

# 8<sup>th</sup> Congress Women's Enterprises

Dubrovnik, Croatia, 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> October 2013



The Grand Hotel Park in Dubrovnik was the venue of the 8th Congress of Women's Enterprises of the Adriatic and Ionian Area, which was organized by the workgroup for women's entrepreneurship of the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area in collaboration with the Croatian Chamber of the Economy of Dubrovnik. The event was organized under the title "Banks in the economic crisis – women's entrepreneurship" and was granted the patronage of the President of the Republic of Croatia this year, too. Thanks to the highly topical issues dealt with, it witnessed a very large number of participating female enterprises from the Adriatic and Ionian Area.

The Congress saw the participation of the AIC Forum President Rodolfo Giamperi and the President of the Croatian Chamber of the Economy from Dubrovnik Terezina Orlić, as well as of Anna Danti (DG Enterprises of the European Commission), Zdenka Lončar (Vice-Minister for the Economy of Croatia), Helena Štimac-Radin (Government of Croatia), Marija Vučković (County of Dubrovnik), Andro Vlahušić (Mayor of Dubrovnik), Selma Jakupović (Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ljiljana Filipović and Nina Drakić (Chamber of the Economy of Montenegro), Ivan Lovrinović (University of Zagreb), Mira



Krnet (Bank for Reconstruction and Development of Croatia), Lamija Kozarić-Rahman (IGA Agency– Bosnia and Herzegovina), Flutura Xhabija (Association of Albanian Women Entrepreneurs SHGPAZ, Albania), Monica Onori (Retecamere, Italy) and Mary Ann Rukavina-Cipetić (Gender Task Force, Croatia). Besides representing an occasion for women entrepreneurs from the entire area to meet and exchange ideas, the Congress provided them with the opportunity to promote, develop and share projects favouring women's entrepreneurship and business networking. Worth mentioning are the following topics, which emerged during the discussion:

- the importance of a full participation of businesswomen from the area in the consultations for the establishment of a Strategy and an Action Plan for the future Adriatic and Ionian Macroregion;
- the need to monitor the funds currently targeted to enterprises run by women in the area or capable of involving and supporting also female enterprises;
- the importance to focus on training for young businesswomen from the area, with specific reference to topics related to finance facilities and innovation.

## Croatia: Welcome to Europe

Ancona,  
20<sup>th</sup> September 2013

On 20th September 2013 Ancona hosted the Country Presentation Day dedicated to the 28th Member State of the European Union Croatia. The event was organized by the Ancona Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Croatia in Italy, the Special Agency of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce MARCHET and the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area. The initiative, which was not only intended to present the new scenario of Croatia being part of the European Union, but also to consolidate institutional relations between Italy and Croatia, was an occasion to illustrate a detailed overview of the Croatian economy and the economic and commercial opportunities that the country can offer. The meeting was organized in two different sessions: the morning session was devoted to the contributions by institutional authorities of the Adriatic-Ionian Area and experts in the economic and trade fields, while the afternoon session was dedicated to meetings between local entrepreneurs and institutions, whereby the latter offered guidance and technical information to all those who are interested in starting a business activity in Croatia.

Congress "Croatia: Welcome to Europe" at the "Loggia dei Mercanti" in Ancona



## Meeting of correspondent members of EUROCHAMBRES

(Ankara, Turkey,  
6<sup>th</sup> September 2013)

The meeting of the Affiliated and Correspondent members Committee of EUROCHAMBRES took place on Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> September last at the Headquarters of the Turkish National Union of Chambers of Commerce and trade (TOBB) in Ankara.

With almost all member countries represented within said Committee (i.e. European countries that are not Member States of the European Union), the works were coordinated by TOBB President Rifat Hisarcıklioğlu together with EUROCHAMBRES President Alessandro Barberis. The meeting saw a number of major contributions, including the speeches by the Turkish Customs and Trade Minister Mr. Hayati Yazici, Mr. Günter Verheugen of the European Commission and EUROCHAMBRES Director Dirk Vantghem.

The gathering was also the occasion for the official pre-selection of the new Committee representatives for 2014 within the EUROCHAMBRES Board of Directors, who were then officially appointed during EUROCHAMBRES Economic Forum held on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

This was the first time that the AIC Forum participated in this meeting. Its purpose was to establish and share institutional relations with all participating national Chambers of Commerce in the future, but also and above all to establish a more active collaboration with Eurochambres.

