



**FINANCIAL STATEMENT ON
31.12.2013 AND
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR 2013**

Corfu, June 12, 2014

ENCLOSURE B – FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2013

REVENUES	Statement of Accounts 2013	EXPENDITURES	Statement of Accounts 2013
I. Membership fees	€ 77.500,00	I. Operation management and administration costs	€ 11.853,60
<i>I.I Current year fees</i>	€ 73.500,00	<i>I.I Postal expenditures</i>	€ 160,75
<i>I.II Previous year fees</i>	€ 4.000,00	<i>I.II Telephone expenditures</i>	€ 1.484,71
		<i>I.III Expenditures for publishing</i>	€ 0,00
II. Other membership contributions	€ 0,00	<i>I.IV Advertising</i>	€ 0,00
<i>II.I Various contributions</i>	€ 0,00	<i>I.V Interpretation and translation services</i>	€ 1.289,51
<i>II.II Funding from Project activities</i>	0,00	<i>I.VI Representation expenditures</i>	
		<i>I.VII Consulting fees</i>	€ 6.932,62
III. Contributions and financing from third parties	€ 75.450,95	<i>I.VII.I Web page consulting services</i>	€ 2.758,80
<i>III.I Various contributions</i>	€ 1.691,05	<i>I.VII.II Account-keeping and salaries</i>	€ 4.173,82
<i>III.II Funding from Projects (the Region and other institutions)</i>	€ 32.775,40	<i>I.VII.III Other consulting service fees</i>	€ 0,00
<i>III.III Advance payment from Chamber of Commerce in Ancona</i>	€ 40.984,50	<i>I.VIII Miscellaneous expenditures</i>	€ 1.986,01
		II. Staff costs	€ 36.910,56
IV. Sponsorship	€ 0,00	<i>II.I Employees fees</i>	€ 32.280,23
<i>IV.I Various contributions (donations)</i>	0,00	<i>II.II Official visits and travels</i>	€ 0,00
		<i>II.III Travel expenses and accommodation costs</i>	€ 1.771,45
VI. Miscellaneous revenues	€ 5,84	<i>II.V Internship expenses</i>	€ 2.858,88
<i>VI. I Interest income</i>	€ 0,25	III. Association bodies' expenditures	€ 1.236,07
<i>VI.II Surplus</i>	€ 0,00	<i>III.I Travel expenses and accommodation costs</i>	€ 1.236,07
<i>VI.III Various dues and collections</i>	€ 5,59	<i>III.II Participation fees</i>	€ 0,00
VII. Operating profit from previous years	€ 12.988,80		
<i>VII.I Surplus for project activities</i>	€ 0,00	IV. Promotion and institutional initiatives' expenses	€ 98.195,92
<i>VII.II Surplus for institutional activities</i>	€ 12.988,80	<i>IV.I Development initiatives and Association accreditation activities</i>	€ 21.292,66
		<i>IV.II Thematic round tables initiatives</i>	€ 25.984,84
		<i>IV.III International Adriatic-Ionian Arbitration Court promotion initiatives</i>	
		<i>IV.IV Projects funded by various bodies and institutions</i>	€ 50.918,42
		<i>IV.V Partnership network support initiatives</i>	€ 0,00
		V. Assets' purchase expenditures	€ 0,00
		<i>V.I Equipment</i>	€ 0,00
		<i>V.II Capital value reduction</i>	€ 0,00
		VI. Various liabilities	€ 6.233,09
		<i>VI.I Bank fees</i>	€ 942,81
		<i>VI.II Insurance fees</i>	€ 590,00
		<i>VI.III Tax and social insurance fees</i>	€ 4.700,28
TOTAL GENERAL REVENUES	€ 165.945,59	TOTAL GENERAL EXPENDITURES	€ 154.429,24
OPERATING LOSSES		OPERATING PROFIT	€ 11.516,35
TOTAL BALANCE	€ 165.945,59	TOTAL BALANCE	€ 165.945,59

APPENDIX I

BUDGET AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2013 REVIEW

REVENUES	Budget 2013	Statement of Accounts 2013	Variance	EXPENDITURES	Budget 2013	Statement of Accounts 2013	Variance
I. Membership fees	€94.500,00	€77.500,00	€(17.000,00)	I. Operation management and administration costs	€10.370,00	€11.853,60	€ 1.483,60
<i>I.I Current year fees</i>	€ 80.500,00	€ 73.500,00	€ (7.000,00)	<i>I.I Postal expenditures</i>	€ 400,00	€ 160,75	€ (239,25)
<i>I.II Previous year fees</i>	€ 14.000,00	€ 4.000,00	€ (10.000,00)	<i>I.II Telephone expenditures</i>	€ 1.350,00	€ 1.484,71	€ 134,71
				<i>I.III Expenditures for publishing</i>	€ 300,00	€ 00,00	€ (300,00)
II. Other membership contributions	€ 00,00	€ 00,00	€ 00,00	<i>I.IV Advertising</i>	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
<i>II.I Various contributions</i>	€ 0,00	€ 00,00	€ 00,00	<i>I.V Interpretation and translation services</i>	€ 600,00	€ 1.289,51	€ 689,51
<i>II.II Funding from Project activities</i>	€ 00,00	€ 00,00	€ 0,00	<i>I.VI Representation expenditures</i>	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
				<i>I.VII Consulting fees</i>	€ 4.700,00	€ 6.932,62	€ 2.232,62
III. Contributions and financing from third parties	€79.149,00	€75.450,95	€(3.698,05)	<i>I.VII.I Web page consulting services</i>	€ 1.200,00	€ 2.758,80	€ 1.558,80
<i>III.I Various contributions</i>	€ 0,00	€ 1.691,05	€ 1.691,05	<i>I.VII.II Account-keeping and salaries</i>	€ 3.500,00	€ 4.173,82	€ 673,82
				<i>I.VII.III Other consulting service fees</i>	€ 0,00	€ 00,00	€ 00,00
<i>III.II Funding from Projects (the Region and other institutions)</i>	€ 79.149,00	€ 32.775,40	€ (46.373,60)	<i>I.VIII Miscellaneous expenditures</i>	€ 3.020,00	€ 1.986,01	€ (1.033,99)
<i>III.III Advance payment from Chamber of Commerce in Ancona</i>		€ 40.984,50	€ 40.984,50	II. Staff costs	€42.466,00	€36.910,56	€(5.555,44)
IV. Sponsorship	€ 00,00	€0,00	€ 00,00	<i>II.I Employees fees</i>	€35.866,00	€32.280,23	€(3.585,77)
<i>IV.I Various contributions (donations)</i>	€ 00,00	€ 0,00	€ 00,00	<i>II.II Official visits and travels</i>	€ 00,00	€ 0,00	€ 00,00
				<i>II.III Travel expenses and accommodation costs</i>	€ 1.800,00	€ 1.771,45	€ (28,55)
				<i>II.IV Permanent and part-time coordination and cooperation costs</i>	€ 00,00	€ 0,00	€ 00,00
				<i>II.V Internship expenses</i>	€ 4.800,00	€ 2.858,88	€ (1.941,12)
VI. Miscellaneous revenues	€25,00	€5,84	€ (19,16)	III. Association bodies' expenditures	€1.000,00	€1.236,07	€ 236,07
<i>VI. I Interest income</i>	€ 20,00	€ 0,25	€ (19,75)	<i>III.I Travel expenses and accommodation fees</i>	€ 1.000,00	€ 1.236,07	€ 236,07
<i>VI.II Surplus</i>	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	<i>III.II Participation fees</i>	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
<i>VI.III Various dues and collections</i>	€ 5,00	€ 5,59	€ 0,59	IV. Promotion and institutional initiatives'	€116.758,00	€ 98.195,92	€ (18.562,08)

				expenses			
VII. Operating profit from previous years	€0,00	€ 12.988,80	€ 12.988,80				
<i>VII.I Surplus for project activities</i>	€0,00	€0,00	€0,00	<i>IV.I Development initiatives and Association accreditation activities</i>	€20.309,00	€21.292,66	€ 983,66
<i>VII.II Surplus for institutional activities</i>	€0,00	€ 12.988,80	€ 12.988,80	<i>IV.II Thematic round tables initiatives</i>	€ 17.000,00	€ 25.984,84	€ 8.984,84
				<i>IV.III International Adriatic-Ionian Arbitration Court promotion initiatives</i>	€3.000,00	€ 00,00	€(3.000,00)
				<i>IV.IV Projects funded by various bodies and institutions</i>	€79.149,00	€ 50.918,42	€(28.230,58)
				<i>V. Assets' purchase expenditures</i>	€0,00	€0,00	€0,00
				<i>V.I Equipment</i>	€0,00	€0,00	€0,00
				<i>V.II Capital value reduction</i>	€0,00	€0,00	€0,00
				<i>VI. Various liabilities</i>	€3.080,00	€6.233,09	€ 3.153,09
				<i>VI.I Bank fees</i>	€ 520,00	€942,81	€ 422,81
				<i>VI.II Insurance fees</i>	€ 490,00	€590,00	€ 100,00
				<i>VI.III Tax and social insurance fees</i>	€ 2.070,00	€ 4.700,28	€ 2.630,28
TOTAL GENERAL REVENUES	€173.674,00	€ 165.945,59	€ (7.728,41)	TOTAL GENERAL EXPENDITURES	€173.674,00	€ 154.429,24	€(19.244,76)
OPERATING LOSSES				OPERATING PROFIT		€ 11.516,35	€ 11.516,35
TOTAL BALANCE	€173.674,00	€165.945,59	€(7.728,41)	TOTAL BALANCE	€173.674,00	€165.945,59	€(7.728,41)

