

12th Edition of the AIC Forum

Brindisi (Italy), 6th-8th June 2012



The opening session of the 12th Edition of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce



The 12th edition of the AIC Forum was held this year in Brindisi from 6th to 8th June, in collaboration with the Brindisi Chamber of Commerce. It concluded its works with a remarkable success, expressing a high level of comparison and reflection on the subject matter broached, namely: "TOWARDS THE ADRIATIC - IONIAN MACRO-REGION: A STRATEGIC PROJECT FOR TERRITORIAL AND BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS". The international event saw the participation of more than 250 representatives, making their contribution to the works devoted to the establishing of the future Adriatic Ionian Macro-Region and the role that the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area may play in such a delicate political and social context. A great many authoritative figures were involved, such as the President of the Committee of the Regions Mercedes Bresso, the President of the Marche Regional Board, Gian Mario Spacca, the Deputy President of the Apulia Regional Board, Loredana Capone, and the President of the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce,

Ferruccio Dardanello and the President of Eurochambres, Alessandro Barberis. The contributions by the representatives of the various DGs of the European Commission, the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Transport Ministry, the C.E.S.E., the All permanent secretariat, important networks such as NECSTouR, Uniadriion and the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns. The video message sent by the Deputy President of the European Parliament Gianni Pittella provided an excellent institutional frame to the works of this edition. And this year's event once again chose to focus on the future Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region, in line with previous editions of the Forum and on ways to implement a programme that would be consistent with territorial policies and with the EU growth priorities for the creation of a new governance model capable to encourage integrated development, promoting innovative, sustainable interventions in support of the businesses of the area. The message launched by this edition was to help develop the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region by 2014. It

is in this direction that the Final Declaration heads. It was approved unanimously by the meeting of participants, seeking to stress the political commitment and responsibility that the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area intends to take on in representation of 36 chambers, in order to lay a solid basis for the social and economic re-launch of the area. In this sense, we need to create the conditions whereby the European integration process of the communities and territories involved by the macro-regional programme is developed as quickly as possible, with the bottom-up approach that has always marked the initiative of the Chambers of Commerce in the relevant basin. A vast strategic area with great opportunities for growth that involves Italy, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovenia, Greece, Albania and Serbia and which can count on very interesting numbers: more than a hundred million inhabitants, more than 1,2 million businesses, 32 billion euros in cross-border turnover. (follows at pag.2)

(follows from pag.1)

An outlet market that already sees the “Made in Italy” amongst the top four trading partners and which “may represent a cog in helping increase the plateau of businesses exporting abroad” both due to geographic closeness and cultural affinity, as the President of Unioncamere Ferruccio Dardanello rightly pointed out. To make the most of this potential the establishment of a credible supra-territorial organism, which is recognised by all parties in play and is able to guide the standardisation of market rules without losing sight of the specific needs of the different countries comprising it, is absolutely essential. According to Rodolfo Giampieri, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Ancona and Deputy President of the Forum, it is clear that “the interconnection of the economies of the Macro-region is now a given fact and it is virtually no longer possible to split the trend of an individual country away from that of the others”. Alfredo Malcarne, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Brindisi that housed the Forum works, is absolutely convinced of this and declared that “we must all work together on this journey, on the one hand each striving to do his best, with his own competences and specific skills, and on the other putting all the knowledge and potential on the network to achieve an expanded concept of territoriality and productivity”. These are objectives that the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian have put in black and white, committing themselves to “build a network of the experience and potential present in the economic-productive fabric, strengthen and rationalise the infrastructural system, develop social