The meeting turned out to be extremely important in view of the possibility to conceive and outline clear projects of collaboration between the AIC Forum and EUROCHAMBRES, specifically considering the possibility of the possible future development of financing programmes already managed in the past by the latter in the Western Balkans or the activation of other new programmes for the 2014-2020 programme.

# The AIC Forum at EUROCHAMBRES Plenary Assembly

Istanbul, Turkey, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013



EUROCHAMBRES, in collaboration with TOBB, organized a major three-day celebration dedicated to European Chambers of Commerce. The first two days were devoted to the works of EUROCHAMBRES within the framework of the Economic Forum and the Global Chambers Platform, while Eurochambres Plenary Assembly took place on the third day. On 16<sup>th</sup> October about 200 representatives of European Chambers of Commerce had the chance to meet and discuss current topics of common interest, including innovative start-ups with specific reference to the issue of access to credit and competences, internationalization, female entrepreneurship (that should be increasingly considered an economic rather than a social issue), as well as the importance of a sustainable reindustrialization of the European economy. A number of important issues were raised, specifically the need to reinforce the role of SMEs in the industrial sector; to this end, Chambers of Commerce highlighted the need for more support mechanisms dedicated to research and development and innovation. Furthermore, EU institutions were formally called upon to support producers with policies aimed at improving competitiveness in the fields of energy and climate change. The AIC Forum officially participated in the works of the 17<sup>th</sup> October, when the 114<sup>th</sup> EUROCHAMBRES Plenary Assembly took place mainly to discuss the hand

over of responsibilities between the outgoing President Engineer Alessandro Barberis and Richard Weber, i.e. the new President who was appointed for the next 2014 - 2015 two-year period. The Assembly formally elected Richard Weber for the 2014 - 2015 two-year period. At the same time of the new appointment, the following priorities for the next two-year period of the EUROCHAMBRES presidency were defined:

- 1) leading all Chambers of Commerce to become part of an inclusive and healthy network, thereby turning EUROCHAMBRES into a context characterized by a spirit of participation and openness by reinforcing contacts between the members and offering them more opportunities of getting to know each other more or better;
- 2) strengthening the role of Chambers of Commerce as reliable and competent partners for business policies, with particular attention to the following strategic areas: internationalization, energy policies, innovation, entrepreneurship education, training for SMEs;
- 3) further developing representative role of EUROCHAMBRES as an effective and efficient network, thereby promoting an increasingly positive internal and external communication.

The AIC Forum intends to significantly focus on its collaboration with EUROCHAMBRES, also given the prerequisites for even more openness and sharing emerged during the meeting.



# Elaboration of the Strategy for the Macroregion

## AIC Forum participates to consultation process concerning the EUSAIR strategy

The collaboration with the Permanent Secretariat of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative in recent years, as well as the commitment shown in terms of visibility and communication towards the various institutions of the European Union, have led the AIC Forum to become one of the major reference stakeholders for the consultation process concerning the EUSAIR strategy. The consultation, which has got to the heart of the strategy right in the course of 2013, has to be considered as a way to position and define shared and strategic projects for the entire area concerned, with the full involvement all participating players at all political-administrative, public, private and civil society levels (i.e. State, regions, local governments, Chambers of Commerce, professional associations, universities, social partners, enterprises, civil society, non-governmental organizations, etc.). During this year the AIC Forum has been repeatedly called upon to give its contribution and officially express and clear and operational stance within this far-reaching process of consultation through a number of different tools and in different contexts, e.g. the following:

- a) events, workshops and round-tables, organized at various institutional levels:
  - "Towards the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion" (Bari, 25th-26th September);
  - "Linking the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion" (Ancona, 14th October)
  - "The Action Plan for the Strategy of the Adriatic and Ionian Region" (Ancona, 8th November);
  - "A Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Macroregion" (Ancona, 12th November);
  - Regional consultation workgroups on the Macroregional Strategy (Ancona, 7th and 8th November 2013), representing the system of Chambers of Commerce;

- b) interviews, questionnaires, statistical surveys proposed by players entrusted by the DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission (e.g. Cogea, Cespi, GOPA-Cartermill S.A., T33, etc.).

