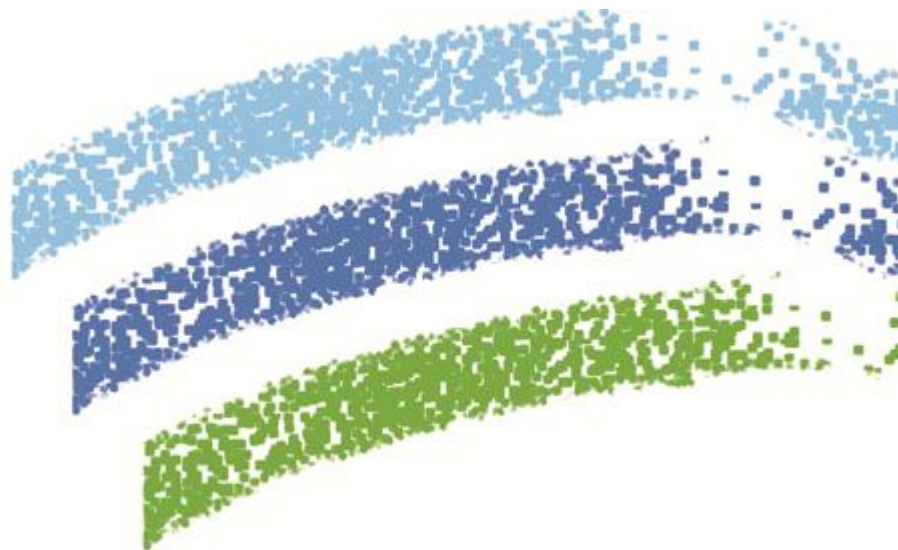




# Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion

## ANNUAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMME AND FINANCIAL PLAN FOR 2016



*Dear Colleagues*

*the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion to more than 9 years since it was founded in Pula in June 2006, has successfully contributed to achieve the objectives of promoting the coordinated and integrated development of the territories involved, as well as of responding to the priorities of the EU to support cohesion and European integration policies through the application of the principles of reciprocity, exchange and sharing of regional development priorities.*

*The Association has been strengthened over the years through the work of its institutional bodies, the exchange of best practices and administrative experiences in view of a continuous process of capacity building. A great effort has been made for the implementation of the membership of the network, which currently has 27 members, rather indeed 28 with the entrance – that has taken place today – of the Old Royal Capital Cetinje.*

*We have seen with satisfaction the entrance of Croatia into the European Union that took place on 1 July 2013, and we have looked with equal satisfaction at the adoption of the European strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR), which represents the recognition that was lacking in European context to a stable partnership already existing in the area and to a path undertaken from the bottom for the construction of cooperation and integration processes.*

*This opens up numerous opportunities for our territories in the sector of tourism, fisheries, infrastructure, transport and valorisation of all that is related to the sea. The European Commission has provided the framework of the strategy, but there are no new institutions or funds: it is therefore up to us, the countries and regions concerned to make it work. Reference resources are mainly European structural funds of the individual states, the funds for territorial cooperation and the funds of pre-accession assistance for countries outside the EU, but it is now essential to understand if and how we can support our activities with the funding of EU direct access programmes, which range from research and innovation to culture, transport, environment, such as Horizon 2020, Cosme, Creative Europe, Europe for Citizens, Connecting Europe and Life +.*

*In thanking all the members for the trust placed in me in guiding the AIE for the next two years, I also take this opportunity to thank those who preceded me in the presidency, namely the Presidents Jakovcic, Iorio and Frattura, for everything they have made in these years for the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion. Without their commitment and the firm belief in the*

*importance of the network, combined with a great capacity as political guidance of all the activities that have been made, certainly today we could not draw such a positive result of the great work done so far.*

*The intent that inspired us was to promote and foster economic growth, sustainable development and improving the quality of life of citizens in all regions of the AIE, aware that the role of public institutions is to achieve concrete and effective policies that favor these objectives.*

*I believe it is important to continue in this direction; we know that much has been done but there is still much to do and for this reason it is important to guarantee our contribution and increase our commitment. In this regard, I offer to the debate and reflection of all the members and AIE bodies the following programmatic cues that will characterize the action of this presidency for the next biennium.*

*President*

*Nikola DOBROSLAVIĆ*

## **Main Programme goals for 2016**

### **THE ADRIATIC-IONIAN MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGY**

It is a point of fundamental importance. The Strategy concerns eight Countries: four EU Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia) and four non-EU Countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia). Overall, a pool of 70 million citizens could benefit from projects for employment, economic, cultural and social growth, out of National funds, European cohesion policy funds and pre-accession instruments. The adoption of the strategy and the creation of the Macro Region pose new challenges to future European projects.

For some time, in fact, they preached the need for organizational improvement in the management of structural funds by concentrating on well-specified results, the simplification of the instruments of governance and procedures, coordination between a number of proposed interventions. In the 2014-2020 programming period are the basis for a re-orientation of the overall European policy, as the new regulatory texts contain important cues to encourage the recruitment of macro-regional dimension as a new paradigm territorial reference design, suitable to ensure flexibility and efficiency to the actions of individual programs.

