



Executive Committee Meeting

Brussels, 12 July 2017

AIE Brussels Office, Rue de Toulouse, 47 – B-1040 Brussels, Belgium

Minute

The Executive Committee of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion was held in Brussels on July 12, 2017 at the Brussels Office starting at 19.00.

The session is chaired by the President Nikola Dobroslavic that opened the meeting welcoming all the participants and members of the Committee. He thanks also the Member of the European Parliament Ms. Željana ZOVKO and he addresses a special thanks to the representatives of Calabria Region and West Herzegovina Canton.

Mr. Andrea Di Girolamo is the secretary in charge for drafting the minute.

President Dobroslavic proposes the following agenda:

1. Finalization of membership applications received by the West Herzegovina Canton (BiH) and the Calabria Region (IT);
2. Thematic Commissions, activities and calendar;
3. Upcoming AIE statutory meetings and events;
4. European Territorial Cooperation, overview on projects submitted and implemented by the Euroregion;
5. Collaboration and joint initiatives with other Adriatic Ionian networks on EUSAIR activities. The AI-NURECC initiative.
6. Report of the Secretary General about the organization of the AIE Secretariat according to the art. 6 of the internal regulation of the general secretariat;
7. Any other business.

The Committee agrees to follow the proposed agenda.

Point 1

President Dobroslavic introduces the point "Finalization of membership applications received by the West Herzegovina Canton (BiH) and the Calabria Region (IT)" pointed out that the AIE General Assembly has already accepted the membership request received by West Herzegovina Canton. He welcomes Mr. Zdenko Cosic the Prime Minister of the Canton. With regard with the membership request received from Calabria

Region, the formal acceptance is a matter of the Assembly but President Dobroslavic was sure that the next assembly wouldn't have problems to accept Calabria Region as full member of the association.

He gives the floor to Mr. Zdenko Cosic, Prime Minister of the West Herzegovina Canton.

Mr. Cosic welcomes the participants presenting the canton and the institution. The West Herzegovina Canton is one of the ten cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, located in the southwest of the country close to Sarajevo, it has around 100.000 inhabitants and the area of the Canton is 1,362 km². It is in a strategic location among Zagreb and the Adriatic sea. The region is one of the most developed of the B&H and today it is one of the richest of the country. He underlines that the Canton has around 7.300 companies, most of them SMEs. The number of enterprises goes up in recent years giving stability to the local economies. He thanks the members adding that, he is available to answer any questions about the institution.

Presidents Dobroslavic thanks Mr. Cosic and gives the floor to Mr. Franco Molica as representative of Calabria Region.

Mr. Molica thanks for the invitation, the Region is enthusiastic to join to the network and to participate in its activities. He hopes that the next AIE Assembly will approve the request of Membership. Mr. Molica gives the regards on behalf of the President Mr. Gerardo Mario Oliverio and the department of international cooperation, hoping that the President will be able to attend the next meeting of the Euroregion. He adds that Calabria has a strategic geographic position in the Mediterranean basin, bordered to the west by the Tyrrhenian Sea and to the east by the Ionian Sea. For this reasons the Region is interested in the valorisation of the Adriatic and Ionian area. The regions has two strategic objectives. The first is to promote more the peculiarities of the Ionian area in EUSAIR due to the fact that the Adriatic dimension is in some case more predominant in the strategy. The other strategic objective is to act as a bridge between the Adriatic Ionian Macroregional strategy and other strategy of the Mediterranean area. For example the strategy for west Mediterranean. So he hope that in the future we will be able to have an unique strategy for the whole Mediterranean. In this scenario, Calabria can act as a bridge between the EUSAIR and the other strategies. He adds a quick overview about the regional Operational Programme of Calabria. The OP has a relevant part on cooperation foreseeing different actions on several thematic objectives strongly linked with EUSAIR pillars. Calabria has the objective to follows policies and projects aimed to knowledge exchanging on different topics such as costal erosion, climate change, strengthening of the port system (for instance for the main port located in Gioia Tauro) and logistic. Furthermore the Region has a strong interest in developing projects on sustainable tourism and research and innovation. He thanks the participants adding that for more details a power point presentation will be distributed after the end of the meeting.