The consultation has occurred at three different levels:

- a) a bottom-up regional consultation, which saw the involvement of the regions coordinating the four pillars of the EUSAIR Strategy (i.e. Friuli Venezia-Giulia, Veneto, Emilia Romagna and Apulia), besides the Marche Region acting at national coordinator and reference authority for the cross-sector pillar on research, innovation and development of SMEs;
- b) a national/ministerial consultation, e.g. the one promoted in Italy through the national Contact Points between the reference subjects of the 2014-2020 partnership agreement, in view of the need, also foreseen by the new 2014-2020 regulations, to take macroregional strategies into account both within the partnership agreement and the operational programmes;
- c) a European Commission level, foreseeing several ways of consultation of the most strategic stakeholders, e.g. "Towards the Action Plan for the Strategy of the Adriatic and Ionian Macroregion" (Brussels, 14th November), organised by the DG for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries or the consultation published online by the DG for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission by filling in a questionnaire from the following website: [http://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/pbl\\_cons\\_eusair](http://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/pbl_cons_eusair); or the consultation specific for pillar I that can be accessed from the following website: <http://forms.interact-eu.net/eusair-online-consultation-pillar-I>, within the INTERACT programme. The consultation required the strong coordination of the Associations' Chambers of Commerce, so that each Chamber

of Commerce could not only express the needs of its area of reference, but was also aware of how certain needs and critical elements of each area's economic system can be shared and contextualized from a macroregional point of view.

Thus worth mentioning is also the work done with the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, together with all Italian member Chambers of Commerce meeting in Ancona on 8th November last, to draw up a single reference document for the entire system of Chambers of Commerce, which should be submitted to the regions and the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The document, completed the 13th of December 2013 (due date for the consultation EUSAIR), represents a summary of stances undertaken by the Italian Chambers system together with those emerged at the last meetings of the Forum AIC thematic Workgroups and taken into account also by non-Italian Chambers of Commerce member to the AIC Forum, which, each in the different contexts in which they are asked to contribute, can express positions in line with said stances.

## Contact AIC Forum

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# Meeting of Italian Presidents of Forum's Members

Ancona, Italy, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2013



*Meeting of the Presidents in Ancona*

Following an invitation by the AIC Forum, well 25 presidents of AIC Forum member Chambers of Commerce, or their delegates, met in Ancona on Friday 8th November for an open exchange of views and ideas at a national level on the contribution that the system of Chambers of Commerce has been called upon to give within the framework of the definition of the European Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR). Said contribution, together with the one given by other national and transnational stakeholders, will lead to the approval of the Action Plan of the EUSAIR Strategy during the 2014, which will serve as the basis for the establishment of the third European Macroregion, i.e. the one related to the Adriatic-Ionian Area. The comparison was based on the reference document by the European Commission under the title "Discussion Paper on a EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)", which was drafted in August 2013, within which 4 pillars were identified coinciding with the most relevant issues for this area, i.e. 1) driving innovative maritime and marine growth, 2) connecting the region, 3) preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment, 4) increasing regional attractiveness. Also in the presence of the Italian Union of Chambers of Com-

merce Unioncamere, which has recently joined the AIC Forum, it was mentioned that "as regards SMEs development policies, the Italian system of Chambers of Commerce is promoting a supply-chain based project approach, which foresees the involvement of several players along the entire value chain. The purpose is to promote the main sectors associated to leading productions through actions aimed at qualifying enterprises and competences". The results of the comparison, which ended in the morning, were then brought to the attention of the representatives of Italian regions during the afternoon session, with said representatives involved in an action of coordination promoted by the Marche Region in Ancona and concerning the EUSAIR Strategy. Within this framework, the regions and the system of Chambers of Commerce reciprocally and officially expressed before the Italian Contact Point, in the presence of Mr. Andrea Vito from the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the strong willingness to share their final summary documents on the ongoing consultation, but above all to carry on this exchange of opinions also in the future keeping it as lively as possible, in order to collaborate on tangible projects in line with the indications that will emerge from the Action Plan that is currently being defined.

## New Projects

It has to be pointed out the project recently presented by the Matera Chamber of Commerce, which saw the participation of the AIC Forum as associate partner and was focused on the tourist promotion of the UNESCO sites of the Adriatic Area. The project entitled STORIES – Sustainable Cultural Tourism Integrative European Sites is currently being evaluated within the framework of the DG Tourism call for projects "Supporting the enhancement and promotion of transnational thematic tourism products". As regards the new project management activity and the presentation of new projects, it is worth pointing out that the peculiar phase of transition in the programme management of European funds from the 2007-2013 to the 2014-2020 programming period will require the AIC Forum EU Project Management Workgroup to immediately start working to communicate its members a series of information and dates concerning the new European projects, e.g. COSME, Horizon 2020, Eurasmus + and the respective deadlines of future calls for projects. As concerns the new territorial cooperation projects, special attention will have to be paid to the new bilateral or cross-border cooperation programmes, which are currently being planned and whose calls for projects are just about to be published.

