CONTRIBUTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS
ADRIATIC IONIAN INTERREGIONAL GROUP TO THE
STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION ON THE EU STRATEGY FOR
THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN REGION

1 - INTRODUCTION

The Adriatic Ionian Interregional Group of the Committee of the Regions congratulates the European Commission and the National Contact Points for the EUSAIR discussion paper issued last 9th August 2013 and thanks for giving this group the opportunity to participate in the preparatory meetings.

The CoR A.I. Interregional group congratulates the European Commission for the paper on “The added value of macroregional strategies” of June 2013, on which a specific CoR opinion has been approved on 28th November 2011, specifically including the EUSAIR.

In line with the CoR own initiative opinion “The territorial cooperation in the Mediterranean through the Adriatic Ionian Macreregion” unanimously approved on 11th October 2011, the CoR A.I. Interregional Group shares the vision of the discussion paper, focusing on a limited number of pillars and cross-cutting issues as priorities for the development and protection of the region, as a sound basis for an EUSAIR action plan.

The Adriatic Ionian Interregional Group of the Committee of the Regions counts to be a key player for ensuring the political commitments and administrative support, which are vital for the Strategy to be successful and deliver its potential in terms of economic and social prosperity, growth and employment in the A.I. region.

2 - WHO WE ARE

The CoR Adriatic Ionian Interregional Group has been set up on demand of the CoR member Mr. Gian Mario Spacca - President of Marche Region on behalf of an initial group of about 40 CoR members, to the President of the Committee of the Regions Mr. Valcarcel Siso at the end of 2012, on the basis of the Council Conclusions of 14th December 2012 asking the European Commission to draft a new EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian region by 2014.

Its mission is to support the European Commission – DG REGIO and DG MARE - and the NCPs of the 8 participating countries of the Adriatic Ionian region in developing the Adriatic and Ionian Strategy before the end of 2014 and in drafting an action plan taking into account the proposals and suggestions coming from Regional and Local Authorities.
Territorial needs can be represented in a bottom-up multi-level governance approach, to better face the common problems and challenges of the Adriatic and Ionian region through widely shared and agreed solutions, as the key element for the success of this EU strategy.

It intends to promote common identity of the Adriatic and Ionian region in order to affirm the A.I. region's full potential. It furthermore aims at making the region more visible at regional, national, and European levels. It aims at creating synergies with the existing strategies of the Baltic and of the Danube regions also through their CoR interregional groups and in particular with the Danubian strategy, as recommended by the European Council Conclusions of 14th December 2012.

3 - WHAT WE DO

CoR Adriatic Ionian Interregional group has been ensuring that a bottom-up multilevel governance activity takes place in order that the success of this EU strategy can be achieved.

The CoR Adriatic Ionian Interregional Group has been involved by the European Commission, together with National Contact Points and the Adriatic Ionian Initiative, in the activities for drafting the EUSAIR “discussion paper” of 9th August 2013.

It has been participating and supporting the organisation of the stakeholders’ consultation meetings of the 4 pillars + 2 cross-cutting issues working groups, each of them guided by 2 of the 8 countries in order that the needs and priorities of the different level of governance can be represented in the action plan and that the existing Adriatic Ionian Forums and networks of the region, which are closer to the regional and local level of governance, can be represented too.

Different meetings took place, e.g. for the pillar “Connecting the region”, led by Italy and Serbia, the meeting in Ancona on 14th October 2013; for the pillar “Driving innovative maritime and marine growth”, led by Greece and Montenegro, the meeting in Corfu on 18th November 2013 and the meeting organised by DG MARE and DG REGIO “Blue Growth” held in Brussels on 14th November 2013.

An intense stakeholders’ consultation took place where several vertical and horizontal, formal and informal workshops and meetings were organised in the same lapse of time and new work processes have been experimented through a’’ learning by doing method’’ of collaboration towards a multilevel governance approach, in view of an effective application of the principle of subsidiarity.

Some examples of these workshops and meetings are the following:

- meetings at European interregional level through the Open Days Adriatic Ionian Macroregion Partnership made of 17 regions led by Marche region, co-leader the
region of Crete, whose workshop was held on 9th October 2013, chaired by Director José Palma Andrés of the DG Regional and Urban Policy and attended by more than 200 participants;

- meetings between regions of each single country: e.g. the meeting of Italian regions which took place in Ancona Portonovo on 7th-8th November 2013 in order to deliver the Italian Contact Points territorial proposals to be integrated in the action plan;

- meetings within each of the eight countries in order to ensure that the EUSAIR can be embedded in the new generation of 2014-2020 planning and programming documents (Partnership Agreements, Operational Programmes and IPA Programmes) as well as in the EU structural and investments funds and in IPA funds.

