



**EUROREGIONE ADRIATICA
JADRANSKA EUROREGIJA
JADRANSKA EVROREGIJA
EURO RAJONI ADRIATIK**

**PLANNING POLICY GUIDELINES
OF PRESIDENT OF ADRIATIC EUROREGION**

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The initiative that some regions launched in Termoli, in November 2004, setting up a network of local authorities as first step for the establishing of Adriatic Euroregion in June 2006 in Pola, proved to be a successful case after nearly ten years. The inputs that we received from the Council of Europe to elaborate and share common policies for Adriatic territories, have anticipated the strategic interest of the main institutional actors in the following years. While we consolidated our institutional relations, structuring our organization into thematic commissions, exchanging administrative experiences and best practices, strengthening the cooperation, creating an remarkable number of projects and extended the membership to our association up to the current 25 members, the Adriatic with all its potential is emerging as the area of strategic interest and geopolitical planning of the new Europe. In recent years, the Adriatic Euroregion has encouraged and promoted the action of the Governments involved in the Adriatic Ionian Initiative that strengthened the political initiatives in the area. During the first meeting held in Brussels in February 2010, we sent a clear message to the European Institutions to elaborate an Adriatic Ionian macroregional strategy, as already launched for the Baltic and the Danube area. We have firmly supported the territorial cooperation programmes of the European Commission, such as Ipa Adriatic CBC and South East Europe, with contribution for proposals and thematic issues. During these years, the Adriatic Euroregion has promoted the enlargement policies for the candidate and potential candidate to EU accession process. I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to send my most heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Ivan Jakovčić for all the efforts and results achieved during his presidency and for the coming accession of Croatia to the EU. Without his enthusiasm and dynamism combined to a remarkable political leadership, we will not be in position to positively assess our activities. We carried out all the activities emphasising the role of local governments through a bottom up approach in order to pursue "the Europe of Regions". We should proceed on this direction ensuring our contribution and intensifying our engagement. On this regard, I would like to debate with the members of Executive Committee some items that will outline the action of the Presidency during next two year period.

THE ADRIATIC-IONIAN MACROREGIONAL STRATEGY

This represents a crucial issues in this particular moment. The European Union is negotiating its budget and regulations for the multiannual financial framework for the 2014-2020, the issue of sustainable and integrated development of European macroregions should give the same importance to the Adriatic area as well as for the Baltic and the Danube regions. The Adriatic Euroregion should work in close coordination with the national governments, being aware that only three Adriatic Euroregion members are in the EU and considering that the Croatia will access to European Union only in 2013. However, other states in the Adriatic, such as Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia Herzegovina, are demonstrating a strong interest to boost their accession process to EU. Local authorities has to play a leading role for the elaboration of the macro-regional strategy, they have to propose four or five priorities that will be the core for the strategic action plan. The Adriatic Euroregion should pay particular attentions to the Governments activities and initiatives. We should share purposes and contents of governments only after an exhaustive debate and comparisons with our priorities. Our organisation should carries out appropriate lobbying at European level and, as President of the Adriatic Euroregion, I would ask to the main political Institutions at National and European level to take into account our organisation in the making of elaboration process of the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregional Strategy. The year 2012 will be decisive for the definition of priorities and contents of Macroregional Strategy, on this regard our commissions should be engaged to elaborate only few operational proposals on important priorities.

THE MEMBERSHIP OF ADRIATIC EUROREGION

We need to consolidate our association, try to find a concrete involvement of Slovenia which is already in the EU and It should participate in our activities in a proactive manner. In the General Assembly of Campobasso, we warmly welcomed the interest of the Republic of San Marino to follow the initiatives of the Adriatic Euroregion. We should find suitable forms of direct participation for San Marino, considering that, the Republic is not structured in regions, due to small territory size. We should reconsider the participation of Greek prefectures of Thesprotia and Corfu. After the recent administrative reform in Greece that has unified the Prefectures in macro regions, it will be desirable to extend the

membership to Epirus and to Ionian Islands. However, I would like to take the advantage of this opportunity to highlight some aspects that we have already discussed since the establishment of our organization: the possibility to reconsider our territorial dimension. At the beginning we only consider the involvement of local authorities located in the Adriatic sea. It is time to extend our association to Ionian regions considering the evolution of the European financial framework for the 2014-2020. On this regard, during next months, I would like to ask to AE members an opinion, taking into account the challenges suggested by European Institutions and national governments.

THE WORK OF COMMISSIONS

In order to qualify our role and contribution, the commissions will have to elaborate common strategies on specific assigned issues; analyse and elaborate project proposals that may affect large parts of our territory; work to exchange experiences and improve knowledge through supporting training courses; find solutions for specific problems related to some key priorities and propose them on relevant institutional round tables. In the past, even if some commissions have performed their tasks fairly well, others commissions did not achieved sufficient results due to logistic, organizational and, above all, financial problems. The Adriatic Euroregion needs the commitment of all members to find adequate sustainable economic resources to convoke the commissions at least twice per year. I am confident that we should use the resources allocated for international events and meetings of our cooperation projects, to increase the number of AE commission sessions. In the last general assembly of AE, we accepted the proposal of Emilia Romagna and Molise to integrate the subjects, already under the responsibility of the commissions, with the theme of training: especially concerning academics studies, vocational trainings and courses for public administrators.

