representatives. The conference saw the participation of delegates of European institutions, such as the Croatian member of the European Parliament Ruza Tomasic; diplomatic dignitaries such as the Italian Ambassador to Croatia Emanuela D’Alessandro; representatives of the Croatian Ministries for Foreign Affairs, Regional Development and Industry/handicrafts; the Director of the Croatian ICE, Massimo Sessa; as well as representatives from the principal Area networks: Uniadriion at the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities, represented by the Mayor of Spalato Ivo Baldasar, and the Adriatic Ionian initiative represented by its Secretary

General Fabio Pigliapoco.

The conference achieved its objective of giving ample dissemination of information on the theme of the Adriatic Ionian Macroregion, presenting the latest results and recent development of the EUSAIR strategy to the main stakeholders in the Area who are called upon to act right away to identify new possible collaborations, to organise joint projects and more generally to make better use of all the opportunities emerging from this new geo-political dimension. As confirmation of this, and in anticipation of the 15th Edition of the Forum in Durazzo this coming 11-13 May, approval has been given for the proposal of the new President of the Chamber of Commerce of the Bosnia Herzegovina Federation, Marko Santic, to organise with the AIC Forum a meeting to raise awareness and promote the macroregional project and the opportunities offered by it to the entrepreneurial fabric of the Bosnian territory. The event was held on 17th of April, as part of an important trade fair in Mostar.

15th edition of the AIC Forum

(Durres, 11th-13th May 2015)

Albania will host the 15th Edition of the AIC Forum. Organised in conjunction with the Durazzo Chamber of Commerce, the event will take place from 11 to 13 May at the Hotel Harmonia AS in Durazzo. Following official approval of the Adriatic Ionian Macroregion, which took place in October 2014, the work of the Forum this year will be to tackle the theme of the active role of players in the territory, and in particular the SMEs, in the new macroregional scenario. Aware of the importance of this new context and of the governance in operation at institutional level aimed at finding strategies and new local policies for territorial development, the chamber of commerce system intends to place at the centre of the debate the economic system, making the importance of the Macroregion concrete and more easily perceptible for the business world, especially with a view to being able to seize the opportunities deriving from it. This edition too will have an initial part dedicated to the plenary session followed by meetings of the AIC Forum Workgroups focussing on the current issues important for the Area such as: women’s entrepreneurship, transport, tourism, agriculture, the environment and fishing /aquaculture. In addition, as usual, a meeting is planned between the representatives of the Group on the European Project Management involved in defining feasible projects of common priority to be developed through the resources made available by the new European 2014-2020 funding programme for member states as well as for those that do not yet belong to the European Union.

View of the city of Durres: anfiteatre



1st Meeting EUSAIR Governing Board

Ancona (Italy), 22th-23th January 2015

Following the adoption of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) by the European Council in October last year, the EUSAIR Governing Board held its first meeting in Ancona (Italy) on 22-23 January 2015. Main points in the agenda were the preparation of the kick-off meetings of the Thematic Steering Groups per pillar, a discussion on the general criteria for the identification and prioritisation of actions/projects, and the setting up of a Facility Point for the support to the implementation of the Strategy. The meeting was co-chaired by Bosnia-Herzegovina (chair pro tempore of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative) and the European Commission (Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy). As devised in the Working paper on governance and management structures endorsed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the eight participating countries in the EUSAIR Launch Conference (Brussels, 18 November 2014), the Governing Board coordinates the work of the Thematic Steering Groups in charge of implementation through strategic guidance with respect to the implementation of the Strategy and its Action Plan.

Participants include: Representatives of the eight participating countries (National and Pillar Coordinators), the Commission services, the Permanent Secretariat of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, representatives of other EU institutions and bodies, the Managing Authority of the future ADRION programme and the authority responsible for the EUSAIR Facility Point under that programme.

EUSAIR Governing Board, (Source: www.adriatic-ionian.eu)



Thematic Steering Groups: Kick-off Meeting

The first meetings of the Thematic Steering Groups (TSG) of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) for the pillars of Blue Growth (pillar 1), Environmental Quality (pillar 3) and Sustainable tourism (pillar 4) took place respectively in Athens (Greece) on 27 March, Piran (Slovenia) on 5 March, and Tirana (Albania) on 12/13 March 2015. The meeting of the TSG for the pillar 2 (Connecting the region: transport and energy networks) will be held in Italy during the course of April. Representatives of the administrations of the eight participating countries (four EU Member States: Croatia, Italy, Greece and Slovenia, and four non-EU countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia), gathered together to discuss on the rules, procedures,

criteria, targets and indicators that will govern their work in order to implement the Strategy and its Action Plan. The European Commission was represented by the Directorates-General for Regional and Urban Policy, Maritime Affairs, Environment, and Growth. As an outcome of the meetings, the TSGs members agreed to carry out some "homework" during the following weeks, based on the identification of the priority actions in the Strategy's Action Plan concerning their respective pillar, as well as the criteria to be used to select the best actions/projects within them. The TSG will also map possible sources of financing (EU and non EU) available in the countries for these projects. On this basis, a work plan will be established in the second round of TSG meetings during June 2015.