APPENDIX II

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2012 AND 2013 - REVIEW

REVENUES	Statement of Accounts 2012	Statement of Accounts 2013	Variance	EXPENDITURES	Statement of Accounts 2012	Statement of accounts 2013	Variance
I. Membership fees	€72.500,00	€77.500,00	€5.000,00	I. Operation management and administration costs	€10.934,66	€11.853,60	€918,94
<i>I.I Current year fees</i>	€68.500,00	€73.500,00	€5.000,00	<i>I.I Postal expenditures</i>	€ 304,82	€ 160,75	€ (144,07)
<i>I.II Previous year fees</i>	€ 4.000,00	€ 4.000,00	€ 00,00	<i>I.II Telephone expenditures</i>	€1.338,93	€1.484,71	€ 145,78
				<i>I.III Expenditures for publishing</i>	€228,70	€00,00	€ (228,70)
II. Other membership contributions	€55.000,00	€ 00,00	€(55.000,00)	<i>I.IV Advertising</i>	€0,00	€0,00	€0,00
<i>II.I Various contributions</i>	€10.000,00	€ 00,00	€(10.000,00)	<i>I.V Interpretation and translation services</i>	€381,52	€1.289,51	€907,99
<i>II.II Funding from Project activities</i>	€45.000,00	€ 00 ,00	€(45.000,00)	<i>I.VI Representation expenditures</i>	€ 00,00	€ 00,00	€ 0,00
				<i>I.VII Consulting fees</i>	€5.926,06	€6.932,62	€ 1.006,56
III. Contributions and financing from third parties	€4.686,71	€75.450,95	€70.764,24	<i>I.VII.I Web page consulting services</i>	€907,50	€2.758,80	€ 1.851,30
<i>III.I Various contributions</i>	€ 526,10	€ 1.691,05	€ 1.164,95	<i>I.VII.II Account-keeping and salaries</i>	€3.466,76	€4.173,82	€ 707,06
				<i>I.VII.III Other consulting service fees</i>	€ 1.551,,80	€ 00,00	€(1.551,80)
<i>III.II Funding from projects (the Region and other institutions)</i>	€ 4.160,61	€ 32.775,40	€ 28.614,79	<i>I.VIII Miscellaneous expenditures</i>	€ 2.754,63	€ 1.986,01	€ (768,62)
<i>III.III Advance payment from Chamber of Commerce in Ancona</i>		€ 40.984,50	€ 40.984,50	II. Staff costs	€34.842,64	€36.910,56	€2.067,92
IV. Sponsorship	€0,00	€0,00	€ 0,00	<i>II.I Employees fees</i>	€33.124,82	€32.280,23	(844,59)
<i>IV.I Various contributions (donations)</i>	€0,00	€0,00	€ 0,00	<i>II.II Official visits and travels</i>	€0,00	€0,00	€ 00,00
				<i>II.III Travel expenses and accommodation costs</i>	€ 1.717,82	€ 1.771,45	€ 53,63
				<i>II.V Internship expenses</i>	€0,00	€ 2.858,88	€ 2.858,88
				<i>Permanent and part time coordination and cooperation</i>	€0,00	€0,00	€ (0,00)
VI. Miscellaneous revenues	€16,56	€5,84	€ (10,72)	III. Association bodies' expenditures	€759,36	€1.236,07	€ 476,71
<i>VI. I Interest income</i>	€13,69	€0,25	€ (13,44)	<i>III.I Travel expenses and accommodation costs</i>	€759,36	€1.236,07	€ 476,71

AIC FORUM

<i>VI.II Surplus</i>	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	<i>III.II Participation fees</i>	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
<i>VI.III Various dues and collections</i>	€ 2,87	€ 5,59	€ 2,72				
VII. Operating profit from previous years	€ 7.671,58	€ 12.988,80	€ 5.317,22				
				<i>IV. Promotion and institutional initiatives' expenses</i>	€ 77.499,47	€ 98.195,92	€ 20.696,45
<i>VII.I Surplus for project activities</i>	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	<i>IV.I Development initiatives and Association accreditation activities</i>	€ 23.241,15	€ 21.292,66	€ (1.948,49)
<i>VII.II Surplus for institutional activities</i>	€ 7.671,58	€ 12.988,80	€ 5.317,22	<i>IV.II Thematic round tables initiatives</i>	€ 52.138,32	€ 25.984,84	€ (26.153,48)
				<i>IV.III International Adriatic-Ionian Arbitration Court promotion initiatives</i>	€ 00,00	€ 00,00	€ (00,00)
				<i>IV.IV Projects funded by various bodies and institutions</i>	€ 2.120,00	€ 50.918,42	€ 48.798,42
				<i>IV.V Partnership network support initiatives</i>	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 00,00
				V. Assets' purchase expenditures	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
				<i>V.I Equipment</i>	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
				<i>V.II Capital value reduction</i>	€ 0,00	€ 0,00	€ 0,00
				VI. Various liabilities	€ 2.849,92	€ 6.233,09	€ 3.383,17
				<i>VI.I Bank fees</i>	€ 548,22	€ 942,81	€ 394,59
				<i>VI.II Insurance fees</i>	€ 490,00	€ 590,00	€ 100,00
				<i>VI.III Tax and social insurance fees</i>	€ 1.811,70	€ 4.700,28	€ 2.888,58
TOTAL GENERAL REVENUES	€ 139.874,85	€ 165.945,59	€ 26.070,74	TOTAL GENERAL EXPENDITURES	€ 126.886,05	€ 154.429,24	€ 27.543,19
OPERATING LOSSES				OPERATING PROFIT	€ 12.988,80	€ 11.516,35	€ (1.472,45)
TOTAL BALANCE	€ 139.874,85	€ 165.945,59	€ 26.070,74	TOTAL BALANCE	€ 139.874,85	€ 165.945,59	€ 26.070,74

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR 2013

Financial Statement for the year 2013 of the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce was drafted by the Board of Governors, fully observing the criteria defined by the Statute of the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian of Chambers of Commerce. The Statement clearly and in detail reports on all revenues and expenditures incurred and realized by the Association in administering institutional activities; notwithstanding that the Association is not a commercial, profit-based company.

The Financial Statement reports on annual revenues and expenditures incurred during the year and evidenced in conformity with the schematic contained in the „Enclosure B“, representing the integral part of the Rules on Financial Management of the Association.

The accountancy criteria adopted to record business activities of the Association is represented through the cash balance principle, pursuant to which, revenues and expenditures become relevant only at the moment of collection, or rather, at the moment of realization of a transaction (payment dues or payment claims).

The items recorded in the Financial Statement correspond fully to the accounting reports kept during the year 2013, and represent the financial result of institutional activities realized by the bodies of the Association.

In order to supply the transparent presentation and fully inform the members on financial budget items, besides the Financial Statement drafted fully observing the prescribed rules and schematic in the „Enclosure B“ of the Rules on Financial Management, two more schematics were drafted – „Enclosure I and II“, bringing the variance to the Budget 2013 and Financial Statement 2013 (Appendix I), as well as the variance to the Financial Statement 2012 and Financial Statement 2013 (Appendix II).

Aiming at providing the members with full insight into the financial situation of the Forum, consisting not only of the cash flow and bank accounts (collection/payment) but of dues and claims as well, the closing part of the Statement records dues and claims on 31. 12. 2013.

Revenues

Revenues realized in 2013 relate to:

- Annual Association membership fees for the current and previous year, collected respectively in the amount decided upon by the Board of Governors, in the amount of € 77.500,00;
- Cost reimbursements for activities agreed upon with the special company of the Chamber of Commerce in Modena, totaling € 1.619,05;
- Contributions paid by regions, and other institutions aiming at realization of EU project proposals, totaling € 32.775,40;

- Advance payment conformable to the agreement and aiming at realization of project activities by the Chamber of Commerce in Ancona, with the repayment obligation of the said amount at the moment of collection of the contribution due by the European Commission, totaling € 40.984,50;
- Revenues gained for interest income realized on the current account deposit, totaling € 0,25;
- Various dues and claims totaling € 5,59;
- Operating profit from previous years in the amount of € 12.988,80.

The point I of the item Revenues records the „Membership fees“, which relate to annual fees paid in the course of the year 2013; whereas € 73.500,00 accounts for the membership fees for the current year and the amount of € 4.000,00 relates to collection of fees for previous years. The expressed amount of € 31.500,00 at the end of the year, indicate the amount of fees still to be collected.