Points 2 and 3

Mr. Dobroslavic gives the floor to Mr. Cocco, Secretary General that welcomes the presidents, the participants and the new members.

He moves forward introducing the topic of thematic commissions. The last AIE General Assembly has stressed the importance to relaunch the activities of the thematic commission because it is a crucial activity of the Euroregion. In the last two months we have respected two commitments, the regional election in Croatia and the national election in Albania. He wishes a very good work to the re-elected and confirmed Presidents, such as Dobroslavic, Flego and Komadina and to the new Presidents of the Croatian Counties.

He talks about the result of the election in Albania stressing the importance to establish good relations with the new government in Albania.

Mr. Cocco asks to the Presidents of the Thematic Commissions to try to restart the thematic work, adding the Euroregion needs these thematic contributions especially now, an important time for the Europe and for the cohesion policy. There are here two important representatives of the Presidencies of two thematic commissions. They are the representative of Puglia Region for the Commission on Tourism and Culture and Mr. Krpan from Primorje-Gorski Kotar County for the Commission for Transport and Infrastructure. He believes that the President, together with the Presidency Bureau, should also ask also to the other Commissions to start their work and to schedule their meetings. He reminds to the participants the other commissions and the respective presidencies. He stresses the importance to schedule these meetings as well as it very important to schedule the other statutory meetings like the assembly and the executive committee. For example there is the availability of Kotor to host one of these events in next autumn. He adds that any members can ask to organise not only a statutory meeting but also an event for the thematic commissions. So it is very important to be active and to start working on it.

Mr. Dobroslavic agrees with Mr. Cocco and gives the floor to the representative of thematic commissions.

Mr. Casalino from Puglia Region says that he is quite new in the network but he commits himself to be in contact with Mr. Notarangelo, the director responsible for the coordination of international policies of Puglia Region and he is confident that Puglia Region, in coordination with the AIE President and the secretary general, will be able to propose new initiatives for the AIE commission on tourism and culture in the near future.

Mr. Dobroslavic gives the floor to Mr. Krpan from Primorje-Gorski Kotar County as president for the Commission for Transport and Infrastructure.

Mr. Krpan reminds that members of the commissions have already met during several meetings in the previous years. These meetings were mainly focused on the strategy for transports. Nowadays another topic has become crucial, it is the gas terminal in the area. Euroregion can continue to discuss on these two themes also in the future. As a concrete and operative suggestion, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County would like to organise the next meeting of the Commission for Transport and Infrastructure in autumn this year. He invites all the AIE members to share the topics that they consider as relevant for the discussion.

Mr. Dobroslavic thanks the two representatives of the commissions, stressing the importance to convene in particular the commission for transports and infrastructures. As Euroregion, we have recalled several times how better connections and efficient transports in the Adriatic and Ionian Region are crucial and essential for our development. We have stressed already the lack of an highway on the east coast of the Adriatic and the lack of a high-speed rail network along the western coast, as well as the lack of proper air links. We have repeatedly stated that the connections of our region are not sufficient so now, also through the work of the commission, the Euroregion should try to push governments to do more for the connection of the area.

He added that also the works of the other commissions is fundamental, so he encourages all members to organise themselves to start committees work. He recognise that it is not an easy task because there are some costs to cover but he hopes that some European and ETC projects will also serve to this purpose.

Point 4

Mr. Dobroslavic gives the floor to the Secretary General Mr. Cocco that introduce the point 4 "European Territorial Cooperation, overview on projects submitted and implemented by the Euroregion"

