

EUROREGIONE ADRIATICO IONICA
JADRANSKO JONSKA EUROREGIJA
ADRIATIC IONIAN EUROREGION
EURO RAJONI ADRIATIKO JONIAN
ΕΥΡΩΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑ ΑΔΡΙΑΤΙΚΗΣ ΙΟΝΙΟΥ

Activity Report

2022- 2023

Adriatic Ionian Euroregion

Report from November 2022 to November 2023

Adriatic Ionian Euroregion
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INDEX

Statutory Meetings

- *Executive Committee, - November 2022;*

European Projects

- *Participation of AIE Secretariat in EU project events*
- *Sustainable Tourism*
- *Techera*
- *AI-NURECC PLUS*
- *Community4Tourism*
- *Dialogue4Innovation*

EUSAIR and other initiatives

- *8th ANNUAL EUSAIR FORUM*
- *STRONG WOMEN FOR A STRONGER ADRIATIC-IONIAN REGION on 4-5 JULY 2023, ZAGREB*
- *YOUTH CONFERENCE ADRIATIC IONIAN REGION IS YOU(TH) on 15-16 NOVEMBER 2023, SPLIT*
- *EU WEEK OF REGIONS AND CITIES*

Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance

STATUTORY MEETINGS

Executive Committee - November 2022

As required by Article 27 of the Statute, by letter dated 28/11/2022 (Ref. No. 33), the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion initiated a written procedure of the Executive Committee aimed at sharing and approving the following documents, which were also discussed at the subsequent IEA General Assembly:

- Official Financial Statement submitted to the Croatian Authorities, year 2021 /Annex “Note to the balance sheet 2021” / Annex “Summary of bank account movements - year 2021”;
- Activity Report 2021-2022;
- Annual Activity Programme 2023;
- Report on the activities and the organization of the General Secretariat.

Ten calendar days were then allotted to the members of the Executive Committee for any thoughts, suggestions, or amendments to the documents.

After reviewing the documents as required by the procedure, no comments were received from the members of the Executive within the allotted time, so the written procedure was concluded and the documents are considered approved by the Executive Committee, as formalized by letter dated 12/01/2023 (Ref. No. 02).

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

Participation of AIE Secretariat in EU project events

In 2022 and 2023, the Secretariat was actively involved in the organisation, participation and communication of several events, which represent an important moment of the projects as they are excellent opportunities for the partners to exchange information on the development of the project, to present their outputs or results, to discuss issues and ideas and to plan future project activities.

The role of the Euroregion, as a transnational actor and a key institutional stakeholder of the EUSAIR Strategy, focused in particular on communication, networking and dissemination of results.

Sustainable Tourism
Length: from 1st November 2019 to 31th December 2022

Programme: Interreg MED

Role of the Euroregion: Project Partner

Topic: Sustainable Tourism

Coordinated by Diputació de Barcelona (Spain)

More at: <https://sustainable-tourism.interreg-med.eu>

In a nutshell: Sustainable Tourism project aims to enhance the development of a sustainable and responsible coastal and maritime tourism in the Med area. In particular, the project will support the mainstreaming of the INTERREG MED modular projects results of axis 3.1 (sustainable tourism) by communication, transferring & community building, and capitalisation activities.

Its objective is to set up a general framework of collaboration to facilitate the creation of synergies among modular projects, to enhance its visibility and to support the institutional uptaking of their outputs and results, mainly in the field of tourism policies and cohesion policies.

THE INTERREG MED SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COMMUNITY MEETS NORTH MACEDONIA

The Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, in collaboration with the Interreg Med Sustainable Tourism Community organised an on-line event entitled “The Interreg Med Sustainable Tourism Community: Success stories of cooperation and best practices. Future opportunities for Sustainable Tourism in North Macedonia” that took place on 19th December 2022 on Zoom platform from 9:30 till 12:30 (CET).

The objective of the event was to present the Interreg Euro Med programme and its opportunities for



North Macedonia’s stakeholders and to showcase how the MED projects on tourism have worked in the recent years; to open the doors to the stakeholders of North Macedonia active in the field of sustainable tourism, giving an opportunity to know better the best practices of Sustainable Tourism Community.

The seminar gave them the opportunity to know better the main results of the Interreg MED Sustainable Tourism Community as well as to showcase some best practices developed by four modular projects. Also the event gave an overview of some good examples of alternative tourism models developed by two INTERREG projects with a particular focus on eco-tourism.

The Joint Secretariat of the Interreg Euro-Med Programme joined to the event with a presentation of the new Interreg Euro Med Programme 2021-27, since the new Mediterranean Interreg programme is

now involving North Macedonia as eligible country, allowing public and private actors to participate in the cooperation projects as beneficiaries of funds.

The seminar was attended by around 40 participants, the majority of them were interested in developing new Interreg projects on alternative and sustainable tourism models.

The AIE Secretariat staff introduced and moderated the on-line seminar. Different guest-speakers were invited to take the floor in the first session, such as:

- Pascale FAUVEAU LAGAYE, Joint Secretariat of Interreg Euro-MED;
- Josep RODRIGUEZ, Coordinator MED Sustainable Tourism Community, Barcelona Provincial Council;
- Céline DUBREUIL, Programme Director of Plan Bleu;
- Dora PAPTACHOCHARI – University of Thessaly;
- Roberto GRASSI, NECSTouR;
- Ermete MARIANI, UNIMED – Mediterranean Universities Union.

In the second session some examples of successful cooperation projects were illustrated by:

- Dejan ISKRA (RDA Green Karst) – VIA DINARICA Trail Project;
- Barbara SARNARI (SVI.MED.) – CONSUME-LESS Project;
- Lucía PRIETO FUSTES (Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation – IUCN) – DestiMED Project;
- Kostas ZAPOUNIDIS (Pieriki Development Agency) – EmbleMatiC Project;
- Claudio BORDI (ANCI Lazio’s External Expert) – SuSTown Project;
- Ivanka NESTOROSKA (Faculty of Tourism and hospitality, University St. Kliment Ohridski-Bitola) – I-TOUR Project.

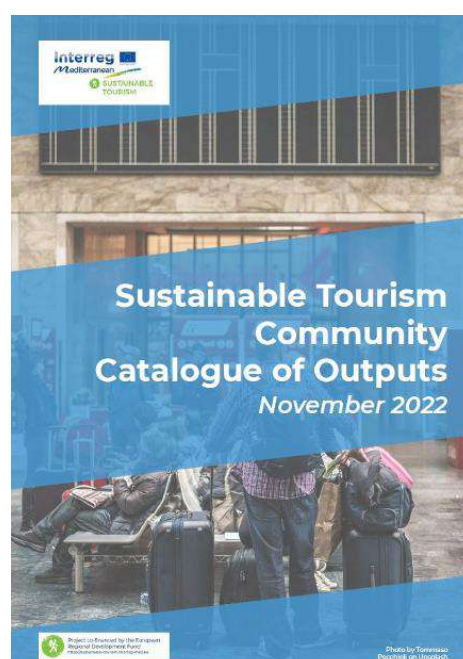
Although the projects have developed a large number of outputs, the ones presented here are selected as being the easiest to be replicated. Therefore, readers are encouraged to dive deeper into the projects’ outputs in order to find additional information that could be useful for their efforts for making Mediterranean a more sustainable place. The mission of the STC Horizontal project partnership is to support the replication of the Community’s results and ensure its effectiveness.

[SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COMMUNITY CATALOGUE OF OUTPUTS](#)

This catalogue presents the most important outputs of the projects implemented within the Sustainable Tourism Community (STC) of the INTERREG MED Programme 2014 – 2020. The document was drafted by the horizontal project Sustainable Tourism, financed by the Interreg Med Programme. The Secretariat of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, as partner of Sustainable Tourism project, has contributed to this catalogue of the outputs.

The selection of outputs was made on the basis of better promoting common integrated actions that could boost the sustainable and responsible development of coastal and maritime tourism in the Mediterranean region. To do so, a collaborative process driven by the Sustainable Tourism Horizontal project through constant communication and exchange with each project individually took place. In total 41 outputs have been identified representing 15 projects. The catalogue includes a series of the most tangible outputs produced by the STC which can be further used for transferring and capitalization purposes.

The ultimate goal of this catalogue is to promote the outcomes of the STC in order to assist their transferring to different areas of the Mediterranean and incorporation in tourism related policies at various spatial scales. To facilitate the wider application of the outputs, some critical information regarding their attributes is provided. Each output is related to expected results that could help potential stakeholders, willing to adopt it, to fulfill various policy targets in tourism but also in other domains. In total 12 policy targets have been identified by the STC as better expressing the directions on which projects have worked during their lifetime. This information is critical so as to understand the utility of adopting an output, especially with regard to shaping operational programmes for the period 2021-2027. A short description and purpose of each output is provided including information on the tool's usefulness and the needs and challenges it addresses. A map with the pilot areas where the output was tested and transferred is provided and a brief



example of the implementation results is presented so as to showcase the applicability of the proposed outputs and the types of destinations they address. Some information about the engagement of essential stakeholders for the successful implementation of the output is also provided. The replicability conditions for the transferring of the outputs are briefly described including human resources, infrastructure, software and other conditions needed for the effective implementation of the outputs. A summary of how each specific output could contribute to the recovery of the tourism sector from the pandemic crisis.

Although the projects have developed a large number of outputs, the ones presented here are selected as being the easiest to be replicated. Therefore, readers are encouraged to dive deeper into the projects' outputs in order to find additional information that could be useful for their efforts for making

Mediterranean a more sustainable place. The mission of the STC Horizontal project partnership is to support the replication of the Community's results and ensure its effectiveness.

<p>TECHERA</p> <p>A new technology era in the Adriatic Sea – Big data sharing and analytics for a circular sea economy</p>  <p>The image shows two logos side-by-side. On the left is the 'Interreg Italy - Croatia TECHERA' logo, which includes a stylized wave icon and the text 'Interreg Italy - Croatia TECHERA' with 'European Regional Development Fund' below it. On the right is the European Union flag with the text 'EUROPEAN UNION' below it.</p>
<p>Length: 01.04.2022 – 30.06.2023</p> <p>Programme: INTERREG Italy Croatia CBC Programme</p> <p>Role of the Euroregion: Project Partner</p> <p>Topic: Blue economy</p> <p>Lead partner: Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna</p> <p>Website: https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/techera</p> <p>In a nutshell: A sustainable Blue Growth may be undermined by the unavailability of scientific and socio-economic observations related to the status of marine environment. The TECHERA project will tackle this problem by promoting the adoption of emerging technologies such as big-data sharing and analytics to increase the smart specialization of companies operating in the blue economy, and to attract the interest of young people in smart and blue careers.</p> <p>Products of previous projects will be interconnected into study examples that will promote sharing of experience, and provide evidence of potentials and benefits of integration and complementary of approaches. Operational and knowledge gaps will be identified as well.</p> <p>To achieve a consistent, meaningful, and successful communication, TECHERA will identify relevant stakeholders for thematic area 1, involving also other Standard and Strategic IT-HR projects operating in the same domain, and adopt different approaches (frontal lectures, participatory discussion, gaming) targeting the transferability of results in the Programme Area and beyond.</p> <p>Finally, TECHERA will propose potential inputs for the next programming period in order to contribute to the definition of a strategy for digitization and to the identification of key innovations to improve the competitiveness in the blue economy.</p>

TECHERA PROJECT PROMOTED AND PRESENTED AT SEALOGY 2022 EXHIBITION

The TECHERA project was presented in Ferrara on November 16 and 17 at the Sealogy 2022 with the aim of showcasing the latest developments and meeting stakeholders from the blue economy.

This important trade fair event dedicated to the Blue Economy, the sea, its resources and actors in the seafood supply chain was attended by Andreea Strachinescu, - Head of Unit Maritime Innovation, Marine Knowledge and Investment in the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), responsible for promoting innovative and emerging technologies and solutions, and ensuring broad dissemination of marine knowledge and research.



The event offered to the Secretariat of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion the opportunity to give visibility to the Techera cluster, to meet with operators, companies, associations and organizations representing the most important experts in the Blue Economy in the Adriatic, to interact with them, with stakeholders and to explain them the background and objectives of the project, including through the distribution of promotional materials.

The event offered to the Secretariat of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion the opportunity to give visibility to the Network and the Techera cluster, to meet with operators, companies, associations and organizations representing the most important experts in the Blue Economy in the Adriatic, to interact with them, with stakeholders and to explain them the background and objectives of the project, including through the distribution of promotional materials.



Sealogy was a great opportunity not only because it brings together experts and leaders in the Blue Economy sector, but it was also a great opportunity to develop new ideas, new projects, create contacts for the enhancement and protection of the marine environmental and sustainability.

The participation at the Sealogy provided Techera Project partners with interesting networking moments that encouraged new partnerships.

TECHERA CO-DESIGN WORKSHOP WITH THE BLUE ECONOMY STAKEHOLDERS OF THE ADRIATIC SEA

On 18th November 2022 the TECHERA project partners organized the Co-design workshop with the blue economy stakeholders of the Adriatic Sea on “How to foster the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture?” that took place at SEALOGY 2022 exhibition (Sala Volturmo), Ferrara Fiere Congressi, Ferrara (IT). The AIE Secretariat staff contributed to the event and attended the same.



The co-design workshop goal was to engage the fisheries and aquaculture actors from the Adriatic area in discovering and exchanging new ideas and actions to generate sustainable innovation in the blue economy context. Because we share the same sea basin, there is a clear added value in addressing common challenges and finding joint solutions for the protection of our common resources.