Exchanges of ideas and contacts with the EU institutions, European Commission and European Parliament have been particularly important for the A.I. interregional group for joint activities directly concerning the Adriatic Ionian region.

In particular this group welcomes the “report on strategy for fisheries in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas”, adopted as European Parliament resolution of 10th September 2013.

The CoR A.I. Interregional Group also welcomes some MEP proposal of a budget line for the A.I. region as accompanying measures of the first Mediterranean macroregion even if it has not been adopted this year and encourages the EP to adopt a budget line for the Adriatic and Ionian region in the next years as for the Baltic and Danubian macroregions.

4 – WHAT WE PROPOSE FOR THE EUSAIR DISCUSSION PAPER

In the different meetings held during the stakeholders’ consultation phase and in the questionnaires and suggestions sent by the members of the CoR Adriatic Ionian Interregional group several proposals were outlined and can be summarized as follows.

- **A NEW PILLAR “COMMUNICATION”**

**Vision**

The CoR A.I. Interregional Group stresses the importance of setting up a new pillar of the EUSAIR, namely “Communication” as a necessary thematic tool to be integrated in the strategy in response to the need of filling the gap between European Institutions and the citizens of the A.I. region.
The resolution on the main political priorities of the Committee of the Regions for 2014, unanimously adopted on 29th November 2013, underlines the need of reinforcing the citizen’s trust in the European project as one of the main challenges for the European Union.

Moreover the Italian Presidency of ministers has recently stressed the importance of communication in EUSAIR in a workshop held in Rome on 27th November 2013 particularly in order to enhance the attractiveness of the Adriatic Ionian region.

The CoR A.I. Interregional Group highlights the importance of this pillar in order to raise the awareness of the civil society on what this strategy represents for citizens, on what is its added value, enforcing the identity and reputation of the A.I. region as a common ownership to be protected and to be developed for a better quality of life of the A.I. citizens themselves.

What to do

Proposals

- To raise the awareness of the civil society on what this strategy represents for citizens, what is its added value, what are the benefits of this strategy for citizens.

- To strengthen the identity and the symbolic value of the territory.

- To facilitate the EU integration through a common identity, as geographic and cultural driver of the region.

How

Concrete actions

- Designing a territorial brand, symbolizing the identity and the cultural and historical heritage of the A.I. region as a marketing tool and in order to increase the citizens’ sense of belonging to the same geographic area, with a common cultural heritage; the A.I. region brand will be used in order to communicate the works implemented through the EUSAIR strategy.

- Organising conferences, workshops, meetings, to explain citizens what will be the results of the EUSAIR and of the action plan implementation.

- Encouraging cultural networking of theatres, cultural associations and foundations, ONGs, joint organisation of Festivals and other cultural events, building the image of the A.I. region, e.g. the Adriatic Mediterranean Festival, getting the citizens of the area closer.
**What are our expected results**

- A participated integration of the civil society of non-EU countries and the will of implementing the EUSAIR action plan allowing to achieve a better quality of life: an easier mobility through the connections of transports, a stronger attractiveness of the macroregion for tourism, investments, youth employment, new forms of jobs, etc.
- The reconciliation of the A.I. region and the integration of non-EU countries citizens sharing common objectives of a better quality of life as citizens of the same A.I. region.
- The trust of A.I. region citizens in EUSAIR and in the institutions involved for its implementation and a stronger will of participating in its activities.

**CAPACITY BUILDING**

**Vision**

The CoR A.I. Interregional Group agrees that capacity building is a cross-cutting issue, particularly relevant through all the strategy’s pillars, in order to ensure the success of the EUSAIR.

The Adriatic Ionian region is a large area including EU countries, candidate and potential candidate countries, with different administrative organisations.

EU countries as well as non-EU countries need to enhance skills and abilities for finding out smart, sustainable and inclusive solutions to common problems, e.g. for a correct management of human resources, quality systems of management and performance, a high ability in managing international relations, innovating processes of management, etc.