About the previous point 3, the Secretary General agrees with the President and he confirms that organising the sessions of thematic commissions can be quite challenging and in some case very difficult. A possible solution to overcome this problem could be to increase the presence of the Euroregion in support of its members and thematic commissions also taking advantage of European projects. Especially in recent years, some European Territorial Cooperation programmes need to involve organisation like the institutional networks in the implementation of capitalisation projects, as well as in the ordinary projects. Mr. Cocco added that for this reason the Secretariat of the Euroregion has applied for an high number of projects in the last months especially for Interreg Italy Croatia Programme. He really hopes that some of these projects will be approved because this will allow the Euroregion to do two things. First of all this will allow to reinforce and to increase the staff of the Euroregion in charge for policies and activities and secondly will create new opportunities for thematic of its interest. In this respect, the Secretary General adds that the Euroregion is implementing as partner a project financed by the MED programme called BleuTourMed_C3. It is an horizontal project dealing with the sustainable tourism. During this project the Euroregion will have to organised in Croatia a workshop on sustainable tourism. On that occasion we could also support the activities of the Euroregion on sustainable tourism for instance organising at the same time, as a back to back event, a thematic commission on Tourism. If the number of European projects will increase, the Euroregion will have more opportunities to organise this kind of meetings.

Mr. Cocco affirms that several projects were submitted in collaboration with other AIE members, most of all with the most experienced and skilled regions such as Istria Region which is very active in EU projects. He also would like to stress the importance to involve the new AIE members and the Albanian Regional Councils in this activity, aiming to include them in EU projects. He adds that the Secretariat is at the service of all members for this specific activity considered that Euroregion does not pursue this task solely to award projects but it is very interested in involving its members in EU projects and initiatives.

Mr. Dobroslavic thanks Mr. Cocco and asks to the members if there are any questions on point 4. No question was raised so he moves to point 5.

Point 5

The President introduces the Point 5 "Collaboration and joint initiatives with other Adriatic Ionian networks on EUSAIR activities. The AI-NURECC initiative" giving the floor to the Secretary General Francesco Cocco.

Mr. Cocco explains the AI-NURECC (Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chamber of Commerce and Cities) which is an initiative stimulated by Mr. Ivan Jackovcic, member of the European Parliament and first president of the Adriatic Euroregion, and jointly elaborated by the most important networks in the EUSAIR area, as representatives of Adriatic-Ionian Regions, Cities, Universities and Chambers of Commerce. The networks are the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR), the Forum of the Adriatic-Ionian Chambers of Commerce, the Forum of the Adriatic-Ionian Cities, UniADRION (the network of Adriatic-Ionian Universities). These networks have elaborated a proposal for an effective implementation of the EUSAIR Strategy and Action Plan asking to the DG REGIO of European Commission to finance the initiative using a specific fund of the European Parliament specifically allocated for EUSAIR, the AI-NURECC's activities should be fully financed from European Institution with the purpose to develop a couple of pilot projects on EUSAIR topics. Obtaining funds will not be simple because the European Commission must follow the rules to grant the funds but it is politically significant that the main Adriatic Ionian networks bring together around a common political and technical project on EUSAIR. Mr.

Cocco adds that the EUSAIR implementation has some criticisms and delays in projects executions. In particular there is now the strong needs to promote an effective multi-actor and multi-level governance structure of the strategy involving more the regional and local stakeholders in the governance process. For these reasons Euroregion hopes that AI-NURECC will be accepted by the European Commission. He propose to organise an event in Brussels next autumn in cooperation with Mr. Jakovčić to present and promote officially the initiative.

Mr. Cocco moves forward to another topic, stressing the importance of Panoramed. It is the first project launched by Interreg MED that gathers regional and national Governments of the program countries for the next 5 years and it is endowed with 9 million euro funding. The aim of Panoramed is to collect scientific evidences from all the Interreg MED-funded projects and from other institutions working for Mediterranean development to design more informed policies and strategic joint planning. The kick-off event will be held on 27th September 2017 in Seville (Spain), presenting its strategic approach and the main challenges it is taking on. The project will be implemented by the regional and national governments, as well as by the main networks of the med area. He proposes to candidate the Euroregion as one of the network interested in the implementation of this project. He suggest to write to the programme authorities, specifically to the Croatian National Contact Point, introducing the Euroregion and asking to involve the organisation in the project activities, as relevant network interested in the governance of the Mediterranean.

Mr. Dalipi takes the floor agreeing with the initiatives proposed by Cocco. He stressed the importance to replicate this activities also on the territory. He believes that, before organise the event in Brussels, will be better to present the AI-NURECC initiative on the territory. So Regional Council of Tirana would like to organise a conference in Tirana in September on this topic to present the initiative just before the event in Brussels in order to involve also the local level and the citizens.

