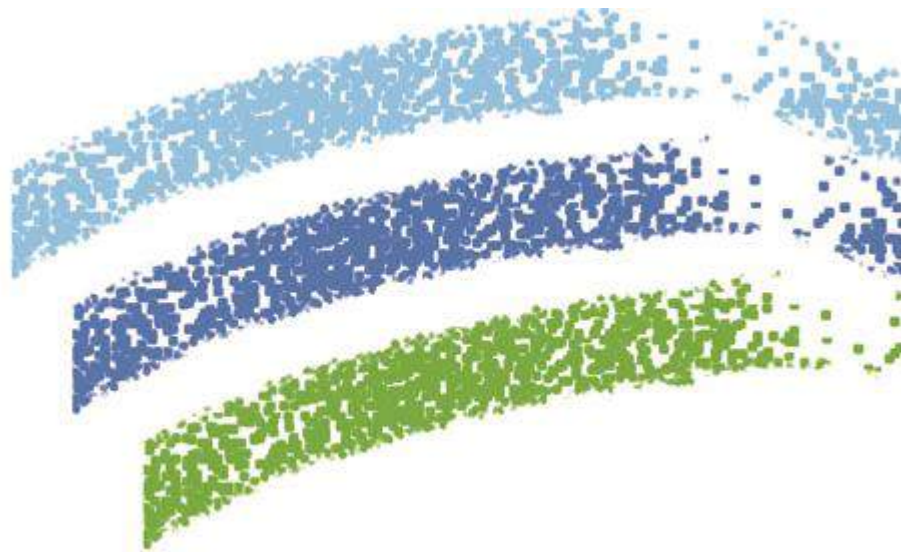




ADRIATIC-IONIAN EUROREGION ACTIVITY REPORT 2016



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1. Meeting of the Presidency Bureau of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, – Pescara, 15th January 2016

The meeting of the Presidency Bureau of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion was held in Pescara, at the headquarters of the Abruzzo Region, on 26th April 2016 was attended by the President of the Association, Mr. Nikola Dobroslavić, the Vice President Vicarious, Mr. Luciano D'Alfonso, the Vice President, Mr. Aldrin Dalipi and the Secretary General, Mr. Francesco Cocco. The Managing Authority of the IPA Adriatic Programme, Ms. Paola Salvatore, is also present.



In the opening of the meeting, President Dobroslavić reported to the audience that, along with the Secretary General, it was decided to meet to take stock of the situation, and expressed to those present the willingness to approve an Action Plan for the current year and for the coming year.

Mr. Dobroslavić reported that a proposal of the Action Plan above mentioned has already been prepared, and believed that this Plan should meanwhile support the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-regional Strategy (EUSAIR), with particular attention to the issue of connectivity.

He reaffirmed that AIE should work on a single project with two segments: connectivity on the Italian part (ridge of the Apennines) and connectivity on the eastern Adriatic part.

President Dobroslavić has anticipated that this vision will be fully illustrated during the 1st Forum of the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-regional Strategy, to be held on 12 and 13 May in Dubrovnik, organized by the Croatian Government and the European Commission.

Regarding future events, Mr. Dobroslavić expressed the need to schedule a meeting of the Executive Committee in February in Dubrovnik, while in June an event in Pula to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the AIE; lastly, the President called for a recovery of the Thematic Commissions' activities and, after repeating that the most important issue is that of connectivity.

Vice President Dalipi told that in Albania the government is working hard on this issue of connectivity, especially to improve connectivity between Albania and Montenegro, and is striving for the improvement of road networks. Finally, he reiterated the importance of tourism as well as agriculture, and expressed his intention to organize a forum in which to invite entrepreneurs and the business community.

Vice President Vicarious of the AIE and President of the Abruzzo Region, Mr. Luciano D'Alfonso, stressed the need to draw up a program of works to do and goals to achieve, and has considered that it is also necessary to promote the emergence of a "citizen of the Adriatic" and has focused in particular on five important aspects: Connectivity, Entrepreneurship, Education, Health and Tourism.

Francesco Cocco, Secretary General of the AIE, underlined the importance to increase the activities of

the association and increase the political role of the network, and underlined the importance to reactivate the Thematic Commissions.

Ms. Paola Di Salvatore, Managing Authority of the IPA Adriatic Programme 2007-2013, added that it is necessary to maintain the territorial transversal dimension and to focus on the main themes of interest for the area, such as immigration, community fraud and financial flows.

The meeting ended with the approval of the proposed Action Plan.

2. Third meeting of the 'CLAVET' project (ERASMUS+) - Pescara, 26th January 2016

The Steering Committee of the Clavet project held in Pescara on the 26th January 2016 was attended by the Secretary General of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, Mr. Francesco Cocco.

During the meeting, the partners discussed the progress of the project activities and the upcoming launch of the OER platform.

The main objective of the Clavet project was to develop a platform for structured co-operation between local authorities for the qualitative development of education and vocational training initiatives with the aim to overcome geographical and border barriers and create an education and vocational training area common to the whole European Union.

