



improvement of training to enhance the quality of services and products in the tourist sector; 4. cooperation in the EU project management activity with the goal of benefiting from community and international financial resources.

Participation in the Seminar on the Adriatic Macro-Region (Ancona, 27th October 2010):

The seminar, which was organised by the Marche Regional authorities in collaboration with ALDE-Committee of the Regions, saw the active participation as rapporteur of both the President and the Secretary of the AIC Forum Workgroup on Tourism.

The initiative marked the official request for recognition of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative. This will be a long and complex process, which is likely to end by 2014 with the creation of the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region. Within this context, networks like the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, represent fundamental and privileged interlocutors for the implementation of sector-specific programmes and community policies through forms of active and qualified partnership, which can tangibly implement projects of local cooperation and especially of crossborder cooperation.

Theme 2 – The new EU project management:

In the second half of 2011 the 2nd Call of the IPA tender notice is expected to be published, within which the AIC Forum Workgroup on Tourism will try and identify a new project proposal to promote the “Adrion” logo. The partnership within this project proposal is expected to reinforce the results obtained with the AdrionTouR project managed by the AIC Forum Workgroup on Tourism in collaboration with the Ancona Chamber of Commerce, which acted as the lead partner of the initiative.

A project proposal put forward by Promec, i.e. the Special Agency of the Modena Chamber of Commerce, within the framework of law no. 84/01, is currently being evacuated. It goes under the title: “The tourist supply chain: Cooperation between the Emilia-Romagna and Marche regions with Albania, Croatia and Montenegro”.

The Workgroup on Tourism is currently working on a project proposal, which is likely to be put forward within the bilateral community IPA programme for 2007/2013 dedicated to Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro and expiring on 1st July 2011. The proposal, which has been identified in partnership with INCE, is the first tangible application of the agreement protocol signed between the AIC Forum and INCE on the occasion of the AIC Forum 11th edition (11th May 2011). Furthermore, the AdrionTouR project, which ended on 28th February 2011 after the educational tour, as shown in the following point on theme 3, is currently in the reporting stage.

Theme 3 – Launch of the Adriatic-Ionian area on reference international tourist circuits

Educational Tour (22nd-28th February 2011):

Following the initiative of the AIC Forum workgroup on tourism and thanks to the co-financing of the Marche Region, from 22nd to 27th February 2011 an Educational Tour in Eastern Adriatic countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Montenegro) was organised. The aim of the initiative was to experiment an integrated tourist package under the ADRION label with journalists of international trade magazines, identified thanks to the collaboration of the Frankfurt and Brussels office of the Italian Tourist Board ENIT. Some local tour operators provided for the organization of the educational tour. They had been previously trained within the framework of the same project thanks to the coordination of the Amatori Group tour operator from Ancona. The event saw the participation of experts in the field, specifically representatives of the Reizen & Vakantie and Femmes d’Aujourd’hui magazines and Tuscany representing the Necstour network. The involvement of these experts has enabled to promote the Adrion logo in international circuits through dissemination in the specialized press, as well as in Necstour, i.e. the most important European network that is also accredited before the European Commission.



Theme 4 – Collaboration with other European networks: Necstour, Ascame and Ince

NECSTOUR (Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism)

✓ 2010 Euromeeting (Florence 9th-10th December 2010)

The AIC Forum for Tourism participated in the annual edition of Euromeeting under the title: “Regional Policies for sustainable and competitive European Tourism”. The event provided the framework for an operational meeting of the Necstour network that saw the participation for the first time of the Workgroup on Tourism following the decision of the AIC Forum to join the network as an associate member. This meeting made it possible to focus on the programme of the Council of Europe Cultural Routes and played a decisive role to direct the work of the Workgroup on Tourism towards more far-reaching European activities.

✓ Contribution to the European Commission Action Plan

On 19th January 2011 the Workgroup on Tourism provided its contribution to Action 17 of the European Commission Communication no. 352 of 30th June 2010 by answering to the Action Plan proposal identified by the Necstour network and shared among its associate members. The Action (“Establishing or reinforcing cooperation between the EU, major emerging countries and Mediterranean countries for the promotion of models of sustainable and responsible tourism and the exchange of best practices”) can be implemented through the fruitful collaboration with the Ascame network, as mentioned in the following point of this theme.

✓ Participation of a Necstour reference person in the educational tour (22nd-27th February 2011)

Participating in the Tuscan Region educational tour in representation of the Necstour network enabled the AIC Forum Workgroup on Tourism to present the Adriatic-Ionian area as a single reference tourist destination to the European network.

✓ General Meeting of the Necstour network (Brussels, 7th-8th April 2011)

Following the participation of the Tuscany Region reference person in the educational tour, during the Necstour General Meeting the same reference person illustrated possible collaboration proposals between the Necstour network and the AIC Forum Workgroup on Tourism.

ASCAME Network (Associations of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry)

✓ Participation in the meeting of the Italian antenna centre of Ascame (Cagliari, 2nd-3rd May 2011)

During the meeting, the ASCAME network highlighted the need to strengthen its role of coordination of project proposals put forward by the various member chambers, as well as its direct involvement in European projects as partner or lead partner. The session dedicated to the AIC Forum was the occasion to highlight the willingness of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce to establish closer synergies with the Cagliari Chamber of Commerce with the aim of better rationalising initiatives and enhancing the chambers’ reciprocal experiences. Appreciation and consensus were furthermore expressed with reference to the idea that ASCAME and the AIC Forum share a project on tourism, which should on the one hand enhance the experience matured in the Adriatic with the ADRION brand and extend it to the Mediterranean setting, and, on the other hand, enable ASCAME to capitalise the final outcomes of this potential project in the Adriatic-Ionian Area through the AIC Forum.