The co-design workshop organized by the TECHERA partners intended to lay the foundation for the identification on new project ideas for the programming period 2021/2027 as well as to contribute to the Flagship paper on data-driven solutions for sea economy which will constitute two project milestone

expected in 2023. The workshop targeted the actors of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors of the Adriatic Area (Italy and Croatia):

- universities and research centres; enterprises, associations, and consortia; NGOs; public administration at local, regional, and national level; sectoral agencies.

The TECHERA partners were highly involved in the identification and engagement of local stakeholder for their participations. To this a stakeholder template was prepared by AMAP and shared within the partnership to facilitate the potential participants identification and categorization.



The event, validated by the TECHERA partnership, was structured in:

- a short introductive plenary session
- n. 3 working group sessions in parallel to tackle the following issues
 1. Session 1 - Fisheries management and governance;
 2. Session 2 - Innovation and diversification of fisheries;
 3. Session 3 - Aquaculture: management and innovation.

SESSIONE 1
GESTIONE E GOVERNANCE DELLA PESCA

IDEE E PROPOSTE SU GESTIONE COMUNE E GOVERNANCE DELLA PESCA IN ADRIATICO.

- MISURE TECNICHE E GESTIONALI PER UN PRELIEVO SOSTENIBILE DELLE RISORSE
- AUMENTI O DELLA SELETTIVITÀ
- RIDUZIONE DEGLI IMPATTI AL FONDO
- OTTIMIZZAZIONE DELL'ATTIVITÀ DI PESCA
- RIDUZIONE DEI CONFLITTI
- BARRIERE ARTIFICIALI
- FORMAZIONE E NUOVE COMPETENZE

PROJECT PARTNERS:

SESSIONE 2
INNOVAZIONE E DIVERSIFICAZIONE DELLA PESCA

IDEE E PROPOSTE PER L'OTTIMIZZAZIONE DEI PROCESSI (POST-CATTURA), AGGIUNTA DI VALORE AI PRODOTTI ITTICI, SVILUPPO DI MODELLI CIRCOLARI E DI SOLUZIONI PER IL RICICLO LUNGO LA FILIERA ITTICA.

- OTTIMIZZAZIONE DELLA PRODUZIONE IN FUNZIONE DELLE RICHIESTE DI MERCATO
- SERVIZI E PRODOTTI SMART
- CERTIFICAZIONE, CONTROLLO QUALITÀ, LABELLING, MARCHI
- NUOVI PRODOTTI, TRASFORMAZIONE, PACCIAGGIO
- COMMERCIALIZZAZIONE, DISTRIBUZIONE, FILIERA CORTA, PUBBLICITÀ
- LOGISTICA
- RICERCA
- SOLUZIONI PER IL RICICLO E IL RIUSO
- UTILIZZO DEI SOTTOPRODOTTI
- MULTIFUNZIONALITÀ
- FORMAZIONE E NUOVE COMPETENZE
- ORGANIZZAZIONI DI PRODUTTORI, BUSINESS MODELS

PROJECT PARTNERS:



The results from each of the three working group sessions were merged into a final Report drafted in close cooperation with the facilitators that managed – together with the project partners in charge of the organization – the workshop implementation.

AIE’ Secretariat staff supported the partnership in organizing the workshop and preparing the required communication materials and in compliance with the program’s visibility rules. During the event the EAI staff presented and distributed the project’s promotional material to interested stakeholders.

n.3 Posters including a list of issues of each Working Group were prepared and printed to facilitate the selection of the WG of interest. Ad-hoc newsletter to launch the co-design workshop was prepared by partnership and delivered via SEALOGY communication channels to the SEALOGY community.

TECHERA FINAL CONFERENCE IN DUBROVNIK, 19 JUNE 2023

As far as activity 2.1 PP2 AIE organized the Techera Project Final Conference (D. 2.1.1), which took place in Dubrovnik on June 19, a high-level sectoral event on the maritime economy, with the aim of integrating activities, best practices, policy outcomes and cluster recommendations.



In the opening session Mr. Nikola Dobroslavic, AIE' President, gave his institutional greetings and welcome; then Mrs. Natalija Adzic Interreg IT-HR Programme Project Manager provided an overview of the new 2021-2027 Programme with particular reference to the promotion of the blue sector.

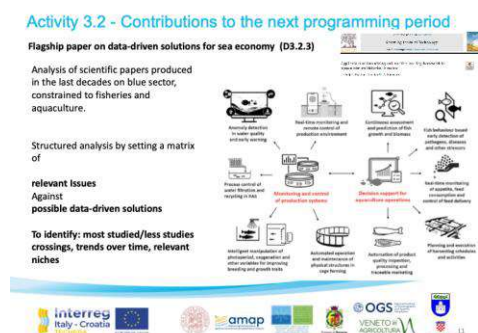
During the first part of the event, the results of the activities within the technical WPs have been presented. All the data collected in the different previous Interreg Italy-Croatia projects capitalized by the TECHERA have been processed in digital tools to support the management of marine space and the protection of marine resources and will be presented.

Luca De Marchi, from Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna (LP) briefly explored the objectives, activities and results of the project.

Carmela Vaccaro as Project Officer of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, Communication WP2 leader, presented the communication tools and activities carried out during project implementation.

The activities of WP2 focused on the communication of the cluster and the results of WP3, showing how the products and results will be transferable. The main target groups included stakeholders of the maritime economy: policy makers, SMEs, commercial agencies, cooperatives.

Attention has been paid to considering stakeholders at local, regional, national and international levels in order to capitalise on the results as much as possible. Digital activities were aimed at specific target



groups such as young people and citizens.

Simone Libralato from OGS - Istituto Nazionale di Oceanografia e di Geofisica Sperimentale, project partner, got into the details of the clustering thematic activities that characterised WP3.

Finally, the second part of the event, dedicated to round tables, saw the participation of numerous stakeholders,

invited by the Techera project partners, who spoke both in person and remotely to provide their input to this high-level sectoral event on sea economy. The main topics of the round tables, speeches and presentations that animated the second part of the event are: “Data driven solutions in the sea economy” and “Blue careers development and sustainable entrepreneurship in the Blue Economy”.

Stakeholders Round table: 1st section “Data driven solutions in the sea economy” moderated by Luca Mulazzani from Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna (LP).