The Clavet platform is a point of reference for local authorities for the formulation and the implementation of VET initiatives: the platform will strengthened skills, experiences and knowledge of the different involved authorities and it became a knowledge centre and a meeting point for the authorities in the field of education and vocational training.

Double the contribution to the initiative provided by the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion that thanks to the partecipazione of all its members, contributed to the enlargement of the network of local authorities and to the inclusion of best practices in the platform by Croatian regions.

3. Executive Committee, - Brussels, 10th February 2016

On 10th February 2016, the Executive Committee of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion met in Brussels, at the headquarters of the Molise Region.

The President of AIE and Members of the Committee present discussed on the Action Plan for 2016, and the President Dobroslavić highlighted the great contribution of the AIE to the finalization of the Eusair, but emphasized the importance that regional and local authorities have to guarantee, as the implementation of the strategy will not be possible without involving regions and cities, too.

There was also talk of the 1st Forum of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), jointly organised by the European Commission and the Government of the Republic of Croatia, to be held in Dubrovnik May 12 to 13, which will be an excellent opportunity to give visibility to AIE, since the presence of President Dobroslavić gives to the network, which has supported and contributed to the approval of the strategy, the emphasis it deserves.

During the meeting we talked about the new AIE website, and the Secretary General, Francesco Cocco, stressed the importance of including on the portal contributions and information precise and always up to date.

The members of the Committee have also addressed the point related to the celebration of the 10th AIE Anniversary Celebration. The President said that the AIE members will share their ideas on the results obtained by the Association, on future activities, and the challenges that the region will face.

4. Confernece "Women Commitment for Sustainable Partnership in the perspective of EUSAIR development" 10 March 2016, Shkodër, Albania

On 10 March 2016, in the frame of AdriGov project, the conference "Women Commitment for Sustainable Partnership in the perspective of EUSAIR development" was held in Shkodër at Hotel Colosseum.

The AIE, as one of the major network operating in the area and with experience in the promotion of international cooperation and inter-regional cooperation between the regions and the local authorities of the Adriatic basin Ionian countries, including through the AdriGov project, financed by the funds the IPA Adriatic CBC program, plays an important and active role in multilevel governance in the Strategy of the Adriatic Ionian Region (EUSAIR).



The focus of the conference was the commitment and the role of women in decision-making how they contribute to create the conditions for a strong and consistent partnership in the perspective of EUSAIR implementation.

Speakers were the representatives of the partner institutions: the IPA Management Authority, Ms. Paola Salvatore, Francesco Cocco (AIE Secretary General), the Mayor of the Municipality of Herceg Novi and some representatives from Molise Region, Emilia

Romagna, Municipality of Kotor, County of Dubrovnik, as well as representatives of local institutions. As outcome of the meeting, it was signed an agreement for a more active work in the EUSAIR Strategy.

5. Thematic session and workshop on fisheries and aquaculture, Ioannina, 15-17 March 2016

In the frame of AdriGov project the Region of Epirus organized the thematic session and workshop on Fisheries and Aquaculture in Ioannina from 15 to 17 March 2016. The events were part in joint initiatives for research synergies between the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion and the new scenario created by the establishment of the Adriatic Ionian Macro-region.

The specific theme was: "Shared Planning for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development at the macro regional level: challenges and prospects", the first session was introduced by the representatives of the Molise Region.

Ms. Sofia Loukmidou, coordinator for Greece of the first EUSAIR pillar “blue growth” animated the event together with Mr. Argyris Kallaniotis, Director of the Fisheries Research Institute. The event proposed a joint action plan for the development of fisheries and aquaculture in the Adriatic Ionian Region to be implemented under the project. The participants took part in study visit in a local port and aquaculture units in Thesprotia.

6. Meeting of the Presidency Bureau of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, Tirana, 26th April 2016

The meeting of the Presidency Bureau of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion was held in Tirana on 26th April 2016 and attended by the President of the Association, Mr. Nikola Dobroslavić, the Vice President Vicarious, Mr. Luciano D'Alfonso, the Vice President, Mr. Aldrin Dalipi and the Secretary General, Mr. Francesco Cocco. The Managing Authority of the IPA Adriatic Programme, Ms. Paola Salvatore, and the Coordinator of the JTS of the IPA Programme, Mr. Nadan Petrovic, were also present.

The meeting was also attended by Mr. Ivo Benzon, representing the Split-Dalmatia County, President of the Thematic Commission (TC) for Productive Activities, and Mr. Alfred Mullaraj, President of the Regional Council of Durres, which has the presidency of the TC for Social Affairs, and Mr. Giovanni Di Stasi, Former President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

The meeting focused on AIE upcoming events, Eusair Forum, Pula event and Thematic Commissions' activities.

President Dobroslavić highlighted the great contribution of the AIE to the finalization of the Eusair, but emphasized the importance that regional and local authorities have to guarantee, as the implementation of the strategy will not be possible without involving regions and cities, too.

7. Conference: Agro-tourism's Development – a tool for the social – economic growth of our Regions” – Tirana, 26th April 2016

As an initiative of the Presidential Bureau of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion under the special attention of the President of the Regional Council of Tirana, at the same time, Deputy President of Adriatic Ionian Euroregion was organized in Tirana on April 26th 2016 the international conference “Agro-tourism's Development – A tool for the social – economic growth of our Regions”.