The TSG of Pillar 4 in the meeting held in Tirana on 12th-13th March (Source: www.adriatic-ionian.eu)



Women Entrepreneurs on "Histrìa 2015"



The Women Entrepreneurs of the Adriatic-Ionian area at "Histrìa 2015"

In line with the conclusions of the Forum AIC Workgroup on Women's Entrepreneurship, which took place the last June 11th within the 14th Edition of the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce in Corfu (Greece), the performance of the Women Entrepreneurs of the Adriatic and Ionian Area on the 22nd food and drink exhibition "HISTRÌA 2015" has been successfully realized.

During the three days of the fair it was very successful also the performance of Italian entrepreneurs who presented their products on the Eurospertello – Unioncamere del Veneto (member of AIC Forum) and they established numerous contacts with visitors and other exhibitors. In this occasion, the Academy of preparing cheese was recognized particularly interesting and as one of the possibilities for future cooperation.

European Maritime Day 2015

Ports and coasts as gateways to maritime growth
(Piraeus, Greece, 27th-28th May 2015)

It will be held in Piraeus on the 28th and 29th May 2015 the next European Maritime Day (EDM) Conference. It is organised in partnership with the Greek Ministry of Shipping, Maritime Affairs and the Aegean and the city of Piraeus.

This edition will focus on the role of ports and coasts as gateways to maritime growth. In particular the two-days Conference will be structured in several plenary sessions on the following topics: Ports and coasts, engines for Blue Growth; Blue Economy and Science Forum; Maritime skills and

employment; Working with nature: innovative solutions for jobs and growth in coastal areas.

At the end the final session will aim to will aim to frame the main conclusions in the context of the European Maritime Policy, and translate the ideas and proposals into a mandate for policy makers and the whole maritime community in the coming years.

EMD 2015 will also host workshops, exhibitions, side events, business meetings and much more. A representative of the AIC Forum will take part to the Event.

Economic Impacts of the Cruise Industry

International Conference organized by INSULEUR
with the collaboration of the AIC Forum



Following a Public Hearing, organized by the Network of Insular Chambers of the EU (INSULEUR) within the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels, on May 2014, on the Commission Communication "A European Strategy for maritime and coastal tourism", INSULEUR proposes the organization of a Forum on the "Impacts of the cruise economy in coastal and island (and river) destinations".

The Forum will be hosted by the Chamber of Ilia – member of AIC Forum - at Ancient Olympia, Greece, on the 23rd of May 2015 with the special collaboration of ASCAME and the support of the Association of Greek Insular Chambers (EOAEN), the Forum AIC (Chambers of Ionian-Adria-

tic), the Danube Chamber of commerce Association, the University of the Aegean (RE.SHI.P) and the European Small Islands Federation (ESIF).

The Event will seek to explore possibilities and conditions presented on coastal, insular and river destinations for business and examine the methods, means and procedures for the effective participation of insular and coastal businesses to promote this thematic tourism industry by offering new products and services.

It will also examine international best practices, current tools, training, etc. To assist Chambers and other local agencies and hence the existing or potential businesses to meet the modern needs of the industry and benefit by this always-growing sector.

The challenge is to achieve an equitable distribution of economic benefits from the cruise to the interested stakeholders.

"Adriatic Sea Forum" 2nd Edition

Two-day Event dedicated
to the maritime tourism
sector and presentation
of the Adriatic Sea
Tourism Report 2015
(Dubrovnik, Croatia,
23th-24th April 2015)



It will be held in Dubrovnik (Croatia) the second Edition of the Adriatic Sea Forum – cruise, ferry, sail&yacht, dedicated to all the operators active and interested in cruise, ferry and nautical sectors in the Adriatic sea. It will involve experts, entrepreneurs, public administrators, researchers who work in this sector.

The Event has been created by Risposte Turismo that is a research and consulting Italian company experienced in providing strategic and operational solutions to organisations and companies in the tourist macroindustry. The Edition is organized in collaboration with the Dubrovnik Port Authority and the City of Dubrovnik and with the support of the AIC Forum and other association which will take part to the two-days event. Adriatic Sea Forum is a fundamental meeting point for whoever is interested in the makings the Adriatic has, of developing new touristic marine traffics (cruising, ferries and navigation) with all the related activities. During the Conference the Adriatic Sea Tourism Report 2015 will be presented. This research study is realised by Risposte Turismo and aims to analyse flows, dimensions, nature and directions of maritime tourism movements in the Adriatic area (cruise, ferry and boating), affecting the seven countries that face onto the Adriatic Sea.