**What to do**

**Proposals**

- To strengthen the capacity building in the A.I. region through managers sharing the same values, knowledge, skills in running innovative management systems and processes.
- To harmonise decision-making processes.
- To harmonise/standardize procedures for project management and to develop common ICT/MIS systems used in the project management.
• To facilitate the EU integration of the A.I. region through a common administrative process.

• To favour networking and best practices and to foster cooperation between enterprises through existing tools and services.

**How**

**Concrete actions**

➢ Setting up an Adriatic Ionian High Level School of Administration like the French ENA (Ecole Nationale d’Administration) for the whole region—where civil servants of the A.I. region can be trained to become key managers able to develop the necessary skills and abilities for a multi-level governance and to learn the necessary knowledge to implement innovative processes in public administration.

**What are our expected results**

❖ The A.I. High Level School of Administration (like the ENA) will allow to have a widespread knowledge of common skills in the whole A.I. region through top level managers in public administration.

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**PILLAR I: DRIVING INNOVATIVE MARITIME AND MARINE GROWTH**

**Vision**

A multi-level governance of the stakeholders involved in the marine, maritime growth is a key factor for an efficient management of the A.I. area through the setting up of agreed common rules and protocols for fishing and preservation of fish stocks, the standardization of management systems and procedures.

Eco-innovation and modernisation of fishing and aquaculture, of maritime transport and of ports with their hinterland infrastructures and maritime clusters - for a blue growth, are necessary measures for a rational exploitation of marine resources and running of the maritime system. A common brand for quality and traceability of fish products from fisheries and aquaculture can be an important tool for the promotion of the area.
What to do

Proposals

- To strengthen Eco-innovation as more selective fishing gear and other innovations that reduce the effects of fishing and aquaculture on the environment.

- To modernize fishing activities and to improve infrastructures/systems to protect the fishery.

- To support environmentally sustainable fishing for the rational exploitation of fish stocks.

- To harmonize the sustainable use of resources through a common policy strategy for an efficient common multi-level governance of the A.I. region.

- To develop the existing ports and marinas, in the regions with innovative infrastructures and to improve and standardize environment management in ports areas (e.g. waste management, electrification systems platforms, use of environmentally friendly fuels, etc.).

- To share common rules, plans and models for the management of the area for fishery and aquaculture of the Adriatic-Ionian region through the establishment of a shared integrated scientific open database of resources and of marine environment.

- To share common rules, plans and models for the management of maritime transport and boating in the Adriatic Ionian region to minimize the impact on the environment and increase the safety and security of the maritime mobility.

- To integrate the fishing supply chain with other clusters activities, e.g. shipbuilding, luxury yachting, craftsmanship, tourism, enogastronomy, etc.

- To enhance current national policies concerning aquaculture, as a more sustainable way of increasing fish resources.

How

Concrete actions

- Carrying on actions on energy saving and reduced environmental impact of fisheries and aquaculture production units.

- Processing fishery and aquaculture products for reduced (or zero) environmental impacts, including waste treatment, residues exploitation etc.

- Supporting Energy Production from Renewable Energy Sources (tides, offshore wind parks etc.).
- Diversifying aquaculture products and farmed species especially for those with remarkable market prospects.

- Carrying on added value aquaculture products based on advance processing technologies.

- Carrying on actions to improve the quality of aquaculture products.

- Boosting innovation in the aquaculture sector, which is considered a traditional one, in order to allow benefits for all the States of the basin, enhancing productivity and reducing the costs per unit of product.

- Homogenizing the red tape requested by the States of the A.I. region in the aquaculture sector. The A.I. region could be the first to obtain such an homogenization in the aquaculture sector, since the legislation of this sector is nowadays very different between the States of the Adriatic-Ionian basin.

- Setting up Innovative actions and a common brand for quality and traceability of fish products from fisheries and aquaculture.

- Stakeholders training and carrying on experience exchanges for staff responsible for monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities.

- Promoting a collective responsibility of stakeholders and representatives of national, regional and local governments, different economic/social, coastal entities, workers and employers' organizations, scientific institutions, etc. with the aim to implement smart applications and improve the sustainability of fishing stocks and competitiveness of the A.I. area.

- Implementing the annual biological closure of fishing for the whole A.I. area on the basis of common management plans.

- Setting up scientific and technical platforms with updated and monitored databases.

- Promoting the networking of ports and marinas' stakeholders and supporting the improvement of the maritime means and infrastructures towards new levels of environmental sustainability.