and economic activities between integrated and complementary areas”. The President of the Marche Regional Board Gian Mario Spacca, in line with the President of the Committee of the Regions, Mercedes Bresso, chose to forcibly stress the matter of the infrastructural system, underlining the fact that five years ago the design of the European infrastructural networks exclusively concerned the north-eastern part of the continent with a strong concentration of connections between Russia and Germany. Today, the Ten-T network has changed significantly: there is a re-affirmation of the role of central Europe in a process of greater integration and above all of the role of the Mediterranean. New corridors are consolidating and these include the Baltic-Adriatic one. The development of infrastructures is a concrete effect of the strategy of the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region. The letter sent by MEP Antonio Tajani, Deputy President of the European Commission, and dedicated to this edition of the Forum was particularly important. With this communication he deemed it appropriate to inform participants that within the “Programme for the competitiveness of businesses and SMEs” the Commission has proposed providing 2.5 billion euros in incentives to the competitiveness and internationalisation of SMEs: the aim is to assist 39 thousand businesses a year, helping them create or save around 30 thousand jobs and develop 900 new products, services and business processes. Under this scope, a good 135 million will be allocated to tourism. This is a strategic sector for the Macro-Region and one which sees it in a better position than other areas of the EU, given that the

Forum has already adopted the “Adrion” umbrella logo some years ago to identify multi-country tourist packages that are presented on international markets. The “Adrion” brand has been recognised as a good practice in both the Regional “Branding Policy” Conference organised by NecstouR and in the European Consultation of the DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission that went under the title “Challenges and opportunities for the coastal sector in Europe”. Transport is another extremely important segment for the establishment of the Macro-Region. It must be modern and efficient in order to integrate those marginal areas of the EU too, which are precisely those worst struck by the crisis. In a period of great difficulty for our economy, the Macro-Region may be essential in laying a solid basis for the recovery of a great many production sectors. With the Macro-Region people and ideas can be moved to face up to challenges and make the most of shared opportunities, always remembering that the added value of this strategy is an important political signal launched to Western Balkan countries. Within the EU re-launch plan the next few years will focus on developing intelligent, inclusive, sustainable growth to create new jobs, particularly supporting small and medium-sized enterprises. The AIC Forum in Brindisi, which has only just ended, was characterized not only by the stringent need for socio-economic integration between people and countries who came along, but also the European spirit, the awareness of being part of a Union that offers possibilities for growth and visibility, and in which we must present ourselves as a compact Macro-region.

The Forum’s operating tools: workgroups

The edition was enhanced by the productions of the theme-specific workgroups, which have always been the technical-operational tools by which to outline the Forum’s annual programme and the related projects and initiatives. Over the last 12 years this method has enabled the promotion of significant cooperation and development activities in favour of the territories of the Adriatic-Ionian area. The final documents are available on the Forum’s website www.forumaic.org (section “workgroups”).



XII edition of the AIC Forum: the workgroup of tourism on 8th June 2012 in Brindisi

FINAL DECLARATION

The Forum's Commitment to the full recognition of the Adriatic – Ionian Macro-region

The Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce met in Brindisi (Italy) for the XII Edition, to discuss on the topic "Towards the Adriatic Ionian Macro-region: a strategic plan for the competitiveness of the territories and enterprise"

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION

- the political and strategic value of the macro-regional system in the integration process and in policies of proximity and cohesion of local communities, in view of the enlargement of the EU;
- the importance recognized by the European Union to the macro-regional strategy as an instrument which facilitates the participation of regional and local authorities at different levels of territorial co-operation in the fields of economic, social and cultural development and the protection of the environmental heritage;
- the common and shared purposes pursued by both the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, as reiterated in the memorandum of association of February 5, 2003, and by the Adriatic – Ionian Macro region;
- the need to support the efforts and actions promoted by the Foundation of the Permanent Secretariat for the Adriatic - Ionian Initiative, of the Marche Region and of all the institutions involved in the process of recognition by the European Union of the Macro-region as a body representing the entire maritime area in the field of territorial cooperation;
- the Brussels Declaration of 23 May 2011 by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the eight members of the All that confirmed that the recognition by the European Union of the macro-regional strategy for the Adriatic Ionian basins is a primary objective;
- the opinion of the Committee of the Regions initiative "Territorial Cooperation in the Mediterranean through the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-region", unanimously approved by the C.o.R. (Committee of the Regions) plenary session, in Brussels on 11th of October 2011;

- the results obtained by both the X and XI editions of the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, respectively held in Ancona (Italy) in 2010 and in Budva (Montenegro) in 2011;
- the approval on January 11, 2012 by the Italian Senate of a package of seven motions that commit the Italian government to agree with the European authorities the establishment of the Adriatic Ionian Macro-region;