Cruise Tourism



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Projects in progress

“Meddiet Mediterranean Diet And Enhancement Of Traditional Products”

(co-funded by the ENPI MED CBC Programme)



The project **MedDiet - Mediterranean Diet and Enhancement of Traditional Foodstuff**, which was scheduled to finish in June 2015, has obtained an extension from the ENPI CBC MED Programme Managing Authority to 31.12.2015.

The activities therefore continue, many of which are increasingly directed towards the Milan EXPO 2015: in particular the final event and the exhibition space dedicated to the Mediterranean Diet as an intellectual heritage of humanity (UNESCO) at the Milan EXPO in the Egyptian pavilion (thanks to the collaboration of the Egyptian partner CEEBA (Confederation of Egyptian European Business Associations).

The AIC Forum, involved in the divulgation and capitalisation of the results of the project in the Adriatic-Ionian Area, at the 2015 Edition of the AIC Forum will produce informative materials to be distributed to local authorities, restaurant owners and schools (the three main target beneficiaries of the project).

Another activity scheduled in the project is the creation of a “MedDiet Infopoint” in certain target areas of the project. The Ancona Chamber of Commerce has offered its services to fulfil this role of animator and facilitator for dissemination of the results of the project throughout Italy. In concrete terms, this role will involve providing at its headquarters a person informed on the topic, as well as the provision of informative material to be distributed to potential public and private interested parties. The role of the Infopoint also includes a commitment to organise a promotion event being planned by the Ancona Chamber of Commerce for the period 29, 30, 31 May, at an event centred around typical local products with the

special focus on fish (entitled “Tipicità in Blu”). Despite being located at the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, this information desk is also at the service of all members of the AIC Forum to share experienced gained, on a macroregional scale as well.

New Projects

“D.E.S.T.I.N.A.T.I.O.N. Durable, Environmental and Sustainable Tourism through Innovative Necstour model And Training Into Observatory Network”

(Erasmus+ Programme)



On 31 March last the AIC Forum was involved, through its relationships as part of the NECSTOUR network, as a partner in the project entitled “D.E.S.T.I.N.A.T.I.O.N. - Durable, Environmental and Sustainable Tourism through Innovative Necstour model And Training Into Observatory Network”, presented by ICStudio S.r.l. – Scuola Emal Ecolabel Toscana (Italia) put forward under the ERASMUS + competition (2014 - 2020). The other partners in the project include: National Research Council - (CNR-IBiMet) (IT), Regione Basilicata (IT), Cité Européenne de la Culture et du Tourisme Durable (FR), IRTA d.o.o. (HR), NECSTouR network (BE). The main goal of the project is to define and test a model - already for some years now the subject of study as part of the NECSTOUR network - for the management and development of tourist destinations focussing on the principles of sustainable tourism. If the candidature is successful, the AIC Forum will have to undertake pilot and promotional activities with special attention to Non-EU countries in the Adriatic-Ionian area. Moreover the AIC Forum must also promote the involvement of a Greek territory thanks to the collaboration between technicians from the AIC Forum European Planning Group, the Achaia Chamber of Commerce will have the task of underta-

king this activity directly.

New Activities

Following the meeting in Zagreb, organised by the AIC Forum and by the Croatian National Chamber of Commerce Union (see the article on page 1) an extraordinary meeting was held by the Group on the European Project Management. The purpose was to share the work carried out so far and to consider the important role of the Group, at this particular time when the new Macroregional Governance is developing in parallel with the start up phase of the new 2014-2020 European Funding period. This particular coincidence ensures that the European Commission demands from the network bodies, of which the AIC Forum is one of the most positive and virtuous expressions, properly shared projects that are the result of continuous operational dialogue. The mission assigned to this Workgroup since the time it was set up is today more than ever in line with the needs of the territories and with the vast and diversified number of resources provides for the Adriatic and Ionian Area (structural funds, IPA Funds, thematic funds, transnational, transborder, bilateral programmes, etc.). Under this perspective, the Zagreb meeting proved extremely strategic and useful. The following provides a summary of the commitments undertaken: - The drafting of a new “Position paper” of the AIC Forum on implementing the EUSAIR Action Plan consisting of a concise and clear prospect of feasible and prioritised projects for the Chamber of Commerce system along with an investigation into possible European Programmes suitable for funding these projects; - The identification of reference project ideas on which to focus common energies in terms of actual planning to take advantage of the forthcoming calls to be issued: these are projects at chamber of commerce level, in which the role and activity of the chamber of commerce system involved will be predominant, to the good of SMEs as end beneficiaries of the actions planned. - The creation of a section of the AIC Forum website which will be given over to the search for partners among members of the AIC Forum through the setting up of an interactive geographical map containing a concise presentation and description of each project involved.