**What are our expected results**

- The reduction of the amount of fish catches in the Adriatic-Ionian region, making the exploitation of resources more sustainable.

- The creation of jobs in the marine sector and maritime industry, and the possibility for fishermen to convert their activities related to aquaculture in something more sustainable and, eventually, more profitable. This would help to fight the overcapacity issue of the fisheries sector in the Adriatic-Ionian basin.
• Improvement of high level quality of products, of the sustainability and competitiveness of the A.I. area.

• Harmonization and implementation of fishing management plans over the year to preserve the biodiversity of resources.

• Improvement of the safety and security of the A.I. area with positive effects also on competitiveness.

• Promotion of local products consumption through the creation of a common "Brand Name" for the marine products of the macroregion.

• **PILLAR II: CONNECTING THE REGION**

**Vision**

The A.I. region needs to improve access of south-eastern Europe to the rest of the world including the Mediterranean area through the extension of the Baltic Adriatic Corridor along the Adriatic ridge. Intermodal transport systems of this area need to be strengthened in order to favour the positioning of the A.I. region hub in the international framework.

The Adriatic Ionian Cloud represents the tool for connecting the existing platforms in order to standardise shared processes, protocols for an efficient intermodal transport of passengers and goods and supply of services, environmental preservation, maritime security.

Adriatic Ionian Cloud can also represent a networking tool of information between scientific and technical platforms and setting up an open database of knowledge.

**What to do**

**Proposals**

• To harmonize and strengthen the ports connections and transports in the A.I. region.

• To strengthen intermodal transports to adequately connect existing ports with rail and road networks.

• To encourage collaboration for the development of strategic research and innovation in the field of shipping and maritime transport.
- To promote the setting up of a common approach to safety and security, developing shared monitoring system and integrated operational strategies.

- To strengthen transports links with the development of an integrated network of sustainable maritime low carbon emissions transport, throughout the intervention area.

- To encourage networking of marine cruise and marinas in the Adriatic-Ionian in order to support the sustainable development of coastal and marine tourism.

- To create a transport network connecting notable destinations of natural beauty and cultural interest of the hinterland to the A.I. seas.

- To support energy production from renewable energy sources in the intervention sea area and the realisation of the related distribution infrastructures.

- To establish a permanent Adriatic Ionian network of all the institutional, economic categories and intermediaries (technology parks, business centers, service centers, linked to universities, regional development agencies, trade associations, etc.) also through fiber infrastructures.

- To build up a digital infrastructure for the delivery of advanced services and the creation of a shared knowledge with semantic approach, able to strengthen a stable cooperation among enterprises, research centres, regional and local authorities for a global integrated approach of the whole area.

- To extend linear transport’s infrastructures (road, rail, port, airport and freight villages) for the connection to the TEN-T Networks including those designed to connect the inland area with such networks.

- To create a hub of the Adriatic Ionian region for trade on the North, South, East and West quadrants of the area.

**How**

**Concrete actions**

- Setting up an Adriatic Cloud representing the networking tool of the Adriatic-Ionian macrowregion:

  - Connecting the whole system in order to develop the skills of the region in the transport of goods and mobility of passengers of an intermodal integration (road, rail, sea and air).

  - Fostering cooperation amongst institutional bodies for the development and enforcement of effective procedures for environmental protection of the Adriatic-
Ionian area and the exchange of maritime information through the integration of existing or future platforms.

- Organizing the available and future energy resources in the macroregion in order to optimize energy exploitation.

- Building a single regulatory area for network energy exchanges.

- Setting up an information system to promote the use of renewable energy resources.

- Reinforcing the intermodal connections. Connecting local ports with their hinterlands might represent a perfect solution for faster transportation of goods; in this regard, involved regions still have many options to improve the logistic situation of the area. As a matter of fact, connecting the A.I. railway nodes would improve the economical situation and infrastructure status quo of the whole area. Railway connections across regions would be reinforced: this would help in obtaining a strong, fast and more sustainable transport of goods in the hinterland of the regions. Transport on wheels should not be considered the only solution for the hinterland transportation of good in the planning stage of the macro-regional strategy. Airports as well should be well-connected to all the other transportation nodes.

- Creating networks (and/or clusters) dedicated to transports in order to strengthen and integrate regional transports systems in the Adriatic-Ionian basin and to promote, even through direct investments, intermodal connections.