The contributors to the first round table were:

- Lav BAVČEVIĆ – Associate professor of Department of Ecology, Agronomy and Aquaculture, University of Zadar;
- Mauro COSOLO – Friuli Venezia Giulia Region;
- Luca DI NICOLA – InfoTeam expert in innovative IT solutions in the "Blue Economy" sector;

- Thomas GALVAN – Researcher at AGRI.TE.CO. s.c.;
- Giuseppe GARGANO – CREA Bari;
- Mateo IVANAC – Representative of the Croatian Chamber of Economy, “Interreg ITA-HR InnovaMare”;
- Mario LOVRINOV – Director of Maribu d.o.o.;
- Daniela MARIĆ PFANNKUCHEN – Ruđer Bošković Institute, “Interreg ITA-HR CASCADE”;
- Federico MORA – 3D&Realtime artist – consultant of “Accademia Italiana Videogiochi” (AIV);
- Marijana PEĆAREVIĆ – Vice Rector for science and international relations at University of Dubrovnik;
- Andrea TORRESAN – ARPA Regione Veneto “Interreg ITA-HR MARLESS”;
- Piergiorgio VASI – Emilia Romagna Region.

The 2nd section: «Blue careers development and sustainable entrepreneurship in the Blue Economy” moderated by Valentina Andrić from the Croatian Ministry of Agriculture, project partner.

The contributors in the second round table were:

- Massimo BELLAVISTA – Emilia-Romagna Fishing and Aquaculture Manager of Legacoop Agroalimentare;
- Valerio Roberto CAVALLUCCI – Director, FLAG Costa dei Trabocchi;
- Mario CVJETOVIĆ – ORKA d.o.o.;
- Antonio FRANUŠIĆ – Fishery and shellfish craft "Tonći";
- Giorgia GIOACCHINI – Prof. of the Department of Life and Environmental Sciences (DISVA), Polytechnic University of Marche;
- Otello GIOVANARDI – CNR-IRBIM Associate Professor;
- Marco SPINADIN – President of the FLAG Chioggia e Delta del Po.

<p>AI-NURECC PLUS Adriatic Ionian Network Of Universities, Regions, Chambers Of Commerce And Cities Initiative Plus</p> 
<p>Length: from April 2021 to September 2023</p> <p>Co-founder: DG-REGIO - European Commission</p> <p>Co-financed by: EC DG REGIO</p> <p>Topic: Capacity Building and EUSAIR - Sub-topics: Sustainable Tourism, Circular Economy, Cultural and Creative Industries, Youth participation in EUSAIR</p> <p>Role of the Euroregion: Project Partner</p>

Partner: Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions – CPMR, Adriatic and Ionian Euroregion, Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities, Association of Universities of Adriatic and Ionian area – UniAdrion

Website: www.ainurecc.eu

In a nutshell: The Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce and Cities Initiative PLUS (AI-NURECC PLUS) is a preparatory action financed by DG REGIO that will capitalise on the results of the AI-NURECC Initiative, ended in December 2019. This project is coordinated by the CPMR in partnership with four stakeholders from the area: the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion (AIE), the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities (FAIC), the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce (FORUM AIC), and the Association of Universities of the Adriatic Ionian area (UniAdrion).

The AI-NURECC PLUS partners have joined their efforts to support the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Sea Region (EUSAIR) implementation, ensuring deep and broad territorial coverage while enhancing Regional and Local Authorities' appropriation of the EUSAIR main objectives and opportunities in the EUSAIR cross-pillar topics: "Research and Innovation", "SMEs Development", and "Skills Development". AI-NURECC PLUS therefore supports entrepreneurship, transnational clusters, and digital innovation hubs activities for the EUSAIR.

Special attention is paid to Youth, also through initiatives addressed to sport, integration and social inclusion, tools that are expected to further encourage community sustainable development, cohesion and solidarity in the area. AI-NURECC PLUS also aims at encouraging multi-actor networking and collaboration among representatives of the private and public sectors and civil society to foster coordination among EU, national, regional, and local policies to develop Circular Economy.

In this context, AI-NURECC PLUS operates in the following fields: Sustainable Tourism, Cultural and Creative Industries, and Circular Economy.

AI-NURECC PLUS activities also contribute to the implementation of the Cultural and Creative Regional Ecosystems (CCRE-S3) thematic area's objectives in the EUSAIR area. CCRE-S3 is an AI-NURECC deliverable and the first thematic area with a specific focus on a Macro-Regional Strategy.

AI-NURECC PLUS EVENTS IN NORTH MACEDONIA

The Adriatic Ionian Euroregion Secretariat organised the [AI-NURECC Plus](#) events in Skopje (North Macedonia), which brought together Adriatic Ionian stakeholders from across the region including EU



institutions, politicians, EUSAIR structures, decision-makers from all levels, experts, private actors as well as civil society organisations. A great number of local

stakeholders took part in the conference, including local authorities, chambers of commerce, universities and young people.

On 23 January, the High-Level Conference “Sustainable Tourism as a strategic driver for the responsible and inclusive growth of the Adriatic Ionian Region and its mountain areas” explored the role of sustainable tourism in contributing to the post-pandemic industrial and societal recovery of the Adriatic Ionian region, also with reference to challenges and opportunities for mountain areas. The Conference saw the participation of Ms Adriana Relja from the Croatian Ministry of Tourism and Sport, leader of EUSAIR Thematic Steering Group 4 on Sustainable Tourism, and of Mr Daniel-George SURDU, State Secretary of the Romanian Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration. Also, Ms Irina Cozma from the Romanian Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration, represented the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). A stakeholder session led by Prof. Ivanka NESTOROSKA, of the Faculty of tourism and hospitality, University St. Kliment Ohridski-Bitola focused on “sustainability as a driver for tourism development in Adriatic Ionian mountain areas” and saw as speakers the Mr Jovan Tozievski, Mayor of Resen, Mr. Nikola Kiselinov, President at Ohrid Tourist Association, Mr Nehat Ramadani, representative of Connecting Natural Values and People Foundation and Ms Anela Panajatova, Head of Unit at Public institution National Park Sharr Mountain, Mr. Angel SEKULOSKI, Project Coordinator at Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development.



On 24 January, the IV Adriatic Ionian Youth Organisations Forum (AIYOF4) focused on “Youth skills for an innovative, sustainable and inclusive Adriatic Ionian Region”, and discussed the role of youth in advancing towards a greener, more sustainable and inclusive Adriatic Ionian Region, as well as youth engagement in the EUSAIR. Following the work and commitments undertaken during its previous editions, the AIYOF4 saw the special contribution of the Adriatic Ionian Youth Network (AIYN), an open initiative of the AIE and several Adriatic Ionian Youth Organisations aimed at enhancing young people’s appropriation of the EUSAIR and their engagement in the Strategy as stakeholders.