## Workgroup on EU Project Management

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# Ongoing Activities

*During 2013, the AIC Forum Workgroup on EU Project Management carried on the activities foreseen within the various projects the Association is involved in:*

## “Development of the fruit and vegetable sector” project



financed under Italian law no. 84/2001, following a negotiation with the Italian Ministry for Economic Development and the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce Unioncamere, and given the project budget surplus, the project is extended until March 2014. The next activities of the project will be carried out in favour of a Croatian operators as their incoming followed by a training path focused on functionality of the telematic system for survey on market prices operating in Italy known as “Fedagromercati – Ismea Prices Observatory”.

### ACTIVITIES 2014

training session for Croatian fruit and vegetable markets managers, with the possibility of B2B meetings in Pescara (planned period: March 2014) and a study-visit to the fruit and vegetable markets of Forlì-Cesena.

## “MedDiet-Mediterranean Diet and enhancement of traditional products” project



Coordinated by the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce Unioncamere and the AIC Forum together with Chambers of Commerce and professional associations from well 5 Mediterranean countries (i.e. Egypt, Greece, Lebanon, Spain and Tunisia), the “MedDiet – Mediterranean Diet and enhancement of traditional products” project features a structured communication plan. This

includes a logo, a website and a Facebook profile and focussed, during the year, on the preparation of an information and teaching tool-kit that should be used and disseminated in schools, local governments and restaurant owners, too. The AIC Forum can use these tools for free and start several forms of dissemination among its members as well as launch a real awareness-raising campaign on the importance of Mediterranean diet, which was declared intangible World Heritage by UNESCO. The various Chambers of Commerce are also expected to open a number of information and dissemination centres, as well as organize events at national and international level to promote the Mediterranean diet. The AIC Forum will also be involved in the organization of an international meeting in collaboration with the ASCAME Network scheduled for the year 2014.

### ACTIVITIES 2014

- meeting in Rome the 22-23 January;
- event in Barcellona the 1-2 April;
- international event/workshop for the Adriatic-Ionian Area for the dissemination of the Mediterranean Knowledge System of MedDiet and the MedDiet Quality Label (planned period: September/October 2014);

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



The year 2013 was characterized by several activities, including the creation of a community on the LinkedIn social network with the various project partners inviting several tourist operators to sign in and exchange views and opinions on nature and social tourism as an opportunity to incentivise deseasonal demand and the tourist promotion of areas, whose tourist potential has yet to be developed. Always within the framework of the

project and in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia, on 26th November last Belgrade (Serbia) hosted the first training course for tourist operators on nature and social tourism as a business opportunity. The training course, which was organized by the AIC Forum, focused on tourism sustainability and accessibility and on the use of new technologies for the promotion and marketing of said tourist products through new dedicated web platform. The course was attended by about 30 tourist operators, who expressed their will to be entered in the web portal for the promotion and marketing of their products in the Adriatic and Ionian area, which will be carried out as one of the objectives of the project. The indications emerged during this project, lay the foundations for interesting prospects also as concerns the use of the ADRIAN logo within the new macroregional context. Other meetings are going to be organized in the next two months, which are always going to be promoted within the same project for operators from Croatia, Montenegro, BiH, Albania and Greece and will be identical to the Belgrade one.

### ACTIVITIES 2014

- organization of no. 3 workshops for tourist operators from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Greece (planned period: January/February 2014);
- organization of no. 6 “one to one” meetings with national/local governments in charge of tourist promotion activities in the countries concerned - (planned period: April/May 2014);
- final project meeting with results presentation (planned period: at the same time of the AIC Forum annual edition). Within this project the AIC Forum intends to implement a revision and an integration of the ADRIAN specifications to give the logo new momentum and make it more visible, also in view of the current developments related to the establishment of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion and, last but not least, of the positive feedback obtained so far at various levels concerning the use of the ADRIAN logo. During the last Board of Governors meeting of 9th December the AIC Forum proposed to implement a number of modifications of specifications and to introduce new adequate tools to develop the potential of the ADRIAN brand. During the 2014 a new

