

The AIC Forum and the new European Parliament legislature: a pathway of strong recognitions and new prospects of collaboration

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A delegation of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, composed of the AIC Forum President Ms. Jadranka Radovanić, the Secretary-General of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce Mr. Michele De Vita and the Vice-President of the Chamber of the Economy of Montenegro Mr. Ivan Saveljić was welcomed by the newly elected MEPs in Brussels.

The meeting aimed at officially presenting the AIC Forum to the new representatives of the European Parliament on the occasion of a dedicated workshop. The MEP and member of the EP International Trade Committee Mr. Niccolò Rinaldi, Ms. Fausta Corda from the DG Regional Policy and Mr. Giannantonio Ballette from the DG Enlargement.

This was the occasion to illustrate the European Parliament the AIC Forum activities and projects, as well as to organize bilateral meetings with the DGs Agriculture and Rural Development, Enterprises and Indu-

stry, Transports and Energy, with the aim of laying the foundations for a far-reaching collaboration based on specific topics.

The delegation also met the President of the European Economic and Social Committee Mr. Mario Sepi, who supported the EP patronage to the 9th edition of the AIC Forum in Agrinio, Greece, last April and Eurochambres Secretary General Mr. Arnaldo Abruzzini. All those who met the delegations unilaterally expressed their appreciation for the activities carried out by the AIC Forum as examples of farsightedness and good practices within the framework of the European proximity and cohesion policy.

The workshop contributed to consolidate the AIC Forum accreditation before European institutions. The process, which started in 2006, will enable the Forum to act as a protagonist in European integration processes and favour its participation in community programmes as an autonomous legal subject.

4th Congress of the Women's Enterprises of the Adriatic and Ionian Area

The 4th Congress of Women's Enterprises of the Adriatic and Ionian Area, promoted by the AIC Forum Workgroup on Women Entrepreneurship, was held in Durrës on 26th and 27th October 2009. This year the Congress saw the extraordinarily large participation of about 200 women entrepreneurs, who seized this opportunity to talk about their experiences on the main topic chosen for the event, i.e. "Creativity and innovation in a period of crisis in women enterprises". The meeting gave representatives from various countries the possibility to analyze and debate the strategies adopted by women entrepreneurs to face the crises. The active participation by the entrepreneurs present at the event led to the adoption of the Charter of Values, i.e. a programmatic document that aims at enhancing the ethical behavior and social responsibility of women's enterprises in the area. Another result of the Congress is the activation of a new service at the various chambers of commerce member to the AIC Forum, which is intended to offer the following:

- assessing local opportunities for business creation;
- acknowledging and acquiring specific entrepreneurial skills;
- providing professional assistance to develop and consolidate entrepreneurial ideas;
- providing opportunities to get in touch with other enterprises for collaboration purposes.

The service will particularly provide new women entrepreneurs with dedicated support for the planning, creation and start-up of their enterprises, as well as with supply analysis, information on incentive norms, guidance and training for the start-up of their business, support during start-up and community of enterprises. At the end of the works, the AIC Forum President Ms. Jadranka Radovanić expressed her deep satisfaction for the activity carried out so far and invited all women entrepreneurs to participate in the following Congress to be held in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the second half of 2010.



Participation in the "Enhancing Women Entrepreneurship in South East Europe" meeting

The Croatian entrepreneur Ms. Dragica Jerkov, who also sits in the Workgroup on Women Entrepreneurship of the AIC Forum, was delegated to participate in Sarajevo the 1st October 2009 in the "Enhancing Women Entrepreneurship in South East Europe" Workshop, organized by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

The Workshop aimed at gathering ideas and sharing experiences prior to the launch of regional project, which is the result of the collaboration between the Regional Cooperation Council and UNECE in order to support the creation and expansion of women's enterprises in South East Europe.

The project will be targeted to the elimination of three main obstacles to the growth of women's entrepreneurship:

- 1) the lack of networking opportunities;
- 2) credit access difficulties;
- 3) the lack of specific knowledge and skills.

The Croatian entrepreneur had the opportunity to present the AIC Forum Workgroup on Women's Entrepreneurship and illustrate the activities implemented over the last few years. From this viewpoint, the creation as early as in 2006 of the <http://womeninbusiness.forumaic.org> website for the networking of women's businesses and the organization of the 2008

Montenegro Congress on the credit access difficulties faced by them are examples of farsightedness, as well as a confirmation of the quality of the initiatives and projects undertaken by the Workgroup.

At the end of the works participants created a workgroup to prepare the next congress, which will be held in April 2010 in Istanbul under the Turkish Presidency of the South-East European Cooperation Process – SEECP.

Participating in the activities of this body will definitely open up new interesting scenarios of collaboration for the Workgroup for Women's Entrepreneurship of the Forum.

Training session on “Conciliation and arbitration for dispute settlement in the Adriatic and Ionian Area”



CORTE INTERNAZIONALE
DELL'ADRIATICO E DELL'IONIO
INTERNATIONAL COURT
OF THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN AREA
MEĐUNARODNI JADRANSKO-JONSKI SUD

Following the successful training session held in Zagreb in December 2009, the activities of the International Court of the Adriatic and Ionian Area continues on 10th December in Durres, Albania, on the occasion of a seminar under the title: “Conciliation and arbitration for dispute settlement in the Adriatic and Ionian Area”.