Introduced by Mr. Mladen FRCKOVSKI, Head of Labor Market Unit at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Government of North Macedonia, the event provided for a productive exchange among Adriatic Ionian youth organisations and between the AIYN and two National Youth Councils (National Youth Council of Slovenia and National Youth Council of Macedonia). The group of young people, led by 4 young representatives of the AIYN, was then involved into small working groups to discuss the challenges that Adriatic Ionian youth are facing in the post-pandemic world and the skills that are needed to advance towards a greener, more sustainable and inclusive Adriatic Ionian Region. In particular, each EUSAIR pillar was discussed to pinpoint innovative solutions to the identified challenges. This collective exercise was aimed at stimulating reflections about a meaningful youth participation in the EUSAIR. As a result of discussions, key recommendations were submitted to decision-makers who participated in the final plenary session: Mr Gilles Kittel, representative of the DG Regio at the European Commission, and various the EUSAIR structures including the National Coordinator for Bosnia Herzegovina, then leading the AII/EUSAIR Presidency, Mr Midhat Dzemic, and the Deputy National Coordinator for Croatia, Ms Lidja Pasengrau Hadrovic.



AI-NURECC PLUS EVENTS IN BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA and V Adriatic Ionian Youth Organisations Forum

“Adriatic Ionian youth bring forward their ideas for a better youth engagement in the EUSAIR” was the



title of the V Adriatic Ionian Youth Organisations Forum (AIYOF5), which took place on 25th May 2023 in Sarajevo during the 8th Forum of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR). The event saw the active participation of delegates from Adriatic Ionian youth-led and youth-focused organisations and networks, as well as youth advocates and other youth stakeholders, youth workers, young professionals, young academics and

students, EU institutions, Macroregional actors and stakeholders, civil society organisations and citizens.

The AIYOF5 was powered by the Adriatic Ionian Youth Network (AIYN), an open network promoted by the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion and several Adriatic Ionian Youth Organisations with a view to boost youth engagement in the EUSAIR, stimulating youth to take ownership of its objectives and appropriation of its opportunities, as to propose, structure, design and implement youth-led engagement, advocacy, awareness raising and capacity building actions.

Through the methodology of the Networking Talks, the Forum allowed youth organisations forming part of the AIYN to meet EUSAIR decision-making structures and, together, explore ways and means of promoting a greater role of youth in the Strategy.

Also working groups were organised by young representatives of organisations to discuss about youth contribution to the revision of the EUSAIR Action Plan and the need to develop a new pillar to include youth engagement. The event was an occasion to meet the representatives of the Mediterranean Youth Council (MYC), who actively participated working groups. Results of the working groups were shared in the plenary with the main EU and EUSAIR stakeholders: Mr Gilles Kittel, Team Manager - Instrument for Pre-Accession, Enlargement Negotiation and EUSAIR, DG REGIO (EC); Mr Midhat Dzemic, EUSAIR

National Coordinator for Bosnia Herzegovina; Mr Luka Vujnovic, EUSAIR National Coordination Team Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia; and Ms Simona Mameli, Consular officer for regional cooperation in SEE, Western Balkan Unit, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



As a result of the five editions of the AIYOFs, of the youth actions undertaken in 2023 and the Sarajevo event, the AIE elaborated a *Declaration of Intents* to strengthen cooperation with Adriatic Ionia Youth Organisations for advancing youth involvement in the EUSAIR and for explore the possibility to engage the AIYN institutionally as a permanent stakeholder, making it part of the EUSAIR governance. The Declaration of Intents was signed by the following organisations from all EUSAIR countries:

- Let's Do it Albania - United Nations Association UNA in Albania;
- Center for Youth KVART in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Δίκτυο Ενεργοποίησης Νέων Κατερίνης, Κέντρο Νέων Ηπείρου and TinasLab in Greece;
- Institut za poticanje mladih in Croatia;
- Giovanichimere and Associazione dottorandi e dottori di ricerca italiani ADI in Italy;
- Mreža za mlade Crne Gore, NVO GLAS and Student Business Center in Montenegro;
- Atlantis ESC and Qendra për zhvillim edukativ dhe kulturor "RACIO" in North Macedonia;
- Western Balkans Alumni Association WBAA, Kulturanova and Centar za održivi razvoj Srbije CORS in Serbia;
- Mladinski svet Slovenije MSS and Mladinska zveza brez izgovora Slovenija in Slovenia;
- YOUTH in San Marino

Youth-led Event on Skills

In Sarajevo, the AIE also organised a youth-led event focusing on “Supporting youth skills to counteract *brain drain* in the Adriatic Ionian Region”. The event was an occasion to continue reflecting on the challenges of the *green and digital transition* and on the EU opportunities that young people need to be prepared to seize in order to face them.






Participants received information about EU-led skills development actions in the Adriatic Ionian Region and in particular about the implementation of the Youth Guarantee as explained by the European Training Foundation. Momentous topics such as *brain drain and brain circulation* in the Adriatic Ionian Region were discussed with a special reference to the role of youth organisations in facilitating skills development. A special attention was given to the perspectives of youth organisations and to reflect upon the role they can play in decision-making processes, especially with reference to the introduction of a potential fifth social pillar in the EUSAIR. The event saw the participation of Ms Ulrike Damyanovic, Senior Human Capital Development Expert, Focal point for SEE and Turkey, Country Liaison for Montenegro, European Training Foundation; as well as Ms Irina Cozma, Coordination Team Member, EUSDR PA 3 Culture, tourism and people to people contacts, together with Ms Alina Adomnicăi and Mr Ionuț Ruști, CDT Project Coordinators, Bucovina Institute, Suceava, Romania; and Ms Anna-Maija Toivonen, Policy Area Coordinator, EUSBR PA Tourism.

Contributions from the Danube and Baltic macroregional strategies were incorporated as well, to illustrate how these strategies are supporting the development of sustainable tourism and creative skills for youth.

A-NURECC PLUS FINAL EVENTS IN BRUSSELS

The AI-NURECC PLUS Initiative organised the project’s Final events on 30th November 2023 in Brussels (Belgium). The works started with a youth-led event of the Adriatic-Ionian Youth Network (AIYN), organised by the AIE, and continued with the project’s Final Conference.

<p>COMMUNITY 4 TOURISM</p>   <p>Co-funded by the European Union</p> <hr/> <p>Sustainable tourism</p> 
<p>Length: 7 Years - January 2023 – December 2029</p> <p>Programme: INTERREG EURO MED</p> <p>Role of the Euroregion: Project Partner</p> <p>Topic: Enhancing sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean</p> <p>Coordinated by: Diputació de Barcelona (Spain)</p> <p>More at: https://interreg-euro-med.eu/en/</p> <p>In a nutshell:</p> <p>Community4Tourism is an Interreg Euro-MED Thematic Community project coordinated by the Barcelona Provincial Council and falls under the programme's Mission "Enhancing Sustainable Tourism". It is a seven-year project that aims to contribute to the EU Territorial Cooperation and its transnational dimension through the objectives included in the Programme and the main goals of Mission 4, related to the Enhancement of Sustainable Tourism in the MED Area and the transition towards a climate-neutral and resilient society.</p> <p>The project is based upon the main objective of improving a better governance of cooperation, both policy governance and multi-sectoral, multi-level and transnational territorial governance, with a strong focus on environment and climate, promoting a smarter and greener Mediterranean, which is in line with the European Green Deal, the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations and the Territorial Agenda 2030.</p> <p>The project is built upon the outputs of the Interreg MED 2014/2020 Sustainable Tourism and BleuTourMed Projects but reinforces its objectives to current new challenges. Community4Tourism integrates the 4 Programme's specific objectives, as tourism has shown to be a transversal issue in the MED area, involving all kinds of stakeholders, agents and territories. It will address its activities to pursue the consolidation of a competitive innovation ecosystem, support a circular economy, promote climate change adaptation, and enhance nature and biodiversity. As a result of its activities, it will come up with jointly developed solutions and promote cooperation across borders.</p> <p>The project ensures also the necessary synergies with the Dialogue4Tourism, the other governance project of the tourism mission, and other Euro-MED initiatives and stakeholders to ensure the capitalisation of the project results in other territories, improve multi-level governance and contribute to supporting macro-regional and sea basin strategies in the basin.</p>