## WORKGROUP ON EU PROJECT MANAGEMENT



tourist promotion tool will be launched; it is a Web Wholesaler incoming cross-border Tour operator. It was conceived with reference to a model that already exists on the web ([www.globeinside.com](http://www.globeinside.com)). The project web portal will represent a sort of “rib” of said model and refer to the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion, with the aim of eventually becoming a reference tool also within the 4th pillar of the new Action Plan of the Macroregion. During project implementation, decisions must be made as regards the use of the portal as a B2B or B2Consumers tool, i.e. whether using the portal as a tool for the promotion and sale of tourist packages and destinations only among tour operators and travel agencies, or the possibility to enable final consumers (i.e. tourists) to access and enjoy the portal, too. Similarly, a web domain will have to be identified that well represents the spirit of sharing common cultural ideas and a common marketing strategy. In view of implementing said platform, the tourist operators interested in collaborating within the project and above all within the promotion and marketing portal mentioned above, will have to:

- underwrite an explicit and formal expression of interest to actively participate in the project activities, with specific reference to the possibility of having their names and contact details listed in the Wholesaler;
- underwrite an unilateral commitment to comply with the requirements for joining Wholesaler and being published in it; said requirements are in line with the ones foreseen by the ADRION specifications;
- formally request to use the ADRION logo;
- receive an authorisation for use of the ADRION logo;
- insert their tourist packages in the Wholesaler.

### “VERO-Tour Venetian routes: Enhancing a shared European multi-cultural sustainable tourism” project (43/G/ENT/CIP/I2/B/N/02S022)



co-financed by the European Commission – DG Tourism. On 25th November last Palazzo Grande Station, i.e. one of Venice government buildings, hosted the Steering Committee meeting of project partners. Partners, including the AIC Forum, discussed ongoing and future activities in the morning, while in the afternoon a training course organized by the AIC Forum was held within the project under the title: “Cultural itineraries of Venetian commercial routes: new skills and experiences for SMEs in the tourist sector”. The course was organized in two sessions: session 1 was devoted to the “Development of innovative and sustainable tourist products to capitalize on the European cultural and natural heritage”, while session 2 focused on the “Development of online tourist services and the use of new technologies in the tourist sector”. The course was attended by about 30 tourist operators, mainly coming from the North-east of Italy and Slovenia. Planned activities for 2014 include the organization of two similar training/information events in Montenegro and Albania, as well as the implementation of a promotional pilot action to be carried out in various Adriatic locations with a strong connotation of being part of the Venetian commercial routes. This tour will see the participation of representatives from sector-specific magazines and tourist operators, who will have the chance of obtaining information on the topic of interest through the info-points set up in the various locations.

#### ACTIVITIES 2014

- organization of a workshop in Albania for tourist operators (expected period: April 2014)
- organization of a workshop in Montenegro for tourist operators (expected period: June 2014)

### WELLFOOD project



Within the WELLFOOD project (<http://www.wellfoodproject.eu/>), which involves the AIC Forum as associate partner, provided the context for a meeting in Corfu (Greece) on 17th and 18th October 2013, followed by a transnational workshop under the title “Transnational Conference on Healthy and Organic Food in the Adriatic Region. On this occasion, the AIC Forum involved and

enabled representatives of the local Chamber of Commerce of Corfu, which is a member to the AIC Forum, to both events, specifically Messrs. Spyros Voulgaris, Alexander Vavoulis and George Kolyta.

### Progetto “Adriatic Economic Cluster Club”

(cod. 189/2009 - Programma IPA CBC)



Although not directly involving the AIC Forum, worth mentioning are a number of activities related to the “Adriatic Economic Cluster Club” project (cod. 189/2009 - IPA CBC Programme), which were implemented during the year and saw the participation, in addition to the Chamber of Commerce of Ancona, of various Chambers of Commerce and chambers of economy members to the AIC Forum. Specifically, the following two events are worth highlighting:

- 3rd Intercluster meeting, within which representatives from Unioncamere Veneto (project lead partner) and the Chambers of Commerce of Venice, Pordenone, Udine, Ancona, Brindisi, Chieti and Campobasso participated with their respective entrepreneurs in a visit to Serbia from 23rd to 26th September last. The local correspondents, who are also project partners, from the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Belgrade, Leskovac and Novi Sad welcomed the Italian delegation, together with representatives from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania, thereby facilitating contacts with local enterprises and clusters in the nautical sector and related supply chain;
- 3rd Animation meeting, which took place on 29th November last in Mestre (Venice) at the headquarters of Unioncamere Veneto. This meeting aimed at facilitating the encounter of the nautical clusters (from Italy, Croatia, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina) of the Adriatic-Ionian Area. The Animation Meeting provided the setting for meetings between enterprises, research centres and representatives from various reference clusters and aimed at establishing tangible collaborations also as a follow-up of the previous intercluster meeting held in Serbia.