More specifically, the said fees relate to the following:

- Fees for the years 2009-2010-2011-2012-2013 totaling € 7.000,00 still due by the Chamber of Commerce In Lezhe;
- Fees for the years 2010-2011-2012-2013 totaling € 6.000,00 still due by the Chamber of Commerce In Tirana;
- Fees for the years 2012 and 2013 totaling € 4.000 still due by the Chamber of Economy in Greece; whereas the amount of € 2.000 for the year 2012 was collected on January 16, 2014;
- Fees for the year 2013 totaling € 14.500,00 due by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Aetoloakarnania, Corfu, Ileia, Ioannina, Preveza, Thesprotia and Ferrara. The fee due for the year 2013 by the Chamber of Commerce in Ferrara was collected on January 27, 2014.

During the year 2013, the Association was joined by the following new members: Chamber of Commerce in Ferrara, Reggio Calabria, Ascoli Piceno, Fermo, Macerata, Udine, and the national association Unioncamere. Respectively, the requests for withdrawal of membership were granted to the Chamber of Commerce in Gorizia and to the special company Promex of the Chamber of Commerce in Padua.

The item **“Contributions and financing from third parties”** records the following:

- **“Various contributions”** which total € 1.691,05 relate, as previously mentioned, to the reimbursement of costs for the services provided by the special company Promec of the Chamber of Commerce in Modena;

- **“Funding from Projects”** totaling € 32.775,40 relate to the contributions paid, as follows:
 Veneto region for the realization of the project VeRo Tour totaling € 7.440,92; special company PROMEC of the Chamber of Commerce in Modena covering partially the costs incurred in the second semester of 2012 for the realization of the project: “Tourist system: cooperation between the regions Emilia Romagna and Marche and Albania, Croatia and Montenegro” totaling € 2.608,90; national association Unioncamere for the realization of the project: “Development of fruit and vegetable growing sector” totaling € 2.120,00; „Permanent Secretariat of the AII“ for the realization of the project „*Innovative skills and competences for entrepreneurs in order to promote a new sustainable tourism in the Adriatic and Ionian Area*” totaling € 12.225,00, and national association Unioncamere for the realization of the project “*MedDiet – Mediterranean Diet and enhancement of traditional products*” totaling € 8.380,58.
- **“Advance payment of the Chamber of Commerce in Ancona”** totals € 40.984,50, and represents the advance payment by the Chamber of Commerce in Ancona to the AIC Forum, currently expecting the funds due by institutions financing some of the projects, in order to overbridge and cover for the costs incurred for realization of the projects financed by the European Commission. The Forum has committed itself to reimbursement of the said funds to the Chamber of Commerce in Ancona once the payment of the aforementioned financial contributions has been settled. The agreement has been signed between the parties, in conformity with the convention signed by both the Forum association and the Chamber of Commerce in Ancona.

The item **“Miscellaneous revenues”**, totaling € 5,84, records the interest income on the current account balance, which totals € 0,25 and money refund on various costs totaling € 5,59.

The item **“ Operating profit from previous years”** records the operating profit shown in the Statement of Accounts for the year 2012, totaling € 12.988,80.

Expenditures

Total expenditures recorded in the item **“ Operation management and administration costs ”** for the year 2013 totaled € 11.853,60, or € 918,94 more with regard to the expenditures recorded in 2012, representing thus the increase of costs of 8,40%, incurred primarily by expenditures due for maintenance of the three web pages: Forum, Women Entrepreneurship and Adrion.

The Statement of Accounts brings records of expenditures in detail, whereas the item „Miscellaneous expenditures” records primarily the utility fees due for the premises in the year 2012 totaling €1.814,76, maturing in the year 2013.

More precisely, the said item records the electricity, water, heating, cleaning services and surveillance costs for the premises used by the Forum Secretariat.

“Staff costs” for the year 2013 totaled € 36.910,56 but, with regard to the year before, they have increased for € 2.067,92. This is primarily due to the item: „Internship expenses” relating to the internship services for the administration, inactive the year before.

The item “Employees fees” totaling € 32.280,23 was decreased for € 844,59 with regard to the previous year, or for approximately 2,55%, mainly due to better organization of work activities of the Forum employee. The Staff costs in the amount of € 1.771,45 comprise both travel expenses and accommodation costs recognized to the said employee.

“Association bodies' expenditures” totaling € 1.236,07 refers to reimbursements of travel expenses and accommodation costs for members, incurred due to participation of members at the XIII Forum edition. Respectively, during the year 2013, the member chambers also covered directly for travel expenses and accommodation costs of their representatives in the Board of Governors and the Board of Auditors.

“Promotion and institutional initiatives' expenses ” total € 98.195,92, representing thus with regard to the previous year, the increase of € 20. 696,45, or approximately 26,70%. The said increase is due to more proactive approach of the Association to promotion activities, with regard to the year 2012. This is going to be referred to in more details in the second part of this Statement of Accounts.

The said expenses relate to:

Development initiatives and Association accreditation activities: € 21.292,66

The amount of € 15.412,77 of the aforementioned total amount, relate to promotion costs and integration of Western Balkans regions in the European Union (Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion), whereas € 5.879,89 relate to realization of international partnership network support activities;

Thematic round tables initiatives: € 25.984,84

The amount of € 19.115,57 of the aforementioned total amount, was allocated for organizational activities of the **XIII edition of Forum 2013** held in Međugorje in May 14 – 16, 2013, whereas the remaining € 6.869,27 relate to the organization costs for the **VIII Congress of Women Entrepreneurship of the Adriatic – Ionian Region (Dubrovnik, October 24 – 25, 2013)**;

Projects funded by various bodies and institutions: € 50.918,42

The costs referred to hereby, have been sustained by the Association for the realization of project activities, as follows:

-Project **“Development of fruit and vegetable growing sector” – Law 84/2001**”; funds amounting € 23.518,51 were allocated for the realization of project activities. The activities are respectively further analyzed in the text referring to the project management. The revenues of the Project totaled € 2.120,00, and are recorded in the separate item, whereas other costs were covered for from the advance payment, allocated and anticipated to the Association by the Chamber of Commerce in Ancona. On February 21, 2014, as shown in the report, the Association collected and recorded the contribution from the national association Unioncamere in the amount of € 23.689,51;

-Project **“VeRo Tour”**”; the costs for the project activities to be realized in the year 2013 totaled € 1.413,76, and were fully covered for from project funds;

-Project **“Tourist system: cooperation between the regions Emilia Romagna and Marche and Albania, Croatia and Montenegro”**: the project activities were realized in cooperation with the special agency Pomac. Direct project costs in 2013 totaled € 2.768,49, whereas the received funds amounted € 2.608,90. The activities realized in 2013 are analyzed in the text referring to the project management. In the year 2013, the project financial statement with cost analyses for the first semester of 2013 was drafted, whereas in February 2014, the collection of contribution totaling € 8.149,28, paid in by the special company Pomac of the Chamber of Commerce in Modena, was recorded.

-Project **“Innovative skills and competences for entrepreneurs in order to promote a new sustainable tourism in the Adriatic and Ionian Area”**: the funds amounting € 9.294,92 were allocated for the realization of project activities in the year 2013. The activities are respectively further analyzed in the text referring to the project management. The allocated funds totaled € 12.225,00, covering fully all costs of realization of project activities.

- Project **“MedDiet – Mediterranean Diet and enhancement of traditional products”**: the funds amounting € 11.997,77 were allocated for the realization of project activities in the year 2013. The activities are respectively further analyzed in the text referring to the project management. The allocated funds totaled € 8.380,58, whereas the rest of the costs were covered for from the advance payment, allocated and anticipated to the Association by the Chamber of Commerce in Ancona.

-Project–**“Techtour”** is financed by the association Unioncamere Veneto. Funds for the realization of project activities in the year 2013, amounting € 1.924,97, are partially covered from the advance payment, allocated and anticipated to the Association by the Chamber of Commerce in Ancona, and partially by the previously mentioned revenues realized in 2012. In February 2014, the financing association Unioncamere Veneto allocated the funds, guaranteeing thus the complete project activities realization and cost payment.

It is hereby highlighted that the expenditures recorded in the item **“Promotion and institutional initiatives' expenses”** represent only one small portion of expenditures for promotion activities

in the year 2013, whereas the said costs have been funded mostly by the member chambers, primarily by the Chamber of Commerce in Ancona and Chamber of Commerce in Split.

The item **"Various liabilities"** relates to insurance fees and INAIL policies (*Istituto Nazionale Infortuni sul Lavoro – State Institute for Occupational Injuries*) in the amount of € 590,00; to tax liabilities and fees for the year 2013 totaling €4.700,28, and to bank services' fees totaling € 942,81.

The accounting tax base for the settlement of IRAP (production activities tax) for entities which are not commercial companies and perform only institutional activities, has been set by applying the so called retribution method, whereas the total represents the sum of the following items:

- Staff costs;
- Reimbursements for human resources assimilated to permanent staff costs;
- Reimbursements paid for coordinated and permanent cooperation;
- Reimbursements for independent and part-time activities.