The Adriatic Ionian Euroregion has a key role in the project as leader of the Trasfering Work Package and activities.

1st PARTNERS MEETING OF COMMUNITY4TOURISM (C4T) PROJECT

The 1st COMMUNITY4TOURISM Project Meeting was held on 19 January in Marseille (France), and the AIE Secretariat staff participated in the event as full partner of the project.

The project Community4Tourism, aims to contribute to EU territorial cooperation and its transnational dimension through the Programme's objectives and the main goals of its Mission 4 related to the Enhancement of Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean and the transition towards a climate-neutral and resilient society. This project is based upon the main objective of improving better governance of cooperation, both policy governance and multi-sectoral, multi-level and transnational territorial governance, with a strong focus on the environment and climate, promoting a smarter and greener Mediterranean.



The project is built out of the outputs of the Interreg MED 2014-20 Sustainable Tourism Community and its partnership (Barcelona Provincial Council-DIBA, PLAN BLEU for Mediterranean Environment and Development, UNIMED, Adriatic Ionian Euro-Region, NECSTouR) counting on the addition of two new partners (the University of Tirana and the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission). It integrates the 4 Programme's specific objectives, as tourism has shown to be a transversal issue in the MED area, involving all kinds of stakeholders, agents, and territories.

As leader of the Coordination activities, the CPMR-Intermediterranean Commission will ensure the necessary synergies with the Dialogue4Tourism and other Euro-MED initiatives and stakeholders to ensure the capitalisation of the project results in other territories, improve multi-level governance and contribute to supporting macro-regional and sea basin strategies in the basin.

2nd STEERING COMMITTEE IN VOLOS FOR COMMUNITY4TOURISM

The partners of Community4Tourism (C4T) project meet in Volos (Greece) on 5th and 6th of July for the 2nd steering committee. The meeting was hosted by the University of Thessaly and the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, as partner of this governance project financed by Interreg Interreg Euro-MED programme, was represented by the staff of the AIE Secretariat. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the progress of the project and to plan the upcoming activities in the next two years. In particular, during the two-day meeting, all the partners had the opportunity to get together and discuss the state of art of the project as well as upcoming activities which will involve the thematic projects currently in the selection phase. Community4Tourism is now ready to welcome the thematic projects under the Programme mission “Sustainable Tourism” that will be awarded the final approval by the end of 2023.

Talking about the main decisions taken in Volos, as far as concern the communication, the Mission website is about to be launched soon and the social media of the mission (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube) are already available.

The Adriatic Ionian Euroregion and the University of Thessaly presented the exchange groups (Thematic Working Groups and Mediterranean Clusters) that will be created in the framework of C4T and that will involve, among others, the thematic projects that will be selected. AIE has presented in Volos a draft version of the guidelines for coordinate the Mediterranean Clusters, one of the activities programmed under the Work Package Transferring. Indeed, the Community4Tourism project will create the Mediterranean Clusters to promote the dissemination of the results and the participation of actors beyond the partnership and the community of projects itself. These networks shall facilitate the dissemination of knowledge, the transfer and mainstreaming, the involvement of relevant external actors working in concrete thematic to produce further results.

CRPM and NECSTouR presented the draft agenda for the 1st Joint Annual Forum that will be held during the event of the Interreg-MED Programme on the 21st and 22nd of November in Slovenia. This event will be organized every year in the framework of the Programme’s Mission to highlight certain aspects of sustainable tourism and bring together the key actors of the sector, both institutional and technical. The 2023 Forum will therefore be considered as a moment to present the mission, its objectives, its activities open to the tourism stakeholders who will be present there and to start thinking about synergies with other initiatives, programmes etc.

1st Joint Annual Forum of the Sustainable Tourism Mission

On November 22nd, 2023 in Ljubljana it was held the First Joint Annual Forum organised by the Sustainable Tourism Mission of the Interreg Euro-Med Programme. The event was aimed at presenting

the goals and the activities of the Mission, paying special attention to the role and contributions of all the actors involved in carrying the Mission out. It took place in a dedicated session of the Interreg Euro-Med programme event “Connecting the dots: the paths to a Smarter and Greener Mediterranean held in Ljubljana” on the 21st and 22nd of November 2023. The event was targeted to the partners of the Sustainable Tourism Mission, Mediterranean Tourism Stakeholders from the public and private sector, Associated Partners of the two governance projects featuring the Mission, Stakeholders from the Southern Shore, EU institutions, the Joint Secretariat, National Contact Points, key representatives from Euro-MED organisations and initiatives such as the Union for Mediterranean and representatives from the other thematic missions of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme.

<p>DIALOGUE4INNOVATION</p> 
<p>Length: 7 Years - January 2023 – December 2029</p> <p>Programme: INTERREG EURO MED</p> <p>Role of the Euroregion: Project Partner</p> <p>Topic: Innovative Sustainable Economy</p> <p>Coordinated by: Emilia Romagna Region</p> <p>More at:</p> <p>In a nutshell: Dialogue4Innovation is the Institutional Dialogue project funded by Interreg Euro-MED Programme and coordinated by Emilia Romagna Region. The seven-year project falls under the programme’s Mission “Innovative Sustainable Economy”.</p> <p>The project aims to support mission-oriented innovation policy and the creation of long-lasting conditions for a permanent dialogue on innovation in the Mediterranean. Dialogue4Innovation will work to increase the coordination, coherence and alignment of policies and actions for innovative sustainable economy at the basin scale.</p> <p>Capacity building is one of the pillars of the project, which will develop tools to increase the capacity of policy makers and stakeholders to address the Sustainable Development Goals more effectively. By working with territorial actors through Transformative Innovation Policy Labs, the project will promote the diffusion of more systemic and integrated approaches, which are necessary to tackle the urgent challenges of the ecological transition.</p> <p>Dialogue4Innovation will contribute to improve the long-lasting conditions for a permanent institutional and social dialogue in the Mediterranean, bridging the transnational dimension with local solutions. It will become a reference platform for Mediterranean innovation ecosystem</p>

stakeholders aimed at fostering an open, inclusive, and effective governance, increasing the visibility and relevance of the Mediterranean instances at the European and international levels. To amplify its impact, the project will support Mediterranean challenge-driven multi-actor alliances. To meet its objectives, it will build on the outcomes of the Interreg Euro-MED thematic projects, narrowing the gap with the policy priorities (at local, regional, national, Mediterranean & European level) and promoting their integration in structural policies and practices.