The development of economic relations within the Adriatic-Ionian area necessarily requires suitable tools for dispute settlement. Trade is often slowed down by the concerns spread among many operators with reference to the costs, times and unknowns of the controversies that might arise, as well as by the difficulty in identifying the applicable law in case of lawsuits and agree on the judge called upon to end a controversy. Conciliation and arbitration are flexible and quick procedures and as such they are particularly suitable to settle disputes between operators who come from legal systems based on different principles. This is because they enable said



business players to rapidly settle their controversy at costs, which are limited and notified to the parties in advance, thereby ensuring that the principles of transparency and impartiality are respected.

With this training activity the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce intends to provide the officials of Albanian chambers of commerce and industry and professionals alike

with basic with adequate training on conciliation and arbitration as well as on the services offered by the International Court of the Adriatic and Ionian Area, as these two tools are a valuable resource and an element of competitiveness and added value for the entire entrepreneurial system. The trainers Mr. Leonardo Criscuoli, lawyer, and Mr. Gianluca Mariani took turns in illustrating the main topics of the course.

The Ancona Chamber of Commerce, seat to the AIC Forum, hosts the All Round Table on SMEs

The All Round Table on SMEs cooperation was held in Ancona on 26th and 27th November 2009 under the Presidency of the Italian Ministry for Economic Development. The main objective of the meeting was to define the draft of an Agreement Protocol for signature on regional cooperation on SMEs related issues in the All area.

Many points were listed on the agenda, with contributions ranging from the discussion on the model of industrial clusters and its development possibility in the Adriatic-Ionian Area, research and innovation opportunities for SMEs, the importance of ports and maritime infrastructures networks for the promotion of the Adriatic-Ionian region, alternative dispute resolution tools for the settlement of trade controversies, the

various modalities of association between enterprises working in the various countries of the area modalities, up to issues related to women's entrepreneurship.

With her active participation, Ms. Luciana Frontini provided useful hints on the several agenda points, in particular on the themes dealt with by the Workgroups of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce. The discussion was enriched by the data emerged from a study carried out by ISTAO on behalf of the AIC Forum on sea traffic in the Adriatic and Ionian area, by the illustration of the International Court of the Adriatic and Ionian Area, i.e. the AIC Forum body working for the settlement of International disputes through conciliation and arbitration, as well as by the contribution on women's entre-

preneurship, with a special focus on the supporting role played by the AIC Forum in the area.

Given the interest shown in the International Court by All participants in the Round Table and considering the difficulties of using ADR tools, mainly due to lack of knowledge/unwillingness on the part of lawyers to inform enterprises of the possibility to use these tools, the Italian Presidency recognized the value of the Court and added a paragraph on the support to the International Court by All countries to the Agreement Protocol to be signed. The text of the Agreement Protocol was further modified to include passages providing





for increased cooperation among All member countries in favour of the diffusion and development of women's enterprises.

Mr. Cipolletti from the Italian Ministry for Economic Development reminded participants of the importance of involving local bodies in cooperation and ended the meeting by making the appointment for the signature of the Agreement Protocol in January 2010 in Verona.

Participation in the All Round Table on Tourism

In order to provide continuity to the fruitful and constant cooperation established between the Permanent Secretariat of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative and Adriatic crossborder networks, the AIC Forum was invited to take part in the All Round Table on Tourism held at the Excelsior La Fonte Hotel in Portonovo,

Ancona, on 24th and 25th September last. The AIC Forum delegate took the opportunity to update participants on the crossborder activities of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, specifically on the forthcoming presentation of the Adrion project financed with IPA funds.



Training courses for tourism promotion in the range of the AdrionTour

The Forum is organizing training courses and informative meetings for tourist agencies and tour operators interested to design and promote multi-country holidays using the Adrion trademark. These seminars will take place in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro from 25th

to 30th January 2010. The operators attending these activities will participate to the promotional initiatives dedicated to Adriatic-Ionian tourism implemented by the Forum's Tourism Workgroup during the year. Among these initiatives, there is the participation to the tourism ITB Berlin Fair.

11th edition of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns

The eleventh edition of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns was organized in Ancona at Palazzo degli Anziani, which was officially opened for this occasion following restoration.

The meeting, attended by a delegation of the AIC Forum and the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, was organized on two days and focussed on "The Adriatic as Centre of the new Europe". In its intervention the AIC Forum presented the activity carried out over the last year and particularly



focused on community programming, which is seen as an indispensable tool to bring the economies of the potential EU candidates closer to each other.

The participation in the Ancona event also contributed to reinforce cooperation between the three Forums of the area, i.e. the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns and Uniadriion, with the common objective to promote the growth of the Adriatic-Ionian macroregion.

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HOW TO JOIN THE ASSOCIATION



JOINED BY THE SEA

Adriatic and Ionian Chambers Forum

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 e-mail, accompanied by the relevant decision of the competent body.