"MANAGEMENT SURPLUS/DEFICIT"

The financial statement for 2013 closes with a management surplus of € 11.516,35, equal to the sum between the management surplus for 2012 of € 12.988,80 and the 2013 fiscal year result of € - 1.472,45.

2012 management surplus	€ 12.988,80
+ 2013 revenues	€ 152.956,79
- 2013 costs	- € 154.429,24
2013 management	€ 11.516,35

The management as above calculated is bound for € 8.876,86 to the covering of the Deferred Salary Fund in place as of 31.12.2013 and corresponds to the sum of money to be paid to the employee in case of end of service at this date.

In order to complete information the following detailed information on liquid assets as of 31st December 2013 is provided, whereby said assets coincide with the management to carry forward in the 2014 accounts:

Bank account balance as of 31st Dec. 2013 (net of the balance of Banca Libra of € 140,36)	€ 9.943,86
Cash balance of MedDiet Project at 31st Dec. 2013	€ 1.352,74
Cash balance as of 31st Dec. 2012	€ 63,26

Prepaid credit card, sum available as of 31st December	€ 156,49
Total	€ 11.516,35

For a complete analysis on the AIC Forum financial situation, it should be pointed out that during 2013 receivables from the members and payables to third subjects accrued. More specifically, at end 2013, the following situation can be seen:

RECEIVABLES

Receivables due from members for membership fees still to be paid:	€ 31.500,00
of which:	
€ 19.500,00 for 2013 training activities;	
€ 12.000,00 for training activities held in previous years;	
Receivables due from others	<u>€ 33.040,33</u>
Total	€ 64.540,33

PAYABLES

Payables due to the tax authorities for withholdings	€ 526,02
Payables due to Region for IRPEF - income tax	€ 109,18
Payables due to Municipality for IRPEF - income tax	€ 71,01
Payables due to employees for severance indemnity	€ 8.876,86
Payables due to INPS for social security benefits	€ 1076,00
Payables due to INAIL for social security benefits	€ 54,63
Payables due for the purchase of services	€ 2.579,70
Payables due to third parties	€ 299,82
Payables due to Ancona Chamber of Commerce	<u>€ 40.984,50</u>
Total	€ 54.277,90

The payables existing as of 31.12.13 are covered by receivables in place on the same date and by the 2013 management. The management is bound for € 8.876,86 to cover the Payable towards the employee for the deferred salary in case of end of service.

The Receivables due from different institutions are composed as follow:

Receivables due from italian Unioncamere " Fruit and Vegetables Sector "	€ 23.689,51
Receivables due from Unioncamere Veneto " Techtour "	€ 1.201,54
Receivables due Promec, special Agency of Modena Chamber of Commerce " The Tourism Chain "	€ 8.149,28

All of them were collected during the first months of the year 2014.

REPORT ON MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN 2013**MEETING WITH THE MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY LUIGI MATTIOLO - DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE EU AT THE ITALIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (ANCONA, 18 FEBRUARY 2013)**

On February 18, a delegation of the AIC Forum, comprised of the Vice President Rodolfo Giampieri and the Secretary General, Mr. Michele De Vita, met with the Minister Plenipotentiary Luigi Mattiolo, the Director General for the European Union at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Ancona, at the headquarters of the Secretariat of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative.

The meeting was integrated within the framework of the Adriatic Ionian Macroregion, with particular reference to the tangible contributions to the European Commission's Action Plan that various network entities, recognised by the Commission as essential and privileged speakers, are now invited to present for the establishment of the Adriatic Ionian Macroregion, with a view towards integration and in accordance with mutual political and institutional objectives.

The initiative, coordinated by Ambassador Fabio Pigliapoco, Secretary General of the Secretariat of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (All), included two other Adriatic Ionian networks based in Ancona: Uniadriion, with the participation of the Chancellor, Mr. Marco Pacetti, and Prof. Fausto Pugnaroni; and the Forum of Cities, with the participation of Mr. Claudio Grassini of the Municipality of Ancona and Mr. Cesare Di Martino, head of the European Office at the Municipality of Pescara.

Also in attendance were Mr. Marco Bellardi, representative of the Marche Region, and Mr. Andrea Vitolo, Councilor at the Unit for Balkan countries, the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the Adriatic Ionian Initiative (All) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The aim of the meeting was to establish a tangible approach to the Action Plan of the "EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Macroregion" in order to combine, in line with the mandate for the development of the Strategy issued by the European Council to the Commission on 14 December 2012, the political and diplomatic aspects with the operative ones (the latter also pertaining to the financial sustainability of the Plan itself), in view of the first meeting in Brussels on February 22, presided by the DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries at the European Commission, concerning the implementation of the Strategy.

With this meeting the European Commission has formalised the internal coordination on the basis of which the DG Regional Policy will be the one to coordinate the Action Plan, harmonising it with the work already performed by the DG Maritime Affairs, analogous to the developments relative to the already approved Macroregional Strategies for the Baltic and Danube Regions, in view of its final approval by December 2014. Each country is now invited to adopt a mechanism of national coordination between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the competent national authorities for the implementation of territorial cohesion policies, and the stakeholders of the territories involved in the Strategy.

During the meeting with the Minister Plenipotentiary Luigi Mattiolo it was strongly emphasised that it is necessary to continue to support the establishment of the Adriatic Ionian Macroregion and to recognise the cross-border cooperation efforts expanded with dedication and determination throughout many years by the Marche Region, in synergy with three existent networks coordinated by the All. A testament to the latter efforts is the recent (31 January 2013) appointment to Brussels of the President of the Marche Region, Mr.

Gian Mario Spacca, as President of the Adriatic Ionian Macroregional Intergroup at the Committee of the Regions. Evaluating the specificity of the three networks and the main project directions realised by each of them individually, and all of them jointly in recent years, the meeting also strengthened the role of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce which, having held the Presidency of Workgroup on tourism at the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce since its inception, has now been invited to become an even more active key player in order to strengthen and implement projects and initiatives on behalf of the area as a single and integrated tourist destination.

Mr. De Vita emphasised those duties, highlighting the potentials of Adrion, which has been officially recognised as a common trademark identifiable with the area by the European Commission in its 30 November 2012 Communication: "A Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas".

As an official outcome of the Round Table on Blue Growth presided by the Secretary General, who was also a speaker, during the consulting workshop for stakeholders organised by the DG Maritime Affairs in Trieste on 12 June 2012, the aforementioned recognition honours the efforts and perseverance of the Forum as well as the prescience of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce which aims to reach the ambitious goal of including the area in the Council of Europe programme on European Cultural Routes.

During the meeting with the Minister Plenipotentiary Luigi Mattiolo, the Uniadrion network referenced the importance of "Blue Economy", in particular the study presented by the Marche Polytechnic University in Ancona on 16 July 2012 and at the workshop organised by the DG Maritime Affairs in Zagreb on 6 December 2012, the development of which is based on a possible new alliance between the preservation of the marine and coastal environment and the development of innovative techniques, with high technological content and low environmental impact.

Regarding the Forum of Cities, Mr. Grassini reported on the network's efforts towards the development of cooperation dedicated to schools and young people, as outlined in the project "A Sea to Grow in Peace", promoted by the Regional School Office for Marche and the Municipality of Ancona, with the aim of creating a network between schools along the Adriatic and Ionian coasts that would form an enduring virtual community on the website "adriTwinning" for the purposes of cultural exchange between the young and the educators, dedicated to scientific research, projects and student ambitions.

Furthermore, the method of participation of the three Fora at the following appointments set in Brussels by the European Commission was agreed upon during the meeting, and the Ambassador Fabio Pigliapoco, was chosen as the official spokesperson of the three networks to propose their unanimous response to the necessity of realising a joint operative strategy and successful multi-governance for the Adriatic Ionian area.

This is also the year when two very important legislative processes coincide: the launch of the Strategy Action Plan, the start of the negotiations regarding community funds and programs that will, starting from next year, contribute to the implementation of the Strategy in the 2014/2020 period. The prospect of future recognition should allow us to continue to operate in synergy on projects and initiatives important for the entire area.

IKTIMED PROJECT AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE AIC FORUM - ASCAME MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (Ancona, 26 FEBRUARY 2013)

The third meeting of the Innovation Commission and the ICT of the ASCAME network took place on February 26th at the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, organised within the scope of the IKTIMED project, a European project of territorial cooperation financed from the MED programme and coordinated by the Marche Region. The Ancona Chamber of Commerce hosted the event in its role as a partner in the IKTIMED project and a member of the ASCAME network.

The aim of the meeting was twofold: to debate and analyse topics relative to Innovation and ICT in the Mediterranean area, of interest for both the Commission appointed on behalf of the ASCAME network and for the IKTIMED project; and to discuss a possible future collaboration between the project partners and the members of the ASCAME network, many of whom are also chambers of commerce members of the AIC Forum.

This initiative is integrated within the scope of cooperation stipulated in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Forum and the ASCAME Network, signed in 2008, that aims at fostering bilateral collaboration between the two entities and their members in order to stimulate activities benefiting the social-economic development of the Adriatic-Ionian and Mediterranean areas, in line with mutual statutory objectives, in preparation for the joint promotion of initiatives through the use of transnational and cross-border cooperation instruments made available by EU institutions.