The aim of the Conference was to share the latest developments in the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion and discuss on forthcoming project and activities among the countries of the AIE for the coordinated development of agro tourism, as a tool to contribute to the socioeconomic progress of the AIE regions in cohesion with the objectives of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region (EUSAIR).

The conference was welcomed from Mr. Aldrin Dalipi, President of Tirana Regional Council Deputy President of Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, and was addressed from Interventions Mr. Nikola Dobroslavic, President of Adriatic Ionian Euroregion and President of Dubrovnik – Nerveta Region, Croatia and Mr. Luciano D'Alfonso, Deputy President Vicarious of Adriatic Ionian Euroregion President of Abruzzo Region, Italy.

Mr. Erion Veliaj, Mayor of Tirana, in his speech at the conference, emphasized the potentials and capacities of Tirana City and Region to develop agro-tourism as a tool to sustainable development,

while learning from the best practices of other neighbor countries. Mr. Veliaj said that Tirana with its rich nature, culture and tradition and wonderful climate offers all that is needed for the development of agro tourism.

Ms. Paola Di Salvatore, Head of Managing Authority IPA Adriatic CBS, while addressing the conference, emphasized the importance of common regional projects on increasing socio – economic cohesion among all the countries of Adriatic Ionian Euroregion and agro tourism development as a form of economic development that embodies respect for our land, our seas and the work of the good people of our prosperous region.

The conference was addressed from Ms. Odeta Barbullushi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania, Ms. Adela Shera Karapici, as Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship of Albania, Mr. Giovanni Di Stasi, Ex President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Mr. Luan Bregasi, President of “Business Albania” and Mr. Agim Rrapaj, President of Albanian Agribusiness Council, Mr. Alfred Mullaraj, President of Durres Regional Council, Member of AIE and Mr. Angelo Belliggiano, President of the Course of Degree in Agricultural Science and Technology at the University of Molise, Italy. The conference was moderated from Francesco Cocco, Secretary General of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion.

8. The territorial cooperation in the Adriatic-Ionian macro region and EUSAIR Strategy Opportunities, Competitiveness and Connectivity, 27 April 2016, Shkodër, Albania

On 27 April, within the AdriGov project, it was held the conference “The territorial cooperation in the Adriatic-Ionian macro region and EUSAIR Strategy Opportunities, Competitiveness and Connectivity” on 27 April 2016 in Shkodër, Albania. The theme was the commitment of public bodies and the development agencies, regional and local level, to create the conditions for a sustainable partnership with a view to the development of EUSAIR.

The social and economic development of this Area requires a new approach to implement the objectives set by the EU for the strategy. European Territorial Cooperation in this area is essential to explore the possibilities to participate in calls of the ETC programmes which will permit common project and financial resources.

Speakers of the conference were: Mrs. Raffaella Campanati, Italian Embassy in Tirana, Francesco Cocco, Secretary General of the Euroregion, Piercarlo Rossi, Professor of international law at the University of Piedmont, Giovanni Di Stasi, Gaetano Dentamara, Confindustria Bari, Paolo Rossi IUSEFOR.

Ms. Greta Bardeli, as President of Shkoder Region, said that the involvement of local and regional authorities is crucial for the EU enlargement process. Therefore it is essential the creation of institutional networks and the cooperation with other European organizations and institutions that help the implementation of EUSAIR Strategy. It was signed a cooperation agreement between the Regional Council of Shkodra, the University of Shkodra "Luigi Gurakuqi" and IUSEFOR to create a training institution with a programme in EU projects.

9. “4PILLARS: FOR PROMOTING AN INNOVATIVE MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM OF EUSAIR”- Brussels, 3th May 2016

On 3 May 2016 the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) of the IPA Adriatic CBC Programme approved the project “4PILLARS: For Promoting an Innovative multi-Level governance System of EUSAIR”, which Euroregion is associated partner. 4PILLARS has been granted under Priority 1 (Economic, Social and Institutional Cooperation) - Measure 1.4 (Institutional Cooperation), and has been funded with the aim of sharing good practices between the partners of the Adriatic Ionian area in order to improve governance at local level.

The general aim of the project consisted in contributing to the achievement of EUSAIR objectives according to the 4 pillars, exploiting the good results attained by previous approved projects financed by IPA Adriatic CBC Programme 2007-2013, increasing the long term impact of cross-border cooperation through sharing, mainstreaming and transferring of accomplished products.

4PILLARS has capitalized 13 projects IPA Adriatic CBC financed in the Programme period 2007-2013: thanks to the experience and results achieved with SHAPE, INTERMODAL, APC, ADRIGOV, BALMAS, DE FISH GEAR, TISAR, HERA, SPEEDY, SIMPLE, ECOSEA, STAR and EASY CONNECTING, the partners shared best practices to put into practice the four pillars of strategy EUSAIR.

Moreover, the sharing of best practices and technical and institutional competences related to the multilevel governance between local government authorities improved the delivery of innovative services to the administration in the Adriatic.