BEING AWARE OF

- the Adriatic - Ionian Macro-region, considered as an autonomous functional area, is an innovative way to promote and organize cooperation at the inter-territorial and transnational levels and is able to enhance coherence and coordination of policies in various sectors, by rationalizing the use of financial resources and enhancing the role and potential of regional authorities and of local communities;
- the macro-regional approach given the ways and areas of action that characterize its working method - based on consultation, on the equal dignity of individuals and on the principle of subsidiarity – coherently matches other strategic policies of the European Union, as Europe 2020, the cohesion policy and the integrated maritime policy;
- the macro-regional strategy contributes to fulfilling the objective of territorial cohesion strongly supported by the Lisbon Treaty and facilitates the procedures for the admission to the European Union of all the states bordering on the Adriatic-Ionian Basin and more generally the perspective of accession of the whole Balkan area, according to the intentions already affirmed in the Declaration adopted at Ancona (Italy) on May 5, 2010 by the representatives of the Governments of the eight member states of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative;
- the macro-regional strategy contributes to strengthening the existing networks and to the common use of new entities, consolidating an operating mode and a joint action involving different actors, different policies and experiences which are present in our territories, and enhancing the cultural heritage, the richness of their diversity, the potential and the vocations which are present locally;
- the creation of the Macro-region contributes to strengthening the role of local authorities in the representation of the instances which are closest to the needs and lives of citizens, and the capacity to provide proper instruments to expand the rights to citizenship, broadly involving the civil society organizations; the

productivity of the economic world, social forces, associations, institutions of a territorial nature, schools, young people, citizens;

CONFIRMS

- the commitment to developing in the appropriate places and fora at a local, interregional and international level, with the social and productive forces, within citizens associations and the various networks active in the area (Chambers of Commerce, Cities, Universities, the Adriatic Euroregion), the useful initiatives to positive and speedy process of recognition by the European Union of the Adriatic - Ionian Macro-region Initiative
- the will to play an active and proactive role in the process of construction and recognition of the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-region, by supporting the initiatives taken to achieve this goal and the creation of supranational systems of partnership, by contributing to the construction of dialogue and collaboration systems among local, regional and central national and European governments;
- the commitment to developing and implementing experience and the potential found in the fabric of economic productivity, as key strategic resources in the knowledge of a broad and shared territorial governance, in a European and Mediterranean dimension;
- our will to promote large and shared project initiatives in the areas that are close to the institutional tasks of the Chambers in order to support:
 - > the strengthening and streamlining of the overall infrastructure system in the whole maritime area;
 - > the development of economic and social activities across integrated and complementary geographical areas;
 - > the sustainable development respectful of landscape, of architectural and historical traditions, of tourist and production vocations of the territories;
 - > the technological innovation;
 - > the protection of the environment and bio-diversity, together with the prevention and / or mitigation of the risks caused by climate change;
 - > the mobility, free circulation of people, goods and services;
 - > the education, training and knowledge and cultural system;
 - > the harmonization of welfare policies, for welcoming and inclusive communities;
 - > the promotion of "people-to-people" local actions to connect peoples, to stabilize international relations in a dimension of solidarity and peace.

Brindisi (Italy), 8th June 2012

12th edition of the Forum: signed the Agreement Protocol between Forum AIC and INSULEUR

This Edition also saw the signing of an Agreement Protocol between the Forum and Insuleur, a network of insular Chambers of Commerce of the European Union, established in 2000 in Crete, Greece, following the decision of the chambers of commerce of the insular regions of France, Greece, Spain and Italy. Today, there are 37 Chambers of Commerce members of Insuleur: Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Malta and the United Kingdom; for Italy, the Chambers of Cagliari, Nuoro, Oristano, Palermo and Sassari are members. Both organisations are present in the association structure of Eurochambres and on the basis of the agreement they will be able to strengthen relations and cooperation in projects relating to sectors of shared interest, with particular regards to transport and logistics, tourism, the sustainable development of SMEs, agriculture, the environment and female entrepreneurship. This last understanding increases the collaborations that the AIC Forum has built up over the years with other European networks, such as Ascame, INCE, Eurochambres and Necstour, strengthening a chamber network of excellence on a European level and highlighting individual specificities. Networking and acting as a system is therefore method and substance for the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area and represents our heritage of values and experience to be invested in the future Adriatic Ionian Macro-Region