✓ **European Commission Action Plan – Communication no. 352 of 30th June 2010**

The contribution to Action 17 of the Communication can provide for enhanced openness towards the Mediterranean. In this context, the Malaga and Ancona chambers of commerce, which head the ASCAME Tourism Committee and the AIC Forum Workgroup on Tourism respectively, can carry out actions of common interest, thereby enhancing their reciprocal experiences and competences in the field of tourism.

INCE (Central European Initiative)

✓ **Agreement protocol with INCE (Budva, 11th May 2011)**

Following the participation of an institutional delegation of the Ancona Chamber of Commerce in the event under the title “Financial facilities for SMEs:

training and capacity building for business support organisations in non-EU Member States of the Central European Initiative”, an agreement protocol was officially signed between the AIC Forum and INCE.

The agreement protocol focuses on themes of common interest, specifically tourism.

With a traditional predisposition for the Danube area, the relationship with INCE also enables to liaise with the AII network, with the Adriatic-Ionian dimension of both INCE and the AII offering future possibilities of contacts and collaboration with the Mediterranean area.

Conclusions

On the basis of the activities implemented and illustrated during the meeting, as well as of the considerations and valuable hints emerged from the numerous and qualified speakers at the Workgroup on Tourism, the following conclusions can be drawn.

The Workgroup on Tourism

- in a framework, within which the Adriatic Macroregion will enable to create an innovative political, institutional and economic context free from overlapped roles and functions, will serve as a tool for the European Union to facilitate more far-reaching processes, like the ones regarding candidate and potential candidate countries or the processes concerning the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion. The natural setting to analyse these processes will be the Round Table on Tourism of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, with which the AIC Forum Workgroup on Tourism intends to continue an ever closer collaboration as its operational arm for economic issues;
- agrees on the need to reinforce and spread the Adrion brand with the aim of making the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion clear and visible in the eyes of international tourists, especially non-European ones, and facilitating the identification of a tourist product characterized by a common historical and cultural identity;
- intends to jointly promote and capitalise on the territorial wealth and diversity of the area following theme-specific approaches and integrated multi-country packages, starting from sea and coastal tourism as a catalyst for economic development;
- intends to support the identification of European destinations of excellence of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion and thus of official and prestigious recognitions for the tourist resorts of the current and future EU Member States;
- will continue its activity of institutional assistance to tour operators and organizations willing to identify some tourist pathways, which can be referred to “Adrion” for their tourist and theme-related vocation. Future project actions will specifically focus on the promotion of already existing packages, with the aim of avoiding to waste the heritage set up during these years, like the integrated multicountry tourist packages marked with the Adrion logo;



- supports and favours a sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourist offer (sustainable management of tourist destinations, joint adoption of a seal for high-quality welcome, spreading of the Ecolabel environmental quality label and the Emas community system) on the one hand through the adoption of the sustainable tourism principles adopted by UNWTO (United Nation World Tourism Organization), on the other hand by transferring the know-how acquired by the Italian system of chambers of commerce in collaboration with Isnart. In particular, the experience made with “Ospitalità Italiana” quality seal can be transferred to cross-border countries to favour the adoption of common standards and develop a culture based on high-quality welcome in hotels and other accommodation facilities;
- pursues the objective of applying the methodology of the Council of Europe cultural routes (point 5.1 of Communication no. 352 of 30th June 2010) under decision of the Council of Ministers no. 52/2010 both to identify a new cultural route and include the Adriatic basin among already existing cultural routes. The goal is to have the Adriatic area included in the official programme of the Council of Europe Cultural Routes and identify it with the Adrion logo, owned by the AIC Forum since 2008;
- pursues the objective of applying the Necstour network methodology to reinforce regional tourist strategic policies (e.g. master plan of Tuscany for the development of Via Francigena) also through the participation in the “Cultural Routes” task force established within the same network. These synergies are expected to promote the use of sustainability and competitiveness indicators applied to pilot routes, which should be identified and enhanced within the same projects;
- given the partnership agreement signed between the AIC Forum and the Central European Initiative (InCE) on 11th May 2011, the Workgroup on Tourism agrees on the need to tangibly enforce said agreement by means of a “project-oriented” cooperation in the field of sustainable tourism and related activities for SMEs. Within this programme, it was decided to draft common project proposals based on the promotion of the Adrion logo and the tourist routes it identifies, also with aim of transfer ring best practices to other Central and South-Eastern European countries member to InCE;
- besides applying the agreement protocol signed between Ascame and the AIC Forum on 12th November 2008, the Workgroup on Tourism agrees on the need to be opened towards the Mediterranean, as indicated in the European Commission Communication of 30th June 2010. Within this framework, the AIC Forum and Ascame, acting through the Ancona and Malaga chambers of commerce respectively, which are both very active in the field of tourism, will be able to implement projects of common interest by promoting their reciprocal experiences and competences for the development of a “European high-quality tourism label”. Isnart, which is a member of the Necstour network, is the reference organization for the organization of such a label for the purposes of the implementation of action 13 of Communication no. 352 of the European Commission;

Finally, the AIC Forum Workgroup on Tourism wishes an increase participation of the chambers of commerce member to the Forum and of tour operators to disseminate the knowledge and use of the Adrion logo in the areas of reference and provide a tangible and active institutional and operational support to the joint attainment of the objectives that the same workgroup sets every year.