10. “The 1st EUSAIR FORUM”, - Dubrovnik, 12th - 13th May 2016

On 12 - 13 May 2016, in Dubrovnik (Croatia), took place the 1st Forum of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), jointly organised by the European Commission and the Government of the Republic of Croatia.



The Forum gathered together the representatives of the national, regional and local administrations of the eight participating countries, as well as a wide range of stakeholders (academia, business sector, civil society) to discuss the progress so far and define the way forward.

The event represented also an opportunity to give visibility to the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion network, which has supported and contributed to the approval of EUSAIR Strategy, thanks to the presence and the coordination of the President Dobroslavić.

During the opening session, the Commissioner for Regional Policy, Corina Crețu, pointed out the key role that EUSAIR plays for a real integration and the promotion of the competitiveness in the territory.

A second plenary session was devoted to discuss and analyse the challenges linked to good and multi-level governance, with a discussion followed afterwards on the important role to play by sub-national administrations in the Strategy's implementation. Good practices were highlighted by Slovenia as a country participating in three macro-regional strategies.

Three parallel sessions offered a platform for exchange and discussion about crucial issues connected to the four pillars of the Strategy: 1) Blue Growth, 2) Connecting the Region, 3) Environmental Quality and 4) Sustainable Tourism. Existing frameworks and funding opportunities were analysed as a starting point. Several project ideas and proposals of action to be implemented in the EUSAIR framework were put on the table, having in mind the need to improve the governance capacity as well as the need to involve regional and local authorities, the private sector and non-profit organisations.

The Forum confirmed the potential of the Strategy, not only for increased competitiveness and connectivity in the region, but also for supporting the path to EU integration of the four participating candidate and potential candidate countries.

11. "ADRIGOV MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE AS A POLICY DRIVER FOSTERING THE EU STRATEGY FOR THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN REGION" – Campobasso, 30th May 2016

On 30th May 2016, in Campobasso, took place the final event of the Adrigov project, entitled: "Multilevel Governance as a Policy driver fostering the Eu strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region".

The conference aims is to present the conclusions and documents of the project such as documents on capacity building, youth policies, multilevel governance, civil protection and tourism to the main beneficiaries and stakeholders.

In the last session will be a round table with participation of representatives from Euroregion, academia, local and regional authorities, development agency of the cooperation area with the aim to debate about on multilevel governance and its importance in the implementation of EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

12. PROJECT PRE-STEERING COMMITTEE – Campobasso, 30th May 2016

On May 30, 2016, in Campobasso (Molise Region - Italy), took place the first pre-steering meeting of the project 4PILLARS. The meeting was held in order to bring together the project's partners and start planning the project's activities. The partners who participated have decided that:

- the initial steering meeting will be held on 1st July 2016, in Pula (Croatia), and will be also connected with the international conference that Region Istria will organize in the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the AIE;
- the second capitalization event will be organized by Marche Region (Italy), probably within September;
- another international conference will be organized by Dubrovnik Nereva Country during the "European week of regions and cities" scheduled in October;

- the final event will be organized by Molise Region (Italy) in November 2016.

13. “PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE THE EXTRAORDINARY ASSEMBLY FOR THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE ASSOCIATION” – Brussels, 16th June 2016

On 16 June 2016 the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion announced the upcoming Extraordinary Assembly for the 10th Anniversary Celebration (Pula, 2nd of July 2016) with a press conference at the Press Club in Brussels.

The meeting aimed to promote the event and to involve medias and journalists in the capital of EU.

The press conference has been attended by the President Nikola Dobroslavić, together with the Vice Presidents, Mr. D’Alfonso and Mr. Dalipi, as well as Mr. Valter Flego (President of Istria Region), and Mr. Paolo Di Laura Frattura (President of Molise Region), and Francesco Cocco (Secretary General).



14. FINAL MEETING OF CLAVET PROJECT – Malaga, 1st July 2016

The Secretariat of the Euroregion, as project partner, took part on 1st July in the final meeting of the European project named Clavet, hosted by the Faculty of Law of the University of Malaga (UMA).

The CLAVET project had a duration of 2 years (01/09/2014 31/08/2016) and counted on partner institutions, local authorities and organizations from 8 EU countries, all of them with extensive



experience in EU-funded projects. Partners have concluded the project led by the UMA has meant the launch of a virtual platform of good practices in education.

The Fourth Transnational Project Meeting, held at the Faculty of Law at UMA, aimed at providing partners with an outlook of all project activities accomplished, while wrapping-up project technical, administrative and financial concerns.

The CLAVET project had as its main objective the development of an OER (“Open Educational Resources”) online platform to facilitate the structured cooperation among local authorities for the development of innovative education and training initiatives, in order to overcome the geographical barriers in the implementation of the European Higher Education and Vocational Training Area.

The project has been running smoothly for almost 2 years now and all goals have been accomplished as planned. The website www.clavet.eu and the online platform are fully operational, and several best practice fiches have been elaborated, reviewed, translated into different languages and made available to the general public. Also, a BPs browser has been implemented, allowing users to easily find fiches of their specific interest. The web platform backbone is now completed as well. Furthermore, project

promotion has been very intensive from the side of all partners.