Signing of agreement protocol with INSULEUR



The Baltic-Adriatic Corridor

Initiatives in favour of promotion of logistic and economic development in the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region

Forum promoted by the Adriaeco magazine: *"Extending the Baltic-Adriatic Corridor within the framework of the Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region"* (Ancona, 11th May 2012)

The event focused on the importance of the Baltic-Adriatic Corridor, which appears to be strategic for the development of national and European economies, as it will enable Member States and their business players to make use of shorter routes to and from the Mediterranean. The need to extend the corridor, which



the Forum's Vice Presidente Rodolfo Giampieri

is currently foreseen from Helsinki to Ravenna, until the Marche, Abruzzo, Molise and Apulia regions, was stressed by all speakers participating in the conference. In his contribution, President Rodolfo Giampieri underlined the reasons why the Baltic-Adriatic Corridor should be extended to the entire Adriatic backbone and specifically to the Marche Region, as well as the role that the Ancona Chamber of Commerce can play in supporting and strengthening this possibility.



Conference promoted by the Marche Regional Council: *"The Baltic-Adriatic Corridor and the development of intermodal transport in view of the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region"* (Ancona, 29th June 2012) The initiative strengthened the commitment of national, regional and local institutions, MEPs and Italian MPs as well as regional councillors to be granted the extension of the Baltic-Adriatic Corridor at least to Ancona, yet in a much broader view that has this important infrastructure connected to the main ports of the Apulia region. A representative of the AIC Forum took part in the works of the conference.

"The initiative strengthened the commitment of local, national and European institutions to be granted the extension of the Baltic-Adriatic corridor at least to Ancona"

the Baltic-Adriatic corridor



Partecipation to the Insuleur General Meeting

Mitilene, Lesvos (Greece), 8th July



Island of Mytilene (Lesvos, Greece)

The works started with the meeting of the Board of Directors, which focussed on the following topics:

- Proposal for amendment of the articles of association of Insuleur;
- Proposal for renewal of the Board of Directors;
- Proposal for an Agreement Protocol with the AIC Forum;
- Proposal for amendment of the 2012 Budget.

The following meeting saw the participation of several local authorities: the mayor of Mytilene, the president of the chamber of Lesvos, the president of the Union of Greek chambers of commerce, as well as various representatives of insular chambers of commerce, including chambers from the Balearic Islands, the president of Insuleur and a representative of the Ministry for competition. Welcoming greetings and contributions focussed on the problems arising from the concept of "insularity" and related issues: difficulties in transports and connections, excessively high costs for the transport of passengers and goods, the protection of the sea habitat, the economic crisis faced by the Aegean Islands and the poor attention

paid European Institutions in spite of the large number of meetings held in Brussels and the documentation produced. Several important references were made to the "Pact of Islands", which was adopted by the European Parliament in 2012 with the aim of highlighting insular peculiarities and the need for effective measures for maintaining them and protecting islands' ecosystems (see annex). The same applies to the opinion expressed by the EESC in 2012 on the specific problems affecting the islands and to the contribution to the "European Commission Working Documents" drawn up by Insuleur President Juan Gual de Torrella Guasp within the context of a consultation process and concerning a new framework for the EU tourism policy. The issue of port and airport infrastructure management (Insuleur Declaration in Cagliari on the occasion of the 2011 11th Forum) was furthermore paid great attention, as these aspects are essential not only to promote islands' growth and economic development, but also to fully implement the principle of territorial cohesion enshrined in the EU Treaty. Proceedings went on with the Workshop on short-sea shipping, during which spe-