For this reason the Forum, and in particular the European planning team, has always directed its activities towards the collaboration with and between the partners within the Association, but also with other entities from other networks with whom there exist collaboration agreements or arrangements regarding specific projects of mutual interest. In this regard, the IKTIMED project has served as a stimulus to promote such collaboration and, in that sense, it can constitute a reference model for future and similar initiatives.

MEETING OF THE ADRIATIC-IONIAN EUROREGION (BOLOGNA, 6th –7th MARCH 2013)

Bologna was the venue of the meeting of the Commission for the environment, i.e. one of the five theme-specific commissions of the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion, on 6th and 7th March. The meeting of said Commission, chaired by the Emilia-Romagna Region, was one of the first theme-specific meetings foreseen within AdriGov, i.e. the governance project managed by the Molise Region acting in its capacity as lead-partner and financed by the Cross-border Adriatic IPA Programme, which aims at drafting within each of its commissions a final declaration that would serve as a strategic document for local development and should be brought to the attention of the European institutions involved in the process of recognition of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion.

The debate focussed on the evolution of European norms in the field of the maritime strategy and specifically highlighted the potential of the Blue Growth, which is to be intended as **an initiative to enhance the untapped potential of oceans, seas and coastlines in terms of growth and employment, while protecting biodiversity and the marine environment at the same time.**

The participation in the event by Vice-President Rodolfo Giampieri and Secretary-General Michele De Vita allowed to provide the specific contribution of the AIC Forum Workgroup for Tourism, which will be detailed

in an annex to the Declaration of the theme-specific Commission for the environment. Their proposal consists in reference to the Adrion logo, which has already been recognized by the European Commission in its Communication of 30th November 2012, as an instrument to promote the identification of the basin, also with a view for the area to candidate to become a European Cultural Route and with the VeroTour project on Venetian trade routes, which is supported by the Council of Europe, as an example of the strong potential of the area. The contribution also highlights an explicit reference to the methodology of the European system of indicators for the measuring of performance of tourist destinations, which was officially illustrated in Brussels on 22nd February 2013, for the implementation of which the Tourism Unit of the European Commission identified the AIC Forum through its Workgroup for Tourism as the right interlocutor per the diffusion of said methodology in the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion.

PARTICIPATION AT THE "TIPICITÀ: MADE IN MARCHE FESTIVAL" (FERMO, 16th-18th MARCH 2013)

The booth of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce and the Forum, set up within the exposition area of the 2013 edition of the "Tipicità: Made in Marche Festival", held at Fermo from 16 to 18 of March, achieved resounding success with the public. The Adrion logo was promoted on this occasion, having been recognised by the European Commission (Communication COM (2012) 713, 30 November 2012) as a common trademark for the promotion of the Adriatic-Ionian area.

An award ceremony was also among the activities on the programme. It was the second edition of the International Award "L'Oro dei Due Mari", a competition of extra virgin olive oil from the Adriatic and Ionian area, promoted and organised by the International School of Sensory Analysis and Food Culture - OLEA ("Organizzazione Laboratorio Esperti e Assaggiatori"), under the patronage and with the collaboration of the AIC Forum and the Ancona Chamber of Commerce.

This initiative is included in the activities of the Forum's Workgroup on Agriculture and aims at promoting the culture, tradition, connoisseurship, commercial exchanges and quality development of extra virgin olive oil produced in the olive-growing areas of the Adriatic and Ionian seaboard, both Italian and foreign. An impressive 140 extra virgin olive oils originating from all the areas of the basin participated at this edition of the Awards. There were oils with "designation of origin", "single-varietal" oils and "biological" oils. The 115 oils produced in the Italian Adriatic and Ionian Regions competed against the 25 produced in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece and Slovenia.

The awards were presented by Ettore Franca (President of OLEA) and Giorgio Sorcinelli (Secretary of OLEA), with Antonio Ricci (Scientific Director of Olivo&Olivo at Sole 24 Ore) in the role of the moderator. Also participating were Evasio Sebastianelli of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, and Goran Radovanic, representing the Forum and the Split Chamber of Economy.

The award show was followed by an olive oil tasting, with the participation of Renzo Ceccacci, OLEA's expert taster and physician, who demonstrated the organoleptic properties and health benefits of the extra virgin olive oils that were awarded top marks, paying particular attention to the various types and production areas. The winning producers who were present at the hall took the opportunity to acquaint the interested public with their companies, while the numerous visitors appreciatively enjoyed the tasting event.

PARTICIPATION AT THE ADRIATIC SEA FORUM (TRIESTE, 21st - 22nd MARCH 2013)

Adriatic Sea Forum is the new international itinerant annual event dedicated to maritime tourism in the Adriatic (cruise, ferry and nautical tourism - sail and motorboats) created by Risposte Turismo – a research and consultant company serving tourism macroindustry, founded and lead by Francesco di Cesare – that took place **on Thursday 21st and Friday 22nd of March 2013** in Trieste at the Stazione Marittima congress centre.

Adriatic Sea Forum was develop in 6 round tables (2 plenary and 4 parallel) on different solutions for tourism and travel in the Adriatic, from cruise ships to ferries, sail and motorboats. More than 40 international speakers from Albania, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia, that discussed and strengthen, together with all the participants, their own network by gaining contacts with new operators.

A representative of AIC Forum's Workgroup on Tourism participated at the event, in particular, to the opening plenary session "Promoting the Adriatic: many places, one unique destination", in order to begin new potential collaborations and to develop activities with the aim to encourage awereness of the potential of the Adriatic Ionian basin in view of its effective candidature towards becoming a European Cultural Route with a view to achieving inclusion of this area in the official Programme of the Council of Europe, characted by Adrion brand.

13TH EDITION OF THE AIC FORUM (MEĐUGORJE , 14TH - 16TH MAY 2013)

The town of Međugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina was the venue of the 13th Edition of the AIC Forum, i.e. the annual event organized by the AIC in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The plenary session on "The Action Plan for the Adriatic and Ionian Macroregion: a joint contribution for a common project. An exchange of views between Institutional Networks and Enterprises" saw the participation of about 260 delegates, including representatives of European institutions, national bodies (Italian Ministries for Tourism and Economic Development), the Permanent Secretariat of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (All), the university network Uniadrion, professional associations, as well as representatives from the business world and international partnership networks, like Ascame, Insuleur, NecsTouR and the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion.

Also the European Commission was present with influential representatives, specifically from the Directorate-General (DG) Regional Policies and the DG Enterprise and Industry-Tourism Unit, i.e. decision-makers of the Action Plan for the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion.

The choice of the title of the AIC Forum 13th Edition stems from the fact that the Međugorje event represented the first official meeting between Adriatic and Ionian civil society forums and international networks to provide the Action Plan with a system-based overarching contribution with the aim of speaking with a joint and single voice to the authoritative representatives from the European Commission, thereby expressing the requests coming from the territories in view of a "multilevel governance", i.e. with a bottom-up approach that includes several institutions at different supranational or national decision-making levels depending on their respective mission and competence.

The decision to involve international networks also originates from the opportunity to create and reinforce a synergy, which will it possible to participate in the European decision-making process thereby providing the point of view of the system of chambers of commerce as a whole on priority topics.

The event took place a few months from the official start of the operational stage concerning the definition of the Strategy: on 14th December 2012 the European Council formally provided the European Commission with the mandate to launch the Strategy that will lead to the creation of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion, thereby de facto entrusting it develop the contents of the Action Plan for the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion, which will be approved in 2014 halfway between the Greek and Italian EU Presidency. The mandate to elaborate the Action Plan was given to the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion together with the Regions and other local interlocutors, also including partnership networks like the AIC Forum.

PLENARY SESSION – 14th May 2013

Opening remarks

The works opened on 14th May with the greetings by authoritative local speakers, chaired by the President Jadranka Radovanić: the President of the Chamber of the Economy of the host country Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina Jago Lasić, the mayor of the City of Čitluk Ivo Jerkić, the President of the Council of Ministers of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina Vjekoslav Bevanda, the representative of the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Aquaculture of the County of Hercegovina Neretva Donko Jović. Furthermore, the contributions by Ambassador Raimondo De Cardona, Italian ambassador in Sarajevo, and by the President of Unioncamere Ferruccio Dardanella, who officially announced his decision to join the AIC Forum as a new member on the occasion of the 13th edition of the Forum.

The membership of Unioncamere undoubtedly reinforces the activity of the AIC Forum and allows the entire Italian system of chambers of commerce to carry on with momentum and determination their work towards the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion, which will bring benefits to all the territories in the area.

The initial greetings were then followed by the plenary session, which outlined a thorough and complete reference framework of guidance for future actions, thereby focusing on key reference sectors. Contributions were made by ambassador Ivan Orlić, Senior Official of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative representing the host country; Tiziana Vecchio from the Italian Ministry of Economic Development, who provided an updated economic and statistical overview of the situation in her presentation that is useful to promote future SME investments in the area; Flavia Maria Coccia from the Italian Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Tourism, who focussed the possibility of a future branding policy shared among the ministries of the AIC countries, thereby starting from the experience of AIC Forum Adrion as a useful reference logo for the identification of the area as a single tourist destination at a European and international level.