- Reinforcing the connection between neighbouring airports, to better distribute flights on a destination basis, having at least one airport exclusively focusing on local flights while other larger ones managing international and/or intercontinental flights as international hubs of the whole Adriatic area.

- Extending the Baltic Adriatic Corridor to the south of the A.I. region in order to include the whole Adriatic ridge, e.g. completing the dorsal Marche-Abruzzo-Molise and beyond and creating sea corridors between macro-regional countries.

- Enhancing cooperation between national or regional maritime authorities with the EU, establishing mechanisms to enable maritime traffic information exchange between national VTMIS (Vessel Traffic Monitoring & Information Systems).

- Expanding VTMIS, through establishing new VTS centres in the Adriatic and Ionian Seaports and enhancing the cooperation between the VTMIS and EMSA (European Maritime Safety Agency) system, in order to achieve a better monitoring of the maritime traffic, and to avoid illegal trafficking, accidents and ship-source pollution (addressing illegal discharges in the marine environment).

- Completing the E 78 Fano-Grosseto road: land bridge between Spain and the Balkans and between Tyrrhenian and Adriatic-Ionian Seas.
➢ Stimulating the set-up of maritime clusters, platforms and research networks as well as the formulation of research strategy to spur innovation in maritime transport surveillance, including energy saving and efficiency in the nautical sector, smart transport systems, freight tracking.

➢ Enhancing cooperation between national coastguard authorities to establish an integrated safety and security operating capacity.

➢ Facilitating trade with southern, central and eastern Europe optimizing procedures and infrastructures in order to facilitate the transport between seaports of the regions and connection of coastal areas with hinterland.

➢ Adopting innovative approaches in order to integrate a single system for port security and control system between macroregional countries.

➢ Establishing common legislation rules to control the traffic of illegal migration, other illegal trafficking and overfishing (converting EU requirements into national law).

➢ Monitoring and management of actions within the countries and the regions using the same type of indicators (benchmarking).

➢ Strengthening coordination within administrations of the region, through the use of a single instrument to balance the development of a range of maritime and cruise activities.

➢ Optimizing TEN-T network between macroregions.

What are our expected results

➢ Reduction of costs and of power consumption thanks to savings allowed by a better management of the A.I. hub and a more efficient use of energy and transport networks.

➢ Protect the environment and reduction of pollutants’ emissions.

➢ Empowerment of the whole transport chain developing the intermodal transports and connections in all the quadrants of the area.

➢ Reduction of the transport time for both people and goods thanks to the elimination of bottlenecks.

➢ Stronger and easier promotion of the whole A.I. region.

➢ Introduction of innovative information and communication technologies in all modes of transport.

➢ Development of investments for sustainable transports.
An easier communication and standardized information thanks to the Adriatic-Ionian Cloud networking the existing platforms.

Improvement of connection and trade between the metropolitan centres, small islands and remote areas of the region.

Increase of cross-border cooperation in order to achieve a better monitoring and management of the maritime traffic and to avoid illegal traffic, accidents and ship-source pollution (addressing illegal discharges in the marine environment).

Creation of new jobs.

**PILLAR III: PRESERVING PROTECTING AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Vision**

The A.I. region needs to preserve habitat and ecosystems and to face climate change challenges through an integrated multi-level governance involving all the stakeholders in a shared and integrated process.

In particular concerning climate change the CoR A.I. Interregional Group welcomes the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change of 16th April 2013 encouraging the exchange of best practices and the development of macroregional action plans as the Baltic and Danubian ones, as examples of global approaches, for a better assessment of risks and vulnerability. Adriatic Ionian Cloud can represent a networking tool of information between scientific and technical platforms and setting up an open database of knowledge.

**What to do**

**Proposals**

- To create an information system in the sea area to monitor collective information on the weather, pollution, climate change process, to evaluate them, and to make the monitoring available to the competent authorities.

- To create an information system for sensitive areas of the hinterland for collecting, monitoring and processing information about the weather, available to the competent authorities.

- To promote training and information on climate change, prevention and risk management.
• To develop a network for reducing marine debris and improve waste management in coastal areas.

• To coordinate the promotion of environmentally friendly agricultural practices in rural areas of the regions.

**How**

**Concrete actions**

- Drafting a macroregional risk-management strategy (Hydro-geological instability, floods, draughts, etc.).

- Increasing the resilience of coasts with sustainable solutions from the environmental and economic point of view (e.g. research and characterisation of submarine sand deposits as well as mitigating short-term risks).