Mr. Dobroslavic asks to the participants if they all agree with the two initiatives. The committee approves them. The President moves forward to point 6.

Point 6

President gives the floor to Francesco Cocco in order to illustrate the report of the Secretary General about the organization of the AIE Secretariat according to the art. 6 of the internal regulation of the general secretariat.

Mr. Cocco introduces the report pointed out that the AIE statute allows a secretariat that it should be more structured in order to consolidate its role. The request to improve the organisation of the secretariat with a professional staff comes up from some inputs raised at the last Assembly in Dubrovnik from the Presidents Dobroslavic, Dalipi, D'Alfonso and Herzeg. According to the internal regulation of the secretariat, Mr. Cocco has drawn up this report in order to give a complete picture of the situation of the organisation of the General Secretariat in the last months. The Secretariat has updated the website making it more interesting and graphically more appropriate. Furthermore AIE is working for consolidate the structure and the organisation of the secretariat because, so far, most of the activities performed by the association were guaranteed and conducted by some professionals and collaborators on a voluntary basis.

He hopes that funds generated from the participation in European projects will allow the Euroregion to cover the expenditures for having a more organised secretariat. The composition can be extended and improved mainly by hiring the past volunteers and then to hiring new professionals coming from the different AIE territories.

Mr. Cocco pointed out the four collaborators are currently working with him in Campobasso at the Secretariat. They are all experts in EU projects and they were involved in the candidatures of at least 15 EU projects submitted during this year by the Euroregion. He explains that he has conducted a general research on some EU networks gathering information about the composition and the profiles of their Secretariat and the amounts of the annual salaries. In the report he suggests to the Euroregion to taking into consideration to hire some professionals with specific profiles and remunerations. He adds that the work performed by the Secretariat based in Campobasso was always supported by the experts of Dubrovnik Neretva County as well as by the interns in the Brussels office. On this regards he points out that the possibility to send *stageires* in Brussels is open to all members of the association. So for instance, if the Croatian regions, the counties of Albania and Bosnia Herzegovina intend to propose to the Euroregion some *stageires* for the Brussels office, the secretariat will be happy to evaluate this opportunity as we did in the past with some members, such as the Mostar Canton and the prefecture of Shkodër.

Mr. Cocco talks about a particular need that Euroregion has at the moment. The Secretariat is now implementing the project BleuTourMed, approved last year by the MED program. The project has a certain amount allocated as staff costs meaning that the Euroregion must have employed people for the project activities. He pointed out that he is now working with the County of Dubrovnik and with its representative Mr. Luka Vidak to find out what kind of contracts can be useful as employment contracts. The procedures are not so simple because, AIE has a Croatian entity and the Secretariat needs to employee Italian professionals working in Campobasso at the office of the Secretariat.

In the next days the Secretariat will make a research in order to evaluate whether there is a real possibility, in accordance with Italian law, to make the office secretariat's in Campobasso as a permanent and fixed establishment operating on the Italian territory. As for work contracts, this would allow the Euroregion to be able to have employed people under the Italian law, simplifying the administrative tasks of the secretariat in Italy. The secretariat will check this opportunity within the next 15 days hoping that this procedure will simplify the administrative work, avoiding the waste of financial resources allocated for the project.

Mr. Dobroslavic agrees with Mr. Cocco, Euroregion should assess the possibilities on how to use the financial resources of the project for staff cost. He is glad to receive EU funds, this is an opportunity also for having employed staff and new resources. It is clear now that AIE cannot implement the projects only with the support of unpaid volunteers.

Mr. Dobroslavic asked to vote. The Committee approves it unanimously the Report on the organization of the general secretariat presented by the Secretary General.

Mr. Dobroslavic asks to the members if there are any questions as any other business. No questions is raised by the members. Mr. Dobroslavic thanks everyone for the participation. The committee meeting closes at 20.30.

Secretary of the meeting

Andrea Di Girolamo



The President

Nikola Dobroslavic