A key contribution was offered by Giannantonio Ballette from the DG Regio of the European Commission. In his speech he provided participants with anticipations, insights and useful indications, thereby allowing the AIC Forum to focus on strategic sectors like tourism, infrastructures, the blue economy and the environment, as well as on cross-cutting issues, like research, innovation and capacity building to successfully manage the complex process of creation of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion.

Focus Group

A significant contribution was offered by the Focus Group chaired by the AIC Forum Secretary-General Michele De Vita, which actively involved the various forums, the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, international networks and the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion.

The Focus Group saw the participation of the AIC Forum Vicepresident Rodolfo Giampieri, the representative of Uniadriion Prof. Fausto Pugnaloni, the representative of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative Marco Bellardi, the Secretary-General of the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion Francesco Cocco, as well as representatives of the Ascame (Juan José Rios Megino), Insuleur (Juan Gual de Torrella Guasp) and NecstouR (Teresa Caldarola) networks.

Workgroups – 15th May 2013

The second day of the AIC Forum was entirely devoted to the theme-specific workgroups. The presence of key speakers enabled each workgroup to guide and discuss in detail specific topics of priority interest.

The **Workgroup on Agriculture** dealt with ambitious and tangible objectives and saw the participation of Prof. Rodolfo Santilocchi from the Department of agricultural, nutritional and environmental sciences of the Polytechnic University "Università Politecnica delle Marche" as keynote speaker. The best practice represented by the international extra-virgin olive oil competition "Oro dei due Mari", i.e. the gold of the two seas, which was organized and promoted by Olea, will make it possible to start training courses on various typical products of the Adriatic-Ionian area in order to train professional tasters who will be recognized at a European level.

The joint meeting between the **Workgroup on Fisheries/Aquaculture and the Workgroup on the Environment** saw the participation of two keynote speakers: Jakov Dulčić from the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries IZOR (Croatia), for the Workgroup on Fisheries/Aquaculture, and Gerhard Lempl, Councillor for transports and tourism of the Primorsko-goranska County in Croatia, for the Workgroup on the Environment. The debate was stimulated by the contributions of several experts and made it possible to focus on an extremely up-to-date topic, i.e. the sustainable management of natural coastal resources, thereby fully respecting traditions, the ecology and the most recent legislation. The joint objective of two workgroups was to identify a common definition for coastal fisheries and promote research activities through ad-hoc commissions and specific committees, as well as to carry out monitoring work of the fishing activity through the collection of statistical data.

The **Workgroup on Women's Entrepreneurship** was attended by a large number of people, including outstanding influential women, like the keynote speaker and Commissioner of the Ancona Province Patrizia Casagrande Esposto, the Deputy Secretary-General of Unioncamere Tiziana Pompei, as well as numerous businesswomen who actively dealt with the presentation of best practices and the ways to reinforce the economy of the area. The aim was to promote the development of women's entrepreneurial policy in countries, in which no appropriate strategy has yet been developed, thereby taking into account the fact that that this could be a priority topic within the framework of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion.

Within the framework of the Workgroup on women's entrepreneurship, on the occasion of the gala evening President Radovanić made a special mention to all the women, who have shown their engagement for the promotion of female entrepreneurship in the area.

During the **Workgroup on Transports** a significant contribution was pronounced by Ida Simonella from ISTAO. In her presentation on the future of the main maritime sectors of Adriatic and Ionian ports she provided the audience with several useful insights to stimulate a fruitful debate and set the objectives that the workgroup intends to achieve during the year: the ability to share strategic choices for port development within a broader context than the mere local one, so as to strengthen the Adriatic offer vis-à-vis major international shipping agents and the identification of solutions, if necessary also regulatory ones, to promote the development of intermodal transport.

The **Workgroup on Tourism** focused on "The Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion as a single tourist destination". This extremely topical topic generated strong interest following the mention of the Adrion logo in the European Commission Communication no. 713 of 30th November 2012 "A Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas", which acknowledged the Adrion label as the identification logo for the area at European level and thus recognized the work carried out by the AIC Forum in recent years. The aim of the Workgroup on tourism is to have the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion recognized as a single tourist destination on international markets. The single branding policy promoted by the workgroup to candidate the area as a European cultural route recognized by the Council of Europe, which has managed a specific related programme since 1987, pursues exactly this goal. Within this context, the project under the name "VeroTour - Venetian Routes: Enhancing a shared European multi-cultural sustainable tourism" on Venetian trade routes, which is coordinated by the Veneto Region and has the AIC Forum as one of its partners, was approved by the European Commission and appears to have strong potential.

This objective was shared with the tour operators, entrepreneurs and international organizations involved in the workgroup, who agreed on the need to elaborate and identify specific quality objectives, with the aim of reviewing the parameters of the current specifications to re-launch the competitiveness of the area in line with the European quality tourism label policy proposed by the European Commission and which will be adopted as a community regulation by the end of 2013.

The workgroup started from the successful experience of the "Ospitalità Italiana" label by Isnart, which has been promoted by the Italian system of chambers of commerce. Its intention is to promote a quality certification for accommodation facilities through tangible promotional and marketing actions, thereby becoming a privileged showcase to promote foreign customers tourist packages and ad hoc itineraries in the Adriatic-Ionian area.

Keynote speaker of the workgroup was Cinzia de Marzo from the Tourism Unit of the European Commission and Alberto D'Alessandro from the Council of Europe, who focused on possible lines of actions that can contribute to the Action Plan of the Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion and consider cultural tourism as an opportunity of development and cohesion of the Macroregion. The two keynote speakers

legitimated the work done so far and the need to continue developing activities, which refer to the area as a single reference tourist destination.

The workgroup also focused on priority topics, like the Italian national policy for the promotion and growth of enterprises active in the Balkans (Ministry for Economic Development, Unioncamere and Unioncamere Emilia Romagna), the international competitiveness of the Adriatic-Ionian basin (Ministry for Cultural Affairs and Tourism, Assonautica, Isnart, Risposte Turismo srl), business opportunities for tour operators working in the Adriatic-Ionian area (Globe Inside, Amatori Tour Operator) and collaborations with institutional networks (Insuleur, Ascame, NecstouR and Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion).

The third day of the AIC Forum saw the meetings of the **Workgroup on EU Project Management** and the International Court of the Adriatic and Ionian Area, as well as the meetings of the AIC Forum organs.

The meeting of the Workgroup on EU Project Management saw the participation of 19 participants representing all AIC Forum countries, as well as a representative of Insuleur, one of Necstour and one of the Italian-Bosnian Chamber of Commerce.

The workgroup specifically dealt with on-going projects, which see the direct participation of the AIC Forum, and with new calls for proposals for

A number of issues emerged, that workgroup participants committed themselves to work on in the following ones. The most important ones include the following:

request for a stronger collaboration of all member chambers of commerce to support the AIC Forum secretariat and the Ancona Chamber of Commerce in implementing various projects already financed;

the need to recover and propose again projects already presented in the past, but which had not been financed, e.g. the ADRION project (IPA CBC - II Call for proposal for ordinary project);

improved communication between the members of the Workgroup on EU Project Management before, during and after the presentation of individual projects in order to optimize and share ideas in view of new candidate projects, as well as improved efforts for programming and developing the activities of already financed projects;

evaluation of new proposals of the workgroup in view of a constant collaboration, which is not fragmentary or in any case limited to the individual annual editions of the AIC Forum.

The International Court for the Adriatic and Ionian Area, which the AIC Forum organ entrusted with the mediation and arbitration proceedings, decided to open up towards new prospects to increasingly support cross-borders business players.

The objective to pursue in future months is for the court to become a round table for consultations and the exchange of experiences on the issue of Alternative Dispute Resolution, i.e. a setting for the sharing of best practices, a privileged context to carry out research and study activities in the field of arbitration and mediation, a centre to create synergies able to produce project proposals at a community and international levels and set up special partnerships on issues related to international forms of alternative justice to participate in calls for tenders/projects.

This is necessary, so as to have a reference point able to provide tangible answers to the needs of Adriatic and Ionian business players and above all to reassure those wishing to establish trade relations with players on the other shore of the Adriatic. For all the above mentioned reasons, the International Court for the Adriatic and Ionian Area will be further promoted through the diffusion of regulations and clauses and the search for arrangements and bilateral agreements, so that this collaboration leads to a real synergy able to provide local businesspeople with actual support.

Signature of the Declaration of Intentions – 16th May 2013

The 13th edition of the AIC Forum ended with the signature of the “Declaration of intentions for the Integrated Adriatic-Ionian Secretariat”, comprising the Permanent Secretariat of the Adriatic of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative and the three forums, which was approved by the AIC Forum Board of Governors by unanimous vote.

The aim of the Declaration is to reinforce cooperation between the civil society, represented by the forums, and the All Permanent Secretariat, so as to bring the All voice and experience in all institutional settings, starting from European institutions and the governments of the AIC countries.