- Integrating adaptation plans for climate change: fine-tuning of early warning procedures and civil protection plans, improvement of the effectiveness/efficiency of communication with the citizens.

- Developing guidelines/strategies/plans to integrate ICZM (Integrated Coastal Zone Management) and MSP (Marine Spatial Planning) as a common, multisectoral tool to plan and manage coastal and marine spaces in a consistent and inclusive way, in order to find a balance between growth and sustainability.

- Strengthening a common and shared knowledge base, implementing platforms such as the Adriatic GIS (Geographic Information System) Atlas created by the SHAPE Project, with coastal and marine data relevant for the purposes of ICZM and MSP, and setting up an integrated and trans-boundary terrestrial and marine database, compliant with INSPIRE Directive, as a smart and effective tool to support planning and decision-making processes (better quality/comparability/accessibility of data).

- Developing a common information system on weather and marine pollution data for common touristic areas especially those on cruise routes.

- Carrying on information exchange for applying common strategic planning on water pollution dedicative for fishery actions.

- Disseminating best practices through transnational and interregional cooperation between stakeholders.

- Stakeholders training and experience exchange for staff responsible for monitoring, control and surveillance on risk assessment and management.

- Developing network between SMEs and public bodies for advanced waste treatment in coastal areas.
What are our expected results

✔ Protection of the environment, maintaining the morphologies and natural habitats through the reduction of nutrients in the soil and the abatement of waste at sea.

✔ Reducing the risks of hydro-geological instability and coastal erosion, with the aim to increase the resilience of coastal zones.

✔ Joint efficient planning of the A.I. region, integrating and developing existing European standards such as Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).

✔ Energy saving and efficiency.

✔ Increased quality of the marine and coastal environment: to promote and protect the natural reserves and protected areas, the landscape and the rural spaces.

✔ Improvement of harmonization and coordination into the MSP and ICZM, by solving potential conflicts.

✔ Integration of action lines concerning the management of natural and anthropic risks, with action for a better knowledge of the impacts, mitigations and adaptation activities.

• PILLAR IV: INCREASING REGIONAL ATTRACTIVENESS

Vision

The attractiveness of the region is mainly represented by tourism as one of the main growing sector and remarkable trigger for the development of maritime and inland economy of the A.I. region. Its development asks for the multi-level governance of national, regional, local authorities, and involvement of all the territorial stakeholders from chambers of commerce to universities.

On the basis of the common natural, cultural, historical treasures, high-quality agri-food products, professional hospitality traditions, attractive landscapes to be communicated through an Adriatic Ionian brand, tourism can represent an important leverage for sustainable growth, youth employment opportunities and social inclusion. All the relating activities to research innovation and development of SMEs and capacity building have to be boosted in order to strengthen this sector’s potential.

An Adriatic Cloud could furthermore represent a crucial instrument in order to facilitate the sharing of information and tools between professionals and end-users.
**What to do**

**Proposals**

- To stress the cultural, historical, traditional identity and the benefits of the Mediterranean diet, acknowledged by UNESCO in 2011, as well as the quality of the agri-food products, ensuring a high quality of life in order to increase the attractiveness of the region.

- To enhance and appreciate pluri-culturalism and multi-culturalism.

- To draft a master plan of tourism and in particular:
  - to analyse common strengths in the touristic offer.
  - to define common priorities for the development of competitive growth which can be widely shared and agreed.
  - to identify lines of the EU funding dedicated to common priorities in order to set up a unique master plan on growth and development.
  - to support the sustainable development of touristic areas by creating a network for connection, promotion and protection.
  - to support alternative marketing channels mainly in the food sector of the Member States of the macroregion.

- To establish a knowledge community and namely:
  - material/non material infrastructures (cultural assets in network; mobility of knowledge and culture).
  - welfare (social agenda) as a main challenge.

- To encourage the training and the guidance to facilitate access to employment for young people and to ensure professional qualifications involving hotel-tourism specialized schools and universities.

- To apply a smart cities approach functional to the recovery of tourist and cultural attractiveness to a renewed social housing (policies and technologies related to active ageing).

**How**

**Concrete actions**

- Creating an agri-food production and short supply chain network “from producers directly to consumers” of retail centres, where processing of certified high-quality
products is shown to clients while they buy products and they taste the Mediterranean A.I. diet foods; in these shops gastronomic products and meals can be served by young professionals from hotel/tourism high schools and universities.