Following the meeting, the CLAVET Final Conference took place on July 1st at the same premises. In this case, the ultimate goal was that of disseminating the project outcomes to an audience composed of both local and international experts in the topic. In addition to project aspects, a number of presentations conducted by key speakers was delivered and followed by an enriching debate on the subject matters.

15. 10th Anniversary of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion and XIII Extraordinary Assembly – Pula, 2nd July 2016

Celebrated in Pula (Croatia) on the 2nd July 2016 the 10th Anniversary of Adriatic Ionian Euroregion (AIE): the network founded on 30th of June in 2006, just in Pula, to promote the transnational and interregional cooperation among Regions and local Authorities in the Adriatic Ionian area.



10 years of work, 28 members, 12 assemblies, 2 of which extraordinary, 6 executive committee, 12 technical commissions, 13 international conferences, presentation at European Commission, at Europe Council in Strasbourg, opening of the Bruxelles office, meetings with main networks in the Adriatic Ionian area, with Chambers of Commerce, municipalities and universities. These are some of the main results of the AIE, a network that in 2010, for the first time, formally requested to the Committee of Regions, European Commission and Parliament, to adopt a macro regional strategy.

The famous Arena in Pula, the biggest monument of hold architecture in Croatia, has been the location of the ceremony, attended by the most important politics and representatives of regional and local authorities, who contributed to the success of these 10 years.



Nikola DOBROSLAVIC, AIE President and President of Dubrovnik Neretva County (Croatia) has opened the Extraordinary Assembly remarking his great satisfaction having achieved the primary goal.

Satisfaction shared by Ivan JAKOVČIĆ, Member of European Parliament, first AIE President, and great supporter of the association. European Commission was represented by the DG-REGIO with the Head of the Competence Centre for Macro-Regions and European Territorial Cooperation, Andrea Mairate. He has remarked the strength of the AIE in the last 10 years, in which Europe has several changes.

A special award has been assigned to the former Croatian President Stjepan MESIĆ, as AIE founding father and promoter of cooperation.

Valter FLEGO, President of the Region of Istria and master of the house, has spoken about borders and barriers, and he has remarked that boundaries are not barriers, but they help to build a common

European space.

The event was also attended by President of Tirana Regional Council, Aldrin DALIPI, and Luciano D'ALFONSO as President of Abruzzo and AIE Vice President, as well as the AIE Secretary General, Francesco Cocco. Other contribution coming from the Former President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Giovanni DI STASI and by Zeljka BARIC as delegate from the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and national coordinator for EUSAIR and EUSDR.



16. The presidency of Adriatic Ionian Euroregion meeting with the President of Croatia, Zagreb, 11 July 2016

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion - AIE, the President of the Republic of Croatia, Ms. Kolinda Grabar - Kitarovic received on Monday, July 11th, at the premises of the Croatian Presidential Palace, President of the AIE and at the same time, the Governor of the Region of Dubrovnik Mr. Nikola Dobroslavić, Vice President of the AIE also President of Abruzzo Region Mr. Luciano D'Alfonso, and Vice President of the AIE and President of Tirana Regional Council Mr. Aldrin Dalipi, Chairman of the Istrian County Mr. Valter Flego, Mr. Nevenko Herceg Prime minister of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, and the mayor of Kotor Mr. Aleksander Stjepčević and Mr. Francesco Cocco and Mr. Luka Vidak from AIE secretariat.



The presidency of AIE informed President Grabar - Kitarovic about the work of the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion, achievements in the past ten years as well as future plans. Discussion focused on the importance of finalizing the construction of the Adriatic-Ionian Highway and construction and technological modernization of the railway line Ravenna-Brindisi as well as advancement of air and maritime passenger and cargo links across the Adriatic.

Representatives of the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion emphasized that improving infrastructure is a prerequisite for overall development of the Adriatic Ionian area.

In conclusion, AIE President and Vice Presidents stress the importance of the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion as a great model of integration between local and regional government units. They highly appreciate the support of the President of Croatia Ms. Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic in building the bridges of cooperation. Dubrovnik - Tirana highway, railway network of high speed Bar-Ancona, protection of sea from pollution and petroleum production platforms and discussion on the direct air line Zagreb- Tirana

were the priority issues that were shared at this meeting.

17. Executive Committee, - Brussels, 11th October 2016

On 11th October 2016, Executive Committee of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion met in Brussels, at the headquarters of the Molise Region.

The President of AIE and the Members of Executive Committee present have made the picture of the situation on the activities carried out over the past months, events organized and future initiatives to be undertaken, including the organization of the next General Assembly.

As regards this latter it was noted that it came to the final phase of 4PILLARS project, therefore would be preferred to combine the organization of the Assembly in parallel with the final events planned in the frame of the project.

During the meeting the Secretary General reported that in August the Euroregion completed the first European project Clavet as partner and direct beneficiary and that the Secretariat is preparing the administrative steps necessary for the closure and to remunerate the staff employed for the implementation of the project. He also informed that BleuTourMed (Maritime and Coastal Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean – Community building, Communication and Capitalisation) project has been awarded and selected for funding by the Interreg MED Programme. The Euroregion participate as final beneficiary. The Executive Committee gave mandate to the secretariat to prepare the necessary administrative procedures in order to ensure the implementation of BleuTourMed project.