This cooperation was furthermore positively accepted in Brussels on 27th May 2013 on the occasion of the 15th Adriatic-Ionian Council. This is the annual gathering of all ministers for foreign affairs of the eight countries member to the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (All), who confirmed the strong commitment of the eight All governments to the approval of the European Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion.

This important recognition is the first tangible result of the engagement and common efforts by all member chambers of the “Declaration of intentions for the Integrated Adriatic-Ionian Secretariat”, which was also mentioned by the Italian Deputy-Minister for Foreign Affairs Marta Dassù in Brussels, who confirmed the full support to the process of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion by the Italian Government.

Such an explicit and solemn recognition confers the AIC with new responsibilities, especially in a moment like the current one when civil societies and all other players involved in the macroregional process are asked to prove their project management and propositional capacities in offering useful contributions, so that the future Action Plan fully meets the expectations and needs expressed by Adriatic-Ionian territories, which can from now on have a say in Europe through the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area.

Rodolfo Giampieri was elected as the new President of the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area during the meeting of the AIC Forum members. He illustrated the five points on the agenda of his presidential mandate: promoting the economic recovery of the Macroregion through the development of priority assets, which will be identified by the Action Plan; reinforcing the relations between the chambers of commerce of cross-border countries; promoting SME internationalization; favouring the exchange of views and experiences between different chambers of commerce and extending the involvement of more chambers and their number as members of the AIC Forum; ensuring the coordination of activities planned by and with other forums (Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns, Uniadriion network of universities) in order to guarantee continuity and uniformity of action, though respecting the autonomy of each member chamber.

The office of Vicepresident of the AIC Forum went to the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro Velimir Mijušković. In view of Croatia joining the European Union on 1st July 2013, the outgoing President Jadranka Radovanić expressed her wish to assign the Vice-Presidency of the AIC Forum to a country, which is not yet a member of the EU. The meeting of the AIC Forum member chambers unanimously voted in favour of President Mijušković, who expressed his intention to reinforce the collaboration with the Ancona Chamber of Commerce and all other chambers of commerce member to the AIC Forum.

Ordinary Assembly

In the end, Rodolfo Giampieri was elected as the new President of the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area during the meeting of the AIC Forum members. He illustrated the five points on the agenda of his presidential mandate: promoting the economic recovery of the Macroregion through the development of priority assets, which will be identified by the Action Plan; reinforcing the relations between the chambers of commerce of cross-border countries; promoting SME internationalization; favouring the exchange of views and experiences between different chambers of commerce and extending the involvement of more chambers and their number as members of the AIC Forum; ensuring the coordination of activities planned by and with other forums (Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns, Uniadriion network of universities) in order to guarantee continuity and uniformity of action, though respecting the autonomy of each member chamber.

PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETING OF EUROCHAMBRES CORRESPONDENT MEMBERS (ANKARA, TURKEY, 6th SEPTEMBER 2013)

The meeting of the Affiliated and Correspondent members Committee of EUROCHAMBRES took place on Friday, 6th 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 Hisarcıkıoğlu 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 Vantuyghem.

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 16th and 17th 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.

COUNTRY EVENT “CROATIA: WELCOME TO EUROPE” (ANCONA, 20 SETTEMBRE 2013)

Country Presentation Day dedicated to the 28th Member State of the European Union.

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.

PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROCHAMBRES PLENARY ASSEMBLY (ISTANBUL, TURKEY 17th 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 16th 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 17th October, when the 114th 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.

AIC FORUM COMMITMENT IN THE CONSULTATIONS TO ELABORATE THE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN OF THE FUTURE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN MACROREGION

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; or the consultation specific for pillar 1 that can be accessed from the following website: <http://forms.interact-eu.net/eusair-online-consultation-pillar-1>, 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.

PARTICIPATION IN THE ROUND TABLE FOR SMES OF THE ADRIATIC-IONIAN INITIATIVE (TIRANA, 7th NOVEMBER 2013)

On 7th November last Tirana hosted the works of a roundtable under the title "Promoting innovation for sustainable growth", which was organized by the Albanian Ministry for the Economy, Trade and Energy within the framework of the All Albanian Presidency in the 2013-2014 two-year period.

The meeting was chaired by the Vice-Minister for Economic development, Trade and Enterprises Bashkim Sykja, who officially opened the works by stating that the round-table confirmed once again the political commitment of governments in favour of the initiative to promote progress in the fields of economic cooperation and improve the social and economic development of the area.

The AIC Forum was asked to participate and was represented by the Marche Section of the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce Unioncamere.

Several topics were dealt with during the meeting, ranging from **innovation** to aquaculture, the role of clusters, up to business and entrepreneurial training.

The most significant conclusions emerged from the meeting included the need to reinforce the network of Chambers of Commerce in the area to support SMEs for the development of their products and most innovative services, as well as the need for technological financing and actions for the diffusion of best practices in the region.

The meeting ended with the decision to draw up an operational proposal summarizing the most important indications emerged from the round-table, which should be submitted to the All Secretariat for possible financial support.

MEETING OF THE ITALIAN PRESIDENTS OF THE AIC FORUM MEMBER CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE (ANCONA, 8th SEPTEMBER 2012)

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 Commerce 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 a 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 Vitolo 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.

8th CONGRESS OF WOMEN'S ENTERPRISES OF THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN AREA (DUBROVNIK, 24TH-25TH 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 Giampieri 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 Krneta (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.

"MIRABILIA: EUROPEAN NETWORK OF UNESCO SITES" (MATERA, 25TH NOVEMBER 2013)

The AIC Forum President participated in "Mirabilia", i.e. the international symposium on cultural tourism and B2B, which took place from 25th to 27th November 2013 in Matera within the framework of the plenary session specifically dedicated to tourism where he illustrated the best practice of the Adrion logo.

Through the action of chambers of commerce, the Mirabilia project strengthens the promotion of itineraries linked to UNESCO sites. The event was a valuable occasion for institutions and tourist operators to exchange views and ideas and offered the representatives of European institutions the chance to give their contribution to highlight the importance to promote transnational cultural tourism as a lever to generate economic repercussions and effects at a local level.

WORKSHOP "THE CROSS-BORDER TOURISM IN THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN MACROREGION" (ANCONA, 9th DECEMBER 2013)

On 9th December last, the Ancona Chamber of Commerce was the venue for a Workshop on cross-border tourism in the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion. This initiative aimed at promoting and enhancing sample projects and virtuous experiences in the field of sustainable cultural, social and economic development within the framework of the future Macroregion.

The seminar was organized by Biennale Habitat 2012, i.e. an international initiative on the sustainable development of the Adriatic-Ionian area, in collaboration with the AIC Forum and the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, and saw the participation of representatives from the Marche Region, the Adriatic Protected Coastal Areas Network ADRIAPAN, the Conero Natural Park, FEDERPARCHI Marche, the Brindisi Chamber of Commerce and Assonautica.

The seminar ended with the signature of the "Declaration of interest" by participating associations with the aim of identifying an action plan and joint project activity to support the development of ADRION, i.e. the umbrella label that symbolizes the union of the Adriatic-Ionian macro-area and is owned by the AIC Forum.

ACTIVITIES PROJECT MADE IN 2013

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

PROJECT "FRUIT AND VEGETABLES SECTOR"

(Italian Law 84/2001)

"Institutional Building" in the fruit and vegetables sector Split - Dubrovnik - Osijek (Croatia), 21st -25th January 2013

Institutional Building dedicated to the legislative regulation of the fruit and vegetables sector, in accordance with the organisational model most suitable for the type of manufacturers and traceability at the European level, was held in Croatia.

Several Croatian public and private organisations competent in the fruit and vegetables sector were involved in a training activity that took place in three different areas of Croatia, more specifically in the cities of Split, Dubrovnik and Osijek.

The AIC Forum was involved in the overall initiative as a project partner and coordinator of the activities to be performed in Croatia in collaboration with the Split Chamber of Economy, the latter also being an official partner in the project, and the Dubrovnik Chamber of Economy (in the role of implementing body).

The event was an important exchange of good administrative practices and organisational models, and it featured the participation of Italian experts from the sector due to the involvement of the Abruzzo Foreign Trade Centre (also a project partner). Presiding over the training event, in their role as lecturers, were two Italian representatives from the entrepreneurial (Mr. Piero Galasso, President of the SMA (Abruzzo Merchants' Association) - Agricultural and Food Centre "La Valle della Pescara") and academic (Mr. Michele Dall'Olio, expert in fruit and vegetables production and supply chain) aspect of the sector.

"Study Tour", Pescara, 18th –19th February 2013

A Study Tour for Croatian representatives of wholesale markets and entrepreneurs/traders operating in the fruit and vegetables marketing sector was held in Pescara. The Study Tour was organised in accordance with a methodology that enables the participants to take full advantage of the opportunities of the instrument, allowing it to become a good source of revenue. By visiting various types of retail outlets (no-frills, mid-range, high-end) and the Agricultural and Food Centre "La Valle della Pescara", the Croatian delegation was given a first-hand look into the Italian commercial and distributional enterprise. Furthermore, a series of meetings with representatives from the production and distribution sector of the Abruzzo and Emilia-Romagna Regions were held (the latter being present owing to the collaboration of the project partners - the Forlì-Cesena Chamber of Commerce and Unioncamere Emilia-Romagna), prompting numerous opportunities for possible future collaborations between the operators from the two Adriatic seaboard.