For this appears therefore essential to continue to follow the meetings and participate in the tables of Thematic Steering Groups (TSG) of Eusair respectively regarding the “Blue Growth” (pillar 1), “Connecting the region: transport and energy networks” (pillar 2), the “Environmental Quality” (pillar 3) and the “Sustainable Tourism” (pillar 4), and monitor the work progress of the Governing Board, which includes the members of the eight States participating in the regional strategy and the representatives of the European Commission and the European Parliament, in order to continue to provide our contribution to the implementation of the pillars.

As far as the EUSAIR, the following activities will be pursued by the Euroregion:

1. Strengthen the role of regional and local governments in the promotion and implementation of the European strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region, in line with all four EUSAIR pillars.
2. Insist, in particular, on projects for transport connections in the region:
  - North and South Europe with the Adriatic - Ionian corridor (highway Trieste - Kalamata), the inclusion of this corridor in the TEN-T corridors of the European Union
  - North and South Europe with rail corridor Ravenna – Brindisi, the inclusion of this corridor in the TEN-T corridors of the European Union

- Overseas ship connections, air connections, sea-plane connections with the continuation to the corridor (VC) and corridor (VB).
- 3. Follow the work and try to ensure cooperation with the Managing Authority for the implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region.
- 4. Examine the possibilities and develop the model for participation in the Forum of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, which will be held on 12 - 13 May 2016 in Dubrovnik.

### **THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADRIATIC IONIAN EUROREGION AND THE COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER ASSOCIATIONS**

We need to continue to implement the membership of our association seeking the involvement and the accession of new territories. In the General Assembly of Milan, with great pleasure, we recorded the entrance of the Municipality of Herceg Novi, while in last Assembly of 2015 in Brussels we welcome our 28th member, the Old Royal Capital Cetinje. In addition, as a result of the evolution of European programming, we should seek to further strengthen cooperation between the members and to verify the possibility of re-orienting methodologically operational programmes of the 2014-2020 cycle on the new territorial focus outlined by the EUSAIR strategy, also in order to respond with more force and authority to the challenges that it poses us.

On this regards, the following activities should be pursued by the Euroregion:

1. Working actively on the expansion of the membership of Adriatic - Ionian Euroregion, encouraging the activities of existing members in the work of Association and fulfilling their obligations toward the Association.
2. Encouraging the cooperation with other associations and networks in the Adriatic - Ionian region (such as Chambers of Commerce, Universities, Businesses stakeholders, etc.)
3. Strengthening the cooperation with the Member States of the Adriatic - Ionian Initiative;
4. Introducing and presenting the Euroregion to the Governments of the Adriatic and Ionian.

### **THE WORK OF THE THEMATIC COMMISSIONS**

There is a strong need to better support the work of the Thematic Commissions of the Euroregion.

This is an essential point to qualify our presence and our proposal: the work of the Commissions should be strengthened. Our Commissions should meet at least two times a year in view of developing common strategies on the issues assigned to them; express their views on project proposals that may affect large areas of our territory; become a

place to exchange experiences and increase skills also with the preparation of appropriate training programmes; seek solutions to specific challenges and priorities and submit them to the relevant national and European institutional tables. The resources allocated by cooperation projects, to which many regions of AIE work, in addition to those scheduled for some international events can become a useful tool to multiply the opportunities for our thematic representatives to meet.

## **COMMUNICATION AND WEB SITE**

All the events organized by our network have had great resonance. In these years our initiatives have aroused considerable interest and effect. I would like to remember the numerous institutional visits to the representatives of Government and to the heads of European institutions, the many events organized in Brussels in addition to those held in our territories. We should continue on this path, we should be able to circumscribe the work of the network, promoting at the same time the need for the EUSAIR strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region. This means increasing general awareness on financial instruments made available by the new 2014-2020 programming period but also continue to engage all potential stakeholders and of course the citizens of our territories, who are the principal beneficiaries of our action.

In this view, straight away, we should put in place a strategy of communication and dissemination of our activities, updating and upgrading our website and taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the events organized by projects like AdriGov. On this regards, the most urgent and crucial issue is to renew and upgrade the website of the association in order to have an update channel of communication and an useful sharing platform for the members of the Euroregion.

## **EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICE, MOBILITY AND TRAINING**

We should continue to organize opportunities, which offer our civil servants the opportunity to exchange administrative experiences to compare activities and to strengthen capacity building, especially in the design and management of transnational projects financed by the Structural Funds and thematic programmes of the EU. The various steps that make up the path to a European project, from its conception and drafting, passing through its implementation and reporting, and coming to its outcomes and outputs, should become part of the shared cultural heritage of our administrations and institutions. To this end, of great importance are the development, transfer and implementation of innovative practices as well as the implementation of joint initiatives promoting peer learning, mobility and exchanges of experience, also through the organization of training cycles. In all this we hope of course the interest and involvement of students and recent graduates, and we also should seek to promote internships and apprenticeships that, between Brussels and our territories, can guarantee us quality and professionalism especially in the field of European policies and planning.