During the meeting the Members of Executive Committee present discussed about financial issues, and was presented the financial statement for the year 2015, which indicates that the the association revenues have been increased in comparison with the previous financial year (2014), which was approved by the Executive Committee, except the additional final approval by the Assembly.

The Secretary General talked about the final conference held in Campobasso of the project Holistic (IPA Adriatic CBC Programme). The project carried out a feasibility plan for an Adriatic and Ionian Centre for Civil Protection. The Committee takes good note of the document proposed by Holistic on civil protection and expresses its interest in the next phase of implementation.

The Executive Committee also examined the request received by CURSA Consortium to become an AIE Observer Member. In this regard, the President, after examining the statute provisions related to the achievement of the Observer Member status, proposed to postpone to the next General Assembly any decision on whether.

18. “The 14th European Week of Regions and Cities (OPEN DAYS), Brussels, 10/13 October 2016”

The European Week of Regions and Cities (OPEN DAYS) is an annual four-day event during which officials from regions and cities' administrations, as well as experts and academics, can exchange good practices and know-how in the field of regional and urban development. It is also an acknowledged platform for political communication in relation to the development of EU Cohesion Policy, raising the awareness of decision-makers about the fact that regions and cities matter in EU policy-making. The European Week of Regions and Cities is the biggest European public event of its kind.

The EWRC represented more than 100 working sessions, held on 10-13 October 2016 in Brussels, Belgium. The themes of the events was revolved around sustainable economic growth, inclusive economic growth and similar.



In the framework of 4PILLARS project it has been organized a debate which included different panels, one political (“Unlocking the potential of the Adriatic-Ionian region: One year after”) and one technical (“Implementing EUSAIR through new projects and ideas in common”), on jobs and growth in the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion, in the context of the four EUSAIR pillars. The debate brought together political representatives, experts in regional policy and the EU institutions. The conference aimed to discuss the implementation of the EUSAIR and how to make the region more attractive to investors. The role of investment in human capital and the importance of mobility was the most important themes of this event.

Target audience:

- European, national, regional and local representatives;
- Authorities managing and evaluating cohesion policy programmes and projects’s managers;
- Other stakeholders: private companies, financial institutions and similars.

Debora Serracchiani, President of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, spoke about the important role of the Eusair strategy in terms of immigration processes. She told that the European Commission has to invest other financial resources on this central policy, because the Balkan route became a popular passageway into the EU. By the end of October, nearly 700,000 people had travelled along the Western Balkans route from Greece to Central Europe. With a lack of coordination and communication between neighbouring countries, the European Commission, to address the unfolding emergency situation, have to implement the Macro Regional Strategies’s budget.

During the event the Republic of Srpska was represented by Minister Zlatan Klokic spoke about the Republic of Srpska acitvities in line with EUSAIR aims.

19. "CITIZENS' DIALOGUE: REFLECTING ON THE EU - from the perspective of Cities and Region" and Conference: "The role of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Regions (EUSAIR) in increasing prosperity and security in Europe" – Dubrovnik, 28th October 2016

On 28th October in Dubrovnik took place the "local event", in the framework of the European Project 4 PILLARS, co-financed by IPA Adriatic CBC Programme, in the form of a "flagship Citizens dialogue". Target audience were citizens from the Region, students, young people, representatives from academia, NGO's, local and regional authorities, business sector.



Upon the initiative and invitation of Nikola Dobroslavic - President of the Dubrovnik-Neretva Region in Croatia, Head of Croatian delegation and an EPP-CoR Member, the event has been combined with an external meeting of EPP group in Dubrovnik, with the lead of EPP-CoR President Michael Schneider, entitled "The role of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Regions (EUSAIR) in increasing prosperity and security in Europe".

The external meeting had the key note speeches of important speakers such as: CoR President Markku Markkula, EPP-CoR President Michael Schneider, Mr. Dobroslavic and Andrea Mairate, Head of Unit Macro-regions and European Territorial Cooperation, DG for Regional policy, European Commission.

The event had 2 sessions: "Challenges and opportunities for the Adriatic-Ionian region" and "Strengthening regional cooperation and security in the Adriatic-Ionian region".



The first session focused on identifying the main obstacles faced by the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region and proposed solutions to them by enhancing cooperation through the exchange of best practices, experiences and expertise between partners from all level of governance. It has been also examined the existing EU funding instruments and technical assistance available as well as different investment initiatives which aid the implementation of projects.

The session 2 explored the opportunities offered by the macro-regional approach in promoting cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation as well as in the development of cross-border strategies in the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region. It has been also debated the possibilities for strengthening cooperation at all levels of governance to contribute to address the common security and migratory challenges facing the region.