akers from the Danish Bornholm region, Sardinia, Balearic and Greek Islands outlined their analyses and put forward proposals on the matter. In his contribution the president of Insuleur greatly appreciated the agreement protocol signed with the AIC Forum, as it represents a tangible act of cooperation between networks providing them with more strength and visibility both within Eurochambres and in the various Directorate-Generals of the EU. Mr. Michele De Vita, who participated on behalf of the AIC Forum, reported on the mission of our body, the activities carried out and future projects and informed about the work of the AIC Forum theme-specific workgroups. Ms. Luciana Frontini illustrated the opportunities that the agreement protocol can offer to both networks and highlighted the similarities between them. A number of projects were furthermore presented. Some of them have already been completed, while others are currently being defined, including the InnoNauTICs project on water sport tourism, a guide for nautical tourism and a Nautical Centre in the Mediterranean (innovation, research and training for the SMEs of the sector). This project may represent the basis for collaboration with your network, after in-depth evaluation. Juan Gual de Torrella Guasp was confirmed in his office of Insuleur president also based on the excellent work done.

Forum's Secretary General Mr. Michele De Vita presents at Mytilene the Forum activity



10th edition of the Euromeeting

On 19th May 2012 a representative of the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area participated in the 10th Edition of Euromeeting in Florence (Italy). This is the annual appointment organized by the Tuscan Region in collaboration with the Necstour network devoted to regional policies for sustainable and competitive tourism in Europe.

The 2012 Edition focused on "Sustainable management of art and cultural tourism" and ended with the drafting of a Memorandum. Within this context, the representative of the AIC Forum Workgroup on Tourism offered the stage for important updates on the European tourism policy devoted to cultural tourism, which were then thoroughly discussed and analysed in Brindisi on the occasion of the annual meeting of the AIC Forum Workgroup for Tourism on the "Optimization of the cultural and maritime tourism heritage for the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region".

Institutional Mission of the AIC Forum

A delegation from the AIC Forum carried out an institutional visit to the Chambers of Commerce of Teramo, Pescara, Bari, Catanzaro, Lecce and the Union of Chambers of commerce of the Calabria Region (Unioncamere Calabria) from 2nd to 4th May 2012. The aim of the visit was to raise the attention of member and non-member chambers on ongoing activities and projects. The meetings held were furthermore the occasion to state once again the willingness of the AIC Forum to play an active and propositional role in supporting the creation of partnerships for the networking of the experiences and potential of the economic and productive systems as fundamental strategic resources to build a wide and shared territorial governance at a European level. The visit proved to be extremely successful judging from the decision by a number of chambers of commerce to join the AIC Forum and enabled to receive important suggestions in view of the planning of 2013 activities.



Blue Economy

An opportunity for the development of the Marche regional territory (Ancona - Italy, 16th July 2012)



"Towards the Blue Economy - An opportunity for the development of the Marche regional territory" is the title of the conference held on 16th July at 4.30 pm at the premises of the rectorate of the Polytechnic University of the Marche Region (Università Politecnica delle Marche). This important event was firmly wanted and organized by the Marche Regional Authorities, the Polytechnic University of the Marche Region and the Ancona Chamber of Commerce to investigate and illustrate all the chances that can be offered by the sea, provided

that it is adequately protected and safeguarded. This topic is particularly dear to the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, which collaborated in the organization of the initiative, as the maritime sector with its 8.670 km long coastline plays a major role in the Italian economy and the system revolving around the sea has a cross-influence on several economic sectors. The contribution by the President Rodolfo Giampieri precisely aimed at highlighting the many opportunities and advantages that this system can bring about to your regional economy.

Workshop on European maritime policy on the future Adriatic-Ionian Macro-region

On 12th June the Secretary-General of the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area Mr. Michele De Vita took part in an international meeting on maritime policy promoted by the

European Commission with the collaboration of the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region on 12th June 2012. The participation provided for a more in-depth exchange of views with several stakeholders on the underlying needs of the Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region in view of the definition of an action plan by the end of 2012. In particular, the Secretary-General participated in the theme-specific workgroup on "Blue Growth - tourism, research and innovation in the maritime sector" and provided a specific contribution on the Adrion brand as a good practice recognized at a European level, as well as on the potential of the Adriatic basin as an area, which will candidate to become a European Cultural Route.

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