PROMOTION AND INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION

In recent years we have reached good results shining the spotlight on our initiatives. I would like to mention several institutional meetings held with heads of states and governments, with political and administrative leaders of European Institutions and several events organised in Brussels and on our territories. We should proceed in

this direction, continuing to involve the political leaders of our governments, but, above all, promoting information campaign for our citizens. On this regards, in the coming next weeks, we need to update and improve our website and we have to carry out the communication activities identified during the implementation of Adri.Eur.OP project.

EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICES, TRAINING AND MOBILITY

We should encourage the exchange of administrative experiences between public administrators, civil servants and experts, we should also raise the knowledge of administrative procedures on the main subjects codified by European law concerning the structural funds and EU direct funds. It is our priority that our public administrators learn how to elaborate a project idea, how to draft a proposal in "Brussels language", how to articulate in a proper way a budget and how to report project activities because these skills are not always a common and shared heritage among our public officials. In order to fulfil this purpose, we need to enhance the expertise and the competences, as much balanced as possible, in the whole Adriatic area. To guarantee an high level of skills of our public administrators we should provide high-quality intensive training. On this regard, the Molise Region has recently signed a cooperation agreement with EIPA, the European Institute for Public Administration, to open a new EIPA training centre in Campobasso. The centre is aimed at training, planning and providing technical assistance to the public administration of the Adriatic area. During the following days we are going to deliver the first seminars. I am confident to find the interest of all members of the Adriatic Euroregion, we will be committed to provide a high level of seminars and training in order to get a wider participation. At the same time, we should try to encourage internships for students and new graduates on our territories and at our Liaison Office in Brussels. Interns and students can provide new skills and expertise to our organisations especially in the field of management of EU projects.

BRUSSELS LIASON OFFICE

In recent years the activities carried out in our Brussels Liaison Office have been really important and intense to enhance the relationships with European Institutions and to increase the exchanges with other European regions. The events organised

with European Commission, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, Council of Europe in Strasbourg, and for the Open Days, have contributed to raise the visibility of the Adriatic Euroregion in whole Europe. Several young trainees and officials, in particular coming from the Regions of Shkodra, Istra, Mostar and Split, had the chance to make an experience in our representation office in Brussels. Their contribution have been assessed very positive for the activities realised at EU level. We should proceed in this direction, strengthening their visibility in Brussels Office in the light of the next programming period 2014-2020. We are confident that the contribution of the Dubrovnik-Neretva Region, as vice president of AE, will be crucial in Brussels, considering that its delegation office is located in the same building of our liaison office. It could be particularly interesting for our organisation to take the initiative for establishing institutional relations with others Euroregions and to figure out an Euroregions network. On this path we have already established contacts with Black Sea Euroregion and with other similar bodies. Also, it will be crucial to join other networks and partnerships. On this regard, I am glad to inform you that a project was funded by the Central European Initiative for an exchange programme between our association and other bodies of East Europe.

IPA CBC AND SOUTH EAST PROGRAMMES

We are all aware of the role of territorial cooperation in order to consolidate and strengthen the relations between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea. The remarkable number of projects implemented in recent years, not only generated concrete results, but they have raised the awareness that our peculiarities have contributed to unify our peoples. The projects create benefits, from the economic point of view, culture growth and better efficiency of public administration. It is evident the interest of Adriatic Euroregion to monitor the European programmes relevant to our area: first of all the IPA Adriatic CBC and South East Europe. It is clear that our association has no the legal status to candidate projects, but many initiatives, already funded or in the evaluation phase, have been planned in EA round tables in terms of project idea development and in terms of partnership consolidation. On this regard, we should carefully follow the evaluation process of the 2nd ordinary call of IPA-Adriatic CBC and the ordinary and strategic calls of proposals of the SEE and we should pay attention on future perspectives of the IPA-Adriatic CBC strategic call for proposal. The Adriatic Euroregion should be committed to participate at the

final implementation phase of these two important European programmes in order to have a positive impact on our communities and proving to European Institutions our engagement in the territorial cooperation. We have to give our contribution to the negotiation process of these programmes in light of the imminent EU accession of Croatia and the adoption of the Danube Strategy.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Our Organisation is committed to create conditions for the sustainable development and shared management of common subjects. During this period, the AE should aims to encourage the economic growth, and boosting new jobs for our enterprises. The Public Private Partenrship will enhance our strengths on our territories and make an efficient use of financial resources. There are many potential opportunities for our enterprises, with mutual benefits for the two coasts of Adriatic. The AE should be ready to promote initiatives aiming to reach concrete benefits for the investors, entrepreneurs and territorial communities.

EUROPEAN GROUPING FOR TERRITORIAL COOPERATION (EGTC)

From the very beginning we followed the innovative aspect of this legal instrument established by European law. We had not the chance to deeply analyse this issue in order to ensure an appropriate institutional and legal dimension for our association.

The reason lays that many territories of AE, not being EU member State, can not participate in EGTC. Currently the new proposal submitted by the European Commission seems to allow the participation of local authorities not belonging to EU State, probably it will opportune to evaluate the possibility to use this legal instrument in order to structure our organization in a suitable manner with legal personality. It is clear that this item will be discussed carefully after the approval of the new EGTC regulation. The Presidency will elaborate a proposal to be discussed with AE bodies.