The event was also made possible due to the organisational efforts of the AIC Forum, in its role as project partner, which had requested and obtained the collaboration of the Split and Dubrovnik Chambers of Economy.

Final meeting of Project, Split, 13th May 2013

On 13th May 2013 Split hosted the final event of the "Project for the development of the fruit and vegetable sector in Croatia", which was financed by the Italian Ministry for Economic Development (MISE) with resources from Law no. 84/2001, i.e. the so-called "Law on the Balkans". The event marked the end of a year of works, which brought about major results that have been largely appreciated at different levels of the Croatian fruit and vegetable sector. The Fruit and Vegetable sector project foresaw Focus Groups, Institution Building Activities, Study Tours in Italy and training sessions in Croatia and involved tens of producers, entrepreneurs and representatives of the large fruit and vegetable distribution sector coming from three different counties of the country, touching upon the towns of Split, Dubrovnik and Osijek. The event saw the participation of Unioncamere, acting as project lead partner, together with Mondimpresa, the AIC Forum, the Service Centre for Foreign activities of the Abruzzo Region CER (Centro Estero Abruzzo) and the Chamber of the Economy of the County of Split, thereby involving institutional business players of the sector from Croatia. In the afternoon of 13th May 2013 the last training session of the project took place, which was addressed to producers from the counties of Split and Dubrovnik and followed the training activity of 15th April in Osijek. The project is undoubtedly a first and important collaboration between the Italian office of Unioncamere and the AIC Forum, which gives reason for hope also for the future in view of further possible actions of international cooperation that should be launched with the support of the Italian Ministry for Economic Development

PROJECT "MEDDIET – MEDITERRANEAN DIET AND ENHANCEMENT OF TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS"**(MED ENPI CBC PROGRAMME)***Kick-off meeting of the MedDieT Project, Rome, 23rd May 2013*

On 23rd May 2013 Rome hosted the kick-off meeting of the MedDiet project – "*Mediterranean Diet and enhancement of traditional foodstuff*".

This is the first case of effective and tangible cooperation on a specific project, which was co-financed by the European Union and involves the AIC Forum (as partner) and Unioncamere (as lead partner) together: it should be furthermore pointed out that this collaboration takes place in a moment, in which the national union of chambers of commerce has recently joined the AIC Forum as an ordinary member.

This is also the first case of collaboration around a specific project, co-financed by the European Union and involving the AIC Forum and the Network of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce (ASCAME), with which an agreement protocol was already in place, having been signed in 2008 with the specific purpose of reinforcing collaboration on specific projects.

This last collaboration originated thanks to the national contact point for the Italian system of chambers of commerce, i.e. the Chamber of Commerce of Cagliari, which started a coordination activity between the chambers of commerce members to ASCAME together with the national office of Unioncamere in 2010 through a series of meetings, which saw the participation of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, also in the name and on behalf of the AIC Forum (e.g. I Meeting of Italian Chambers of Commerce member to ASCAME of 3rd May 2010 in Cagliari; II Meeting of Italian Chambers of Commerce member to ASCAME of 2nd-3rd May 2011, again held in Cagliari).

The 2011 meeting also saw the participation of the Managing Authority of the ENPI CBC MED European Programme, who illustrated the major features of this programme.

This exchange of views and ideas between the two networks actually led to the establishment of a partnership and the elaboration of the MEDDIET project, which was then actually successfully presented by Unioncamere.

The 30-month long project starting on 1st January 2013 sees the participation of the AIC Forum as project partner (i.e. "adjoining region") specifically committed to and in close coordination with the ASCAME network in the organization of a series of events, specifically one international event in the Adriatic-Ionian area of competence, which, as the title of the project suggests, aim at the dissemination and capitalization of the main project activities, which are targeted to the awareness-raising and diffusion of the Mediterranean diet in the entire Mediterranean basin, hence also in the Adriatic. Within this project activity, the AIC Forum will be involved in the attempt to favour the creation of info points at the chambers of commerce of the Adriatic-Ionian area for the diffusion and dissemination of the importance of the Mediterranean diet.

In the next few months the AIC Forum will raise the awareness of its member chambers on the initiative in view of a far-reaching and tangible involvement of the same to promote the diffusion of the Mediterranean diet as a healthy and important lifestyle that should be diffused and made known throughout Europe.

PROJECT: "INNOVATIVE SKILLS AND COMPETENCES FOR ENTREPRENEURS IN ORDER TO PROMOTE A NEW SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN AREA"

(All Regional Cooperation Programme 2012 of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative")

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 ADRION 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.

VeRoTour PROJECT

(DG ENTERPRISES AND INDUSTRY)

Greenlight to the VeRoTour Project, Venice, 13th-14th June 2013

On 13th and 14th June 2013 Venice was the venue of the official kick-off meeting of *VeRoTour - Venetian Routes: Enhancing a shared European multi-cultural sustainable tourism*, i.e. the project presented by the Veneto Region and co-financed by the European Union within the framework of the call for projects on transnational theme-specific tourist products.

The project aims to create a permanent networking between public and private players to identify and promote a European cultural route on the topic of "Venetian commercial routes".

The AIC Forum will be specifically involved in the development of a branding policy, in line with European directives on cultural routes, aimed at enhancing the cooperation capacities of SMEs in order to achieve the common objective of identifying the Venetian legacy in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

The activities to carry out are part of the commitments that the Workgroup on Tourism undertook to take on during the 13th edition of the AIC Forum, which has recently taken place in Međugorje.

VeRoTour is one of the tangible initiatives that the AIC Forum will specifically focus on to increase the visibility of the Adriatic-Ionian Area vis-à-vis European and international tourists with the ambitious objective to identify the future Macroregion with the Adrion logo, which received prestigious recognition after being mentioned in the European Commission Communication no. 713 of 30th November 2012 "*A Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas*".

Steering Committee, Venice 25th November 2013

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.

WELL FOOD PROJECT

(IPA CBC PROGRAMME)

Kick-off meeting, Forlì, 9th-10th-11th April 2013

On 9th-10th-11th April 2013 the town of Forlì hosted the kick-off meeting of the WELLFOOD project, which was started upon the initiative of the Province of Forlì-Cesena as lead partner and involves partners coming from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.

The kick-off meeting saw the participation of all project partners, who will be called upon to strengthen innovation in the agricultural and food sector in the Adriatic area in the next two years, thereby stimulating the relation between enterprises, innovation centres and consumers. Serving as associate partner to the project, the AIC Forum ensures large visibility of its activities among its member chambers and actively participates in project meetings.

Steering Committee, Corfu 17th 18th October 2013

Within the **project**, 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.

PROJECT ADRIATIC ECONOMIC CLUSTER CLUB

(IPA CBC PROGRAMME)

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:

- b2b Meeting for entrepreneurs under the ORC World Interational Championship (Ancona, 25 giugno 2013)
- - 3° Intercluster meeting (Serbia, 23-26 September);
- - 3° Animation meeting (Mestre, 29 November).

PROJECT "TOURISM CHAIN: COOPERATION OF EMILIA-ROMAGNA AND MARCHE REGIONS WITH ALBANIA, CROATIA AND MONTENEGRO"

(ITALIAN LAW 84/2001)

Forum participates at Place2go, Zagreb 14th-17th March 2013

From 15 to 17 March, the Special Agency of the Modena Chamber of Commerce, the Serramazzone Hospitality School and the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce represented the Emilia-Romagna and Marche regions at the international tourism fair Place2Go in Zagreb, which was held for the second time. The event was the last stage of the project "Tourism chain: cooperation of Emilia-Romagna and Marche regions with Albania, Croatia and Montenegro", supported by the Ministry of Economic Development, promoted by Unioncamere Nazionale and coordinated by PROMEC - the Special Agency of the Modena Chamber of Commerce, with the aim of strengthening the cooperation between Italy and the Western Balkans in the tourism sector. The project was presented at a press conference with the participation of the fair Director, Mrs. Damjana Domanovac, Mrs. Roberta Ferri of the Italian Ministry of Economic Development, Mrs. Maily Anna Maria Nguyen of the Association of the Emilia-Romagna Chambers of Commerce, Mr. Andrea Xhavara of the Durazzo Chamber of Commerce, and Mrs. Sanda Filipović of the Croatian Chamber of Economy - Rijeka County Chamber.

After the press conference, the media representatives and the participants had the opportunity to taste autochthonous gastronomy products of the Emilia-Romagna and Marche Regions, prepared by the excellent chefs of the Serramazzone Hospitality School.

In addition to the exchange of professional experiences, the start of new collaborations and the implementation of territorial promotion, the event was also an excellent opportunity for bilateral meetings to take place between companies, tourism operators, cultural organisations and local entities, both Italian and of all the other countries participating at the event.