## **ACTIVITY OF THE BRUSSELS OFFICE**

Over the years, the activities carried out by our office in Brussels has been very important and effective for both the relations that we were able to consolidate with the European Institutions and for the exchange of experiences that we were able to have with the other regions of the EU. The events organized there, the participation in conferences, workshops and in the Open Days, have helped to raise awareness of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion and reinforce its role on the European scenario. For all these reasons, the activities of the Liaison Office in Brussels should be strengthened, we should take full advantage of the possibilities that this city offers, because it is the place where are situated the most important institutional interlocutors, such as the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions.

Positive are also the results of the work carried by many young interns from different regions of our countries, who have joined our Brussels office, bringing experience and added value.

The Euroregion should continue in this direction:

- Strengthen the presence in Brussels of the Euroregion (especially after the launch of the EUSAIR Strategy)
- Strengthen the cooperation with the EU institutions (in particular with European Parliament, European Commission and Committee of the Regions)

## **THE FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE NEW 2014-2020 PROGRAMMING PERIOD**

The opportunities offered by the IPA Adriatic programme in particular, and the various projects implemented in these years have played a key role in enhancing relations between the two sides of the Adriatic Sea. The new 2014-2020 programming period provides the AIE with a unique opportunity to implement and enforce this territorial cooperation. It is clear, then, the interest that the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion has in monitoring European programmes that insist on our reference area. Let's think of the cross-border programmes such as Italy-Croatia and Greece-Italy, of the external CBC programme, co-financed by the ERDF and IPA, Italy-Albania-Montenegro, of the transnational cooperation programmes MED and ADRION, of the interregional cooperation programmes, such as URBACT and INTERREG EUROPE, or even of the new Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA II) but also of all programmes managed directly by the EC, the so-called thematic programmes. After the first and good experience of CLAVET project, our network should always aim to become a direct actor, a project partner and not just an associate partner, strengthening and boosting its presence on the international stage. This is also because this road is a potential additional source of funding for our association. The adoption of the strategy and the recruitment of macro-regional dimension as a new paradigm territorial reference design open for us a scenario that we can not underestimate.



On this regards, developing and submitting project proposals (for instance in the frame of ADRION Programme, as well as other EU funds) will be a crucial activity to be conducted in 2016. This activity may help also to have extra resources to finance the ordinary activities of the Euroregion.

## **THE POTENTIAL LEGAL EVOLUTION OF THE ADRIATIC IONIAN EUROREGION**

Surely we should assess whether the current legal status of the AIE is functional and suited to those which are now our plans and objectives and for this we should monitor instruments like the EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) or other legal forms that could help us structuring, more appropriately and with due recognition, our association. Obviously, this will be the subject of a comprehensive study that we will submit to the relevant AIE bodies.

In the meantime, however, I think it is important to get ready, as of now, for June 30th, 2016, which will mark the ten year anniversary of the Euroregion. We should organize an event of the highest prestige to celebrate - maybe in Pula, namely the same city where the association was born - the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion and all the work done in its first ten years of life.

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

In 2015 an unprecedented numbers of migrants and asylum seekers traveled in the both side of the Adriatic and Ionian Area, especially following the so called Balkan route.

The Euroregion should be has a role to play in addressing global migration challenges and refugee crises, because the crisis currently affecting its territory.

In this stage, this could be done permanently by monitoring and reacting to the impact of migration on the Macroregion.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

The plan is to organised the following meeting:

- In June 2016 – the General Assembly of the Euroregion in combination with the Celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Association. The meeting should be held in Pula (Croatia);
- During the first semester the Meetings of the Thematic Commissions, according to the offers of potential host (Herceg Novi in Montenegro or Tirana in Albania).



## Activity and Financial Plan for 2016

INCOME		
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Specification</i>	<i>Amount in EUR</i>
Membership fee	28 members of the Association, 1.000 EUR fee	28.000,00
Implementation of EU funded project	Implementation of contracted activities in EU funded project (CLAVET)	14.791,00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>42.791,00</b>

EXPENDITURE		
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Specification</i>	<i>Amount in EUR</i>
Annual meeting of General Assembly	Administration, materials and all infrastructure for the organization of the meeting	4.000,00
Annual meeting of the Executive Committee	Administration, materials and all infrastructure for the organization of the meeting	2.000,00
Administration costs of the Association	Costs of accounting	5.000,00
Implementation of EU funded project	Implementation of contracted activities in EU funded project (CLAVET)	14.791,00
Organization of conferences and seminars	Administration, materials and all infrastructure for the organization of the events; 4 events in 2016	4.000,00
Preparation of new EU funded projects	Engaging external experts and organizing meetings for the preparation of projects – association as a partner in 2 new project proposals	5.000,00
Enlargement in the number of members in the association	Promotion costs	1.000,00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>31.791,00</b>