WEBINAR: STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE FOR AN INNOVATIVE SUSTAINABLE MEDITERRANEAN ECONOMY



On 6th July 2023, the Webinar “Strengthening Governance for an innovative sustainable mediterranean economy was held online.

The Webinar has been the launch event of Interreg Euro-MED Mission: Innovative Sustainable Economy.

The webinar introduced the two governance projects Community4Innovation and Dialogue4Innovation financed by Interreg Euro-Med Programme. The Adriatic Ionian Euroregion is involved in Dialogue4Innovation as project partner, together with Emilia Romagna Region and other Mediterranean players. Dialogue4Innovation has officially started on 1st of January, the partners have been working in these months, together with the Thematic Community Project, to set the scene for this new adventure that will last until 2029 and the online event has been the occasion to illustrate in more detail the projects approach and scheduled activities and to start exchanges on possible collaboration.

This event officially commenced the Online Launch of the Interreg Euro-MED Mission: Innovative Sustainable Economy and its activities. Partners provided an overview of the planned activities and the mission’s strategy for the coming years.

The event also served as an opportunity to introduce the joint roadmap, highlight synergies, and outline the expected roles of coordination bodies to ensure broader stakeholder engagement and a more significant impact on the governance projects of the mission.

The leader of the project is the Italian region of Emilia-Romagna and the consortium has nine partners, including the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion, organisations and research centres from France, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the CPRM (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions), the Government of Catalonia and MedWaves. It also has, as associated partners, local bodies in the Mediterranean, MedCities, the Euroregion Pyrenees Mediterranean.

First Innovation camp of the Dialogue4Innovation Project – Review of the opening conference

The first Innovation Camp was organised by the Dialogue4Innovation project, in collaboration with the EUSAIR Presidency and the Interreg IPA ADRION 2021-2027 Programme, took place on 23-24 May in Sarajevo during the 8th Forum of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) hosted by the Directorate for European Integration of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The two-day event addressed local, regional, national, and macro-regional policymakers, researchers, and actors in the field of smart specialisation and territorial development. It focused on exploring opportunities to strengthen smart specialisation for sustainability in the Adriatic and Ionian macro-region as a contribution to the European Green Deal and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.

The first day of the camp opened with a half-day conference session, followed by the first workshop. On the second day, a hands-on session was held to illustrate how the systemic and transformative innovation approach can be applied to address a specific challenge, such as rural depopulation.

The conference session saw the participation of 18 speakers from European institutions, Interreg programmes, international organisations and representatives of the innovation ecosystems, in conversation with the Mission representatives. More than 80 people enrolled and attended, either in person or online and were involved in the discussion through digital polls.

The Event saw the participation of several important speakers such as Midhat Džemić – Directorate for European Integration of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, EUSAIR 2022/2023 Presidency, Lorenzo Donatelli – First Secretary of the Embassy of Italy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Džana Sokolović – Directorate for European Integration of Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Interreg Euro-MED BA National Contact Point, Gilles Kittel – European Commission, DG Regional Policy and Urban Policy, Isabelle Nobio – Interreg Euro-MED Programme Joint Secretariat, Matija Pavlovčič – Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development of Slovenia, EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner Team.

The discussion continued with the approach of the Innovative Sustainable Economy (ISE) mission that works to boost a just transition to a more innovative sustainable economy in the Euro-Mediterranean region, focusing on green, blue and circular aspects.

Alessandro Daraio – Emilia-Romagna Region, Mission Institutional Dialogue Project Lead Partner – outlined the Innovative Sustainable Economy (ISE) mission scope and the objectives of the governance projects. Mr. Daraio presented the approach proposed by the project to pursue those objectives, stressing the openness to collaboration with external stakeholders and co-creation with other initiatives. Ema Midžić – CENER21, Mission Thematic Community Project Partner – deepened into the thematic community project activities and its specific approach, building on the work of the previous Interreg MED 2014-2020 Green Growth Thematic Community.

The session followed by the key role of smart specialisation strategies in the Mission activities, as a potential enabler of further cooperation to leverage on innovation to address complex challenges, such as the depopulation in rural and lagging regions.

This session was animated by several speakers such as Tatiana Fernández – Catalan Government, Mission Institutional Dialogue Project – focused on the role of Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) to foster innovation and accelerate a sustainable transition. Ms. Fernández explained why we need systemic approaches to address complex challenges and focusing in transformative innovation policies to favour lagging regions in search of their own path to sustainable development. In this sense, Fernando Mérida Martín – European Commission Joint Research Centre Seville – discussed how the European Commission is supporting initiatives through key frameworks such as Long-Term Vision for the EU’s Rural Area 2040 and the New European Innovation Agenda.

Another session was dedicated to the opportunities for collaboration for innovation across the Mediterranean

The final part of the conference explored the synergies between the Interreg Programmes and other initiatives to foster innovation and cooperation across the scale of multilevel governance in the Mediterranean. The Adriatic Ionian Euroregion was represented by Daniele Antinarella (Abruzzo Region) presented the experience of the region, which strategically invested ERDF funds to promote the innovation cooperation process. Mr. Antinarella explained the role of the Partnerships for Regional Innovation (PRI) pilot action. PRI focused on attracting knowledge providers located outside the region and whose involvement in cooperation projects can increase the impact on the regional territory collaboration experiences. It stimulated the Regional Administration to include interregional cooperation for collaborative research within the calls for proposal of the ERDF Regional Programme.

Finally, Sinisa Marcic – Regional Cooperation Council – gave an overview of S3 developments in the region, highlighting the effort to strengthen links between academia and SMEs. He focused on two RCC concrete collaboration experiences: the Western Balkans Innovation and Research Platform and Regional Diaspora Knowledge Transfer Initiative. Both serve as an examples of the potential synergies with the ISE Mission activities.

In this rich starting conference session participants learned more about the approach proposed by the Interreg Euro-Mediterranean Mission Innovative Sustainable Economy Institutional Dialogue project and how to better cooperate to address complex environmental and social challenges. Invited speakers offered interesting insights and showed a crucial alignment with the foreseen Mission’s activities in the next years. Participants also engaged and exchanged their opinions on the topics discussed through an online survey. In particular, the survey showed that the majority of them had great confidence in the impact of the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes (Interreg) and considered the issue of

sustainable innovation as central strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian region. In this direction, 64% of voters raised interest in learning more about transformative innovation policies. As such, participants showed relevant interest in structured online and in person capacity-building programmes and engage with working groups at EUSAIR/Mediterranean scale.