After the event, a citizens' open and interactive dialogue was organised with CoR President Markku Markkula, EPP-CoR President Michael Schneider and Mr. Dobroslavic about the followings topics:

- Territorial Investment and Future of regional policy with the attention to the urban challenges and the role of local and regional for addressing economic, Social and environmental issues;
- Migration and Emigration;
- Future of Europe after Brexit and citizens' participation and democratic accountability;
- Security in an unstable and changing environment.

President Dobroslavic stressed the need to organize such meetings with representatives of the citizens of the EU institutions where in direct conversation it can be possible to share information, experiences, and listen to the opinions and needs of citizens.

As a conclusion of the meeting the CoR EPP Group has adopted the declaration "The role of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) in increasing prosperity and security in Europe".

20. The first project meeting of BLETourMed, - Nice, 9th November 2016

BleuTourMed partners gathered for the first project meeting of BLETourMed project (Maritime and Coastal Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean – Community building, Communication and Capitalisation) that was held on 9 November 2016 in Nice, organized by the Managing Authority of INTERREG MED.

The partners discussed about the main lines of the project strategy, the initial deliverables, having also a general overview of the working packages (Communication, Community Building and Capitalisation).

The BLETourMed project has a duration of 36 Months (from 1st November 2016 to 31st October 2019) and counts on partner institutions, local authorities and organizations from 5 countries, all of them with extensive experience in EU-funded projects: Arco Latino (Spain), Diputació de Barcelona (Spain), Plan Bleu (France), UNIMED (Italy), PANTEION – University of Aegean (Greece), Adriatic and Ionian Euro-region (Croatia).

Built on a transnational partnership with strong knowledge and experience on integrated coastal management and sustainable tourism policies, BLETourMed aims at supporting and ensuring synergies between the modular projects selected under the SO3.1 with the objective of creating a cluster of projects able to enhance jointly solutions for the protection and promotion of natural and cultural resources in the Med area through a coherent strategy of Community Building, Communication & Capitalisation.

The project will develop monitoring and community building activities aiming at collecting the main results of the Modular Projects(MPs) as at stimulating the co-ownership of data and results among them.

It will be also in charge of processing these results for the implementation of the policy framework regarding Coastal and Maritime sustainable tourism (MSP, ICZM, UNEP-MAP, Integrated regional development policies on sustainable tourism), as to elaborate a common Communication and Capitalisation strategy for their dissemination. The project will develop 2 main channels to transfer and disseminate the projects' cluster outputs. The first one will be at a programme level, technically with the Joint Technical Secretariat of the Med Programme and creating synergies specifically with Specific

Objectives 3.2 and axis 4. The second channel will target the main MED and EU decision makers.

Main Responsibility of the Euroregion will be ensuring the capitalization in the IPA and at EU level, especially in promoting the capitalization in the Adriatic Ionian Macroregion.

Main activities also with other partners:

- Defining the communication strategy and the construction of the projects community, capitalization projects;
- Organization of 1 capitalization event and contribution to the other project events.
- Participation and contribution to the realization of the Kickoff, midterm and final conference and other seminars (1 of these will be organized by Euroregion in Croatia);
- Contribution to the Media Strategy Platform (Production of leaflets, video strategy, brochures, web animation, social media).
- Publications on relevant topics in the field of protection and promotion of natural and cultural resources.
- Scientific platform-database (database will be an internal tool for the cluster of projects. It will enable the projects access to the results and data produced by the previous Med programme projects in the field of sustainable tourism).

21. “4PILLARS Meeting and Conference on “Eco-sustainable development and clean, the opportunity and the ability to create a transnational district in agro-industrial sector in northern Albania” – Shkoder, 17th November 2016

On 17th November, the Regional Council of Shkoder organised the international Conference entitled “Eco-sustainable development and clean, the opportunity and the ability to create a transnational district in agro-industrial sector in northern Albania”.

The conference was addressed to important representatives of international organizations such as the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), Municipalities of neighboring Countries and cross-border Institutions, Local and Central Government of the Country.



The aim of the Conference was to share the latest developments in the Adriatic Ionian Macroregion and discuss on forthcoming projects and activities among the Countries of Shkoder's Region for the coordinated development of agro-tourism, as a tool for socio-economic development of regions of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative (All), in accordance with the objectives of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region (EUSAIR), and to share positive experiences and challenges in terms of local governance.

In the second session of the Conference, the Regional Council of Shkoder promoted a focus group about social issues in the Adriatic Ionian Area.



The focus group, chaired by Greta Bardeli, President of the Regional Council of Shkoder, and Eleni Marianou, Secretary General of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), was attended by political representatives of the neighboring regions, Italian politicians, Secretary General of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, representatives of Molise Region and Marche Region, and society "Ikran services".

