Bologna, 2014, May 27th

Adriatic Ionian Euroregion Environment Commission

Proposal for priority issues to be addressed by the AIE Environment Commission

Aiming at the sustainable development and growth of the Adriatic-Ionian macroregion (AIM) the AIE wishes to focus its common action for the future programming period on some crucial issues that are of strategic relevance to a macroregional approach, because they are specific to the region, they have rebound effects across countries and regions within the AIM and they require joint action by several countries and/or regions in order to have effective results.

According to IPCC (2013) [1], ocean warming dominates the increase in energy stored in the climate system, accounting for more than 90% of the energy accumulated between 1971 and 2010. Furthermore, besides general atmosphere and **ocean warming**, **sea level rise**, and the increase in concentrations of **greenhouse gases**, the Mediterranean registers the increase in frequency and intensity of **drought**, the occurring during the past five centuries of **floods** larger than recorded since the 20th century and the enhancing of **extremes** of storm-related precipitation.

All this considered, the proposed priorities, defined in full compliance with the **EUSAIR** pillar 3 proposed priority agenda, in accordance with the **Bologna Charter 2012** initiative and the related Macro-Project, and in line with the **Integrated Strategy** (IS) adopted by this AIE Environment Commission in 2008, are:

Territorial and marine safety and risks management (Measure 5 of IS)

Territorial and maritime safety are fundamental for the well-being and prosperity of the AIM communities, both in coastal zones and in the hinterland. Common integrated planning and programming at basin scale and the drafting of a macro-regional strategy of action and measures aimed at tackling and managing the risks from hydrogeological instability, flooding, erosion, subsidence, submersion, etc. could reach more efficacy.

AIE recommends EUSAIR authorities to prioritize risks prevention and management measures.

[1] IPCC, 2013: Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the 5th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Stocker, T.F., D. Qin, G.-K. Plattner, M. Tignor, S.K. Allen, J. Boschung, A. Nauels, Y. Xia, V. Bex and P.M. Midgley (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, 1535 pp.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime Spatial Planning
(Measure 2 of IS)

ICZM and MSP both address human activities in coastal and maritime areas: their integration together as a unique tool can be a common asset to reach a coherent and sustainable governance of the AIM environment. They set the principles to define a shared approach to the strategic planning of the coastal and maritime zones, to be ecosystem-based, integrated, based on common priorities but also tailored on regional needs, in order to find balance between growth and sustainability.

It is important to strengthen a strong common knowledge basis, by implementing platforms (such as the GIS Atlas of the Adriatic created by SHAPE project) with coastal and marine data relevant for ICZM & MSP purposes, and by setting up an integrated and transboundary terrestrial and marine database as a smart tool to support the planning and decision-making processes.

AIE recommends to the EUSAIR authorities to reconsider the role of ICZM and MSP as cross-cutting issues transversal to all the 4 pillars, not only as instruments to address environmental issues but as inclusive management tools integrating also social, economic and cultural aspects.

Climate change: mitigation and adaptation (Measure 4 of IS)

Mitigation actions must remain a priority, also considering risks scenarios and large scale irreversible impacts. Possible action could include: integrated plans for emission reduction, low carbon development, shared studies and/or research concerning the basin, for the exploitation of renewable energies (wind farms, wave motion), integrated plans for the achievement of energy efficiency, measures for an efficient and responsible use of water (addressing water scarcity) and other natural resources.

Nevertheless, CC impacts shall increase in the next decades due to delayed effects of energy storing (especially strong in oceans and seas), and therefore actions aimed at CC adaptation are necessary to tackle the inevitable impacts and their cost in terms of environment and society. Such actions, if based on flexible and coherent approaches, can be easier and more effective, and can ensure a greater resilience of coastal zones (Joint Action Plan for coastal zones adaptation to CC, etc.).

Biodiversity conservation / improvement (Measure 3 of IS)

Sea and ecosystems are a shared resource which cannot be addressed by countries individually. The macroregional challenges are: overfishing, habitat destruction, invasive alien species and inappropriate location of aquaculture. In response to that, common actions could be: the setting up of cooperation networks for the monitoring, care and recovery of species and the development of action plans for safeguarding them, the data exchange and the transfer of good governance practices, the creation of trans-border protected areas (according to ecoregions), both coastal and marine (also open-water) and establishment of a network (green and blue infrastructure).

Environmental protection: waste management and fight against pollution (Measure 1 of IS)

Waste management has strong impacts on environmental quality (water and soil pollution, eutrophication, littering): a macroregional coordination could reach much more efficacy.

A macroregional approach is also needed in order to fight marine pollution: this challenge is coming from maritime transport, agriculture, municipal and industrial waste water, aquaculture and large scale pollution events.

Proposed basin-scale actions may include: coordinated prevention plans and emergency plans at macro-regional scale addressing oil spill problems, action plan for marine litter and operational protocols related to litter monitoring, setting up harmonised methods for prevention, reduction, and recovery of waste at sea, coordinated fight against eutrophication, etc.