- Creating an alternative gastronomy network between the countries of the A.I. region in order to promote the local products (food and wines) of the area.

- Creating a common branding for the Adriatic Ionian region as a tourism destination of excellence, in line with recent European guidelines on the subject of tourism brands EC COM 2010/352 final (following the input provided by the already existing common brand “Adrion”), which would consolidate a common image of sustainability and quality even through the support to cooperation and intercultural dialogue. This marketing program of the touristic product of the Adriatic Ionian macroregion should be also promoted through new technologies and social networks and through match-making strategic actions on target areas, such as the BRICS.

- Taking specific actions for the valorization of the most relevant clusters with the aim of increasing the interest of tourists for the products of the area.

- Carrying on specific actions for the valorization of the cruise and nautical tourism in order to build permanent links and sustainable processes of local development, developing smaller ports as new cruise ports, as well as considering the growing dimensions of cruise ships, which might be a problem for the future of the Adriatic basin.

- Promoting policies of clustering between enterprises of the tourism industry at cross border level, supporting the increasing quality and effectiveness of the tourism promotion to better harmonize different regulations.

- Promoting a cross-border open system of Administrations (at any level), Institutions, and private enterprises for the tourism promotion of the Adriatic-Ionian basin as a whole. Creating the conditions in terms of services and tools for implementing member States – CC/PCC joint approach to the tourism promotion in a long term perspective.

- Boosting tourism stakeholders’ management capacities with specific regard to the tour operators of the Adriatic-Ionian basin regions.

- Increasing the visibility of minor tourism destinations through:
  - micro-marketing networking activities, especially for cultural and natural landmarks, supported by the use of new technologies and the application of e-commerce tools in line with the new trends of holidays and trips’ buying procedures;
- shared micro-marketing regional actions alongside the existing macro-marketing policies related to tourism.

➢ Establishing a portal for the presentation and promotion of local products of SMEs as well as micro, very small and small enterprises within the A.I. region (e-market).

➢ Planning seaplane itineraries connecting all coastal areas of the A.I. region.

➢ Light aviation network (thematic tourism) with amateur pilot camps in abandoned landing strips.

➢ Developing a medieval network connecting monuments (medieval, ancient, etc.) within the A.I. region.

➢ Developing the interconnectivity potential and capacity building of the macroregion through project ideas e.g. for the A.I. Community for Empowerment of the Knowledge in Social sciences (for the next calls of Horizon 2020) in partnership with the universities and research centres.

**What are our expected results**

➢ Reduction of high-quality food costs through the shortening of the supply chain while promoting the Mediterranean A.I. diet.

➢ The setting up of an integrated tourist network ensuring the repositioning of the A.I. region as an appealing market in the globalization of BRICS tourism, attracting tourism and investments on the basis of its cultural, historical, traditional certified high-quality agri-food offer.

➢ Promotion of local products and relating services: cross-border cooperation of enterprises, mobility and exchange of innovation among SMEs, new jobs.

➢ The creation of a more homogeneous tourist system appealing investments and economic flows as well.

➢ The increasing and better distribution of tourist flows in the area: this would help especially the small and less known high-level tourist destinations.

➢ The creation of itineraries based on common historic paths.

➢ Innovative approaches on coastal sector: increased tourism, investments for a sustainable touristic industry, increased cross-border cooperation in order to optimize the touristic sector, protection of the environment, creation of new jobs.

➢ Valorisation of cultural and natural heritage for tourism purposes: improvement and dissemination of information and human abilities, knowledge about the common history among the citizens of the A.I. region.
• Attraction of high level tourism all along the year: extension of the touristic period, creation of high level jobs, creation of a technical and educational support service ecosystem.

• Development of a high level platform including public administrations and universities of the macroregion to build up a common awareness and knowledge in the social sciences, and to foster macroregion mobility of ideas, students, academicians and workers, also for cultural and research purposes.

• Creation of a smart ecosystem for smart integrated system of advanced services in smart cities directed to citizens and public administration of the A.I. region.

5 - CONCLUSION

The Adriatic Ionian Interregional Group of the Committee of the Regions trusts to be a key player in the multi-level governance EUSAIR in order to ensure the implementation of the Action Plan with the necessary political commitment and administrative support of Regional and Local Authorities, for the success of the A.I. macroregion.

Brussels, 13th December 2013

President Gian Mario Spacca

vice-President Apostolos Katsamaras