During this second session of the event the participants discussed on specific topics about:

- importance of Europe's regions in shaping an EU Cohesion Policy that reduces disparities, increases competitiveness, partnership and innovation, and helps to deal with the refugee crisis. In particular, the CPMR representative stressed the importance and the need to strengthen the role of the regions in European governance;
- environmental hazards associated with environmental factors (climate change, water pollution and disasters); emergency issues response and a building a Centre for emergency risks in the Balkans; about the latter issue, the IKRAN services representative presented the document prepared within the frame of the HOLISTIC project (IPA Adriatic CBC Programme) on civil protection, and presented possibility of establishing a Centre for civil protection in the Adriatic Ionian area because the macroregion has a lack of effective coordination in this matter;
- search for practical solutions to migration challenges: effective national, regional and global migration management policies and strategies. Regarding migration, the participants said that a proper EU response to the refugee crisis can only work if regions are directly involved in planning and implementing the policy and specific measures. They also advised that a flexible approach might allow the Commission to address migratory flows in the future;
- sustainable tourism development strategy in the Area of the Balkans: it has been discussed that all Balkan countries have developed and adopted national strategies for the development of tourism, which will last for a long period , from 4 to 6 years.

22. "4 PILLARS Project: "Communicate EUSAIR" International Final Conference of the project - Campobasso, 24th November 2016

The international conference "COMMUNICATE EUSAIR", as final event of Project "4PILLARS: For Promoting an Innovative multi-Level governance System of EUSAIR" (IPA Adriatic CBC Programme 2007-2013), was held in Campobasso (Italy) on 24 November 2016 at the "Sala Parlamentino" in Molise Region premises. It has been organized by Molise Region, Lead Beneficiaries of the project.

The main goal of this event was to promote different types of communication methods for informing about the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region (EUSAIR).

The event was divided in two different sessions:

- 1) Morning session: "The young generations and EUSAIR";
- 2) Afternoon session: "The new funding opportunities in the cooperation programmes".

The first session was implemented by international journalists and communication experts (Mr. Nicola Bonaccini, Mr. Daniele Imperiale and Mr. Andrea Marrucci). The speakers talked about their experiences and studies in terms of new approaches of communication tools and methods. They discussed about the role and importance of social networks in our life and in the project's development with specific regards to the Cross-Border Communication Plans and Cooperation Programmes in the Adriatic and Ionian Area.

The second session, after a guided visit to the Museo Sannitico in Campobasso, saw the participation of high level speakers; they discussed about the new funding opportunities in the cooperation programmes.

In this event, it was presented the e-learning platform realized by Marche Region, an important instrument to improve the knowledge regarding the themes of 4 pillars of Eusair Strategy – Blue Growth, Connecting the Regions, Environmental Quality and Sustainable Tourism.

All the activities, the events, the results and outputs achieved under the 4PILLARS project were published in the “WEB-SECTION” dedicated to the project and created within the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion website, and downloadable by the website: www.adriaticionianeuroregion.eu

23. Eurorean Projects



The opportunities offered by the ETC programmes, such as IPA Adriatic CBC Programme, and the different ETC projects implemented in the recent years have played a key role in enhancing relations between the two sides of the Adriatic.

The European projects bring additional financial recourse to the association, as did by CLAVET project (Erasmus+) and as it will happen in 2017, thanks to the approved project BLETourMed financed by Interreg Med Programme – that will develop community building, capitalisation and communication activities for the Modular Projects selected by Med Programme under the priority Sustainable Tourism. The AIE Secretariat has ensured the implementation of this project aimed to capitalise the results produced by the modular projects also in the territories of the Euroregion. The Euroregion is also involved as external associated partner in two other MED projects “PANACeA” (Horizontal project of Axis 3.2 on Protected Areas) and “InnoBlueGrowth: Horizontal Communication & Capitalization project for Innovation in Blue Growth at Mediterranean level” (Modular project of Axis 1 on Blue Growth).

It is worth noting that the Euroregion will be involved with a large number of Mediterranean partners and external stakeholders in these 3 projects working in crucial fields such as sustainable and maritime tourism, environment blue growth and ICZM. The projects deliver useful outputs and tools that will be available for the members of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion.

During 2016 the Euroregion has also submitted projects on Erasmus + and H2020 Programs, and looks forward to the cooperation programs such as: Italy - Croatia CBC Programme 2014-2020, MED, INTERREG EUROPE and Italy – Albania - Montenegro Programme.

24. Brussels Office

During this year, as well as in past ones, the activities carried out by the Brussels office have been important to consolidate strong relations with European Institutions and other European Regions and networks. The events organized in Brussels during the 2016 year, such as statutory meetings, workshops, Executive Committee, press conferences, helped to promote the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion at EU level and to reinforce its role.

25. Communication and Website

The web site of the association has been renewed, updated and consolidated in 2016, with different contents such as: News, EUSAIR, ETC Programmes, EU Projects of the association, EU projects developed by AIE Members, etc. Most of the AIE activities and events, as well as external events that affected the macro regional area, have been covered by the editorial staff of the Secretariat and published on website.

Also the project 4Pillars has developed and provided communication tools, such as monthly online magazines, newsletters on different thematic, and all results of capitalization activities have been published on the website of the Euroregion.

26. Mobility and Trainings

In 2016 with the Traineeship Programme “Vado e Torno”, the Euroregion hosted trainees (University students and young professionals in the field of European policies) for the Euroregion Office in Brussels.

As done in the recent years, the Euroregion will encourage to AIE members and their civil servants the opportunity to some administrative exchange of experiences, especially in the management of transnational projects financed by the Structural Funds and thematic programmes of the EU.