EUSAIR AND OTHER INITIATIVES

8th ANNUAL EUSAIR FORUM

The 8th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region was organised by Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Commission, with the support of the EUSAIR Facility Point, in Sarajevo from 23 to 25 May 2023.

The AIE Secretariat Staff, also as a partner in the framework of the AI-NURECC project partners participated to the 8th EUSAIR Annual Forum on site, in Sarajevo, and contributed with several sessions to the rich programme of the Annual Forum.



As the country faces severe “brain drain” issues (that affects many aspects of life) and having in mind that recently Bosnia and Herzegovina received the EU candidate status, there was no doubt about what the main topic of the Annual Forum. The other two thematic orientations were: the enlargement process and “greening” of EUSAIR, the later as an important contribution to the European Green Deal and the Green Agenda for Western Balkan and thus contributing to EU enlargement policy, too. Different stakeholders of all ages were engaged, with strong focus on youth involvement.

The plenary and thematic sessions focused on the digital and green transition, the regional response to the COVID-19 crisis, macro-regional cooperation in relation to the EU post-2020 strategic and legal framework, the new methodology for enlargement and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, as well as the recovery of the cultural and creative industries in the region.

In this occasion the Republic of Croatia took charge of the Presidency of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and Adriatic Ionian Initiative (AII), starting officially on 1 June 2023. Following the Tirana and the Sarajevo Declarations, the Croatian Presidency decided to put a major effort in boosting youth engagement in the EUSAIR and, consequently, to establish close cooperation with the AII-NURECC PLUS initiative, taking the AIE as main contact organisation for all the activities related to youth foreseen in the [Presidency's programme](#) from 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024.

STRONG WOMEN FOR A STRONGER ADRIATIC-IONIAN REGION ON 4-5 JULY 2023, ZAGREB

The Croatian Presidency invited the AIE, as representative of the AII-NURECC PLUS initiative and partner on charge of the youth action, to organise and lead a panel about “Strengthening role of youth in the



region for the future”, which implied the participation of a group of youth organisations representing the Adriatic Ionian Youth Network. In this event took part: Ms Eva Kotnik, President, National Youth Council of Slovenia; Natasa Gligorijevic, Director of Centre of Sustainable Development Serbia; Nikolina Adzic, founder of Youth Network Montenegro; and Mr Tomislav Jelekovic, board member of Status M, Croatia.

The event was an occasion to explain many activities carried out by the AIE in the field of youth engagement and for the participating youth to explore how gender issues are dealt with by Adriatic Ionian youth organisations.

YOUTH CONFERENCE ADRIATIC IONIAN REGION IS YOU(TH) ON 15-16 NOVEMBER 2023, SPLIT

The Conference named “*THE ADRIATIC-IONIAN REGION IS YOU(TH)! - Connecting the youth of the Adriatic-Ionian Region*” took place on 15-16 November 2023 in Split (University of Split, Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism), within the framework of the AII/EUSAIR Croatian Chairmanship.



The conference organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Croatia with the support of the AII Permanent Secretariat and the Split University provided a unique opportunity to get to know some of the leading youth organizations of the region, members of chambers of commerce, municipal authorities, universities and others stakeholders. The aim of the Conference is to connect young people and youth organizations.

Within this event, the AIE was called to organise and lead a panel on youth engagement through networking, capacity building, knowledge sharing as well as initiatives addressed to sport, integration and social inclusion. The event saw as panelists Mr Milan Stojanovic, WBAA Board Member and Project Manager, Ms Natasha Gligorijevic, Center for Sustainable Development of Serbia, Mr Vladimir Perazic Adzic, Youth Network Montenegro, Mr Nikola Aleksic, Senior Advisor for International Relations, Municipality of Split, Mr Luka Skeva, Coach of Kosarkaski klub Split.



EU WEEK OF REGIONS AND CITIES

The AIE participated in the 21st European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels (Belgium), one of the most important events for EU-enthusiasts and for local and regional authorities in EU and beyond. The AIE was invited to take part in the "Youth Manifesto for the Western Balkans 2.0" event that was held on 10 October as organised by the Albanian Cooperation and Development Institute in cooperation with DG REGIO. It was a great opportunity to explain AIE perspective's on youth engagement in the Adriatic Ionian Region and within the framework of the EUSAIR, and to share the results achieved in this field thanks to the AI-NURECC PLUS initiative. Since 2018, supported by DG Regio at the European Commission, the AI-NURECC PLUS Consortium was able to provide awareness raising, high-level post-graduate training, internship positions, networking and capacity building opportunities for young people across the Adriatic Ionian area. The Adriatic Ionian Euroregion contributed in many ways to creating a participated and youth-led path of growing engagement for youth in the region.

MED COOP ALLIANCE

Throughout 2023, the members of the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance (CRPM – Intermediterranean Commission, Euroregio Pyrenees-Mediterranean, Adriatic Ionian Euroregion,

Medcities) have intensified the work to promote the adoption of a Mediterranean Macroregional Strategy. EU institutions, like the Committee of the Regions, have taken significant steps towards developing a new macroregional strategy for the entire Mediterranean area. This includes the adoption of the opinion “Towards a macroregional strategy for the Mediterranean” prepared by the Rapporteur Nikola Dobroslavic.

To provoke action from the European Institutions regarding its establishment, the Mediterranean Cooperation Alliance, together with Regional representatives, Members of the European Parliament and representatives from the European institutions have signed the declaration “Becoming a friend of the Mediterranean Macro-Region”. The Friends of the Mediterranean Macro-Region is an open initiative. Any institution, entity or private person is free to join this community by signing the declaration and pledging to fulfill its principles.

In the framework of the alliance the Euroregion has signed two important declarations for supporting the creation of a macro regional strategy at the scale of the Mediterranean:

- BECOMING A FRIEND OF THE MEDITERRANEAN MACRO REGION
- Declaration in favour of the Mediterranean Macro-region

In the backdrop of these efforts, the Government of Catalonia has organised three important events in coordination with the Member of the Med Cooperation Alliance:

1. The conference “Launching the Friends of the Mediterranean Macro-Region”, Brussels, 24 April 2023,
2. the MEDCAT DAY 2023, Barcelona, 12-13 June 2023,
3. the “Summit for the Mediterranean Macroregion”, Barcelona, 24th November 2023 and

All the events were attended by political representatives of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion. The Vice President Aldrin Dalipi represented the AIE in the Summit for the Mediterranean Macroregion bringing his support to the establishment of macroregional strategy in the mediterranean.