



Strasbourg, 5 May 2008

CDL-UDT(2008)010
Engl. only

T-04-2008

EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

**UNIDEM
CAMPUS TRIESTE SEMINAR
"MODELS OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT"**

**Trieste, Italy
21 – 24 April 2008**

REPORT

ADRIATIC EUROREGION

by

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A. Introduction

1. The initiative of setting up an Adriatic Euroregion has been launched by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE) of the Council of Europe with the support of the Region of Istria (Croatia) and the Region Molise (Italy) and has received growing international, national, regional and local support. A number of institutions acknowledged this initiative as highly deliverable, thereby helping to broaden the overall consensus.

2. A series of international conferences, held in a number of countries in the Adriatic area, have, in their final declarations, expressed a widely shared desire to ensure proper support for the new initiative, generally seen as a tool for co-operation and a means of paving the way for the South-East European countries to accede to the European Union.

- "The Declaration of Opatija" adopted on the initiative of the Littoral-Mountain Region, Istria Region, Dubrovnik and Neretva Region and the Autonomous Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, in the course of the "Adriatic summer school" of the Assembly of European Regions held in the year 2002 in Opatija with the subject "Contribution of the regions to the process of viability - innovative practice for innovative policies of regional development"

- The decisions of the meeting of the presidents of the Croatian Adriatic Regions with the participation of the representatives of the Italian Region of Molise, held in Mošćenička Draga, Littoral-Mountain Region, 25 October 2003

- The report (CLRAE - AER) on common activities for interregional collaboration: aims and results of the Summer school of the Assembly of European Regions and of the Program Centurio - Congress of the local and regional authorities of the Council of Europe,

- Conference held in Pula on 28 June 2004 which confirmed the need of promoting activities of collaboration among regions,

- seminar held in Dubrovnik on 06 September 2004 defining a series of sectors such collaboration includes (fisheries, environment, agriculture, tourism and culture, infrastructure and transportation), without excluding the possibility of adding other future fields of work;

- conference in Chioggia from 22-24 September 2004 organized by the Parliamentary Assembly entitled "Towards Sustainable Development of the Adriatic: Collaboration Among Local and Regional Institutions" resulting in great consensus and winning a wide participation of Parliamentary members from various parts of the region,

- conference in Termoli from 08-09 November 2004 at which the representatives of regions and municipalities of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Serbia and Monte Negro and Slovenia signed "The Protocol on the Establishment of the Adriatic/Ionic Euroregion" and considered the first draft of the Statute of the new institution;

- conference in Pula dated 22 April 2005 at which the Provisional Council of the Adriatic Euroregion adopted the first draft of the Statute;

- seminar in Brussels dated November 2005 entitled "Adriatic Euroregion: Means for European Integration" aimed at presenting the initiative to the European Union and getting its support;

- Convention in Venice dated 06 February 2006 which shaped the initiative by signing the common political declaration with the enclosed draft of the Statute of the Euroregion.



3. The Adriatic Euroregion is an association of units of territorial self-governments, as a rule of the first level below state level situated on the Adriatic Sea. The AE has the quality of a non-profit legal entity in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Croatia.

B. Key information

President: Ivan Jakovčić, President of the Region of Istria, Croatia

Vice-president: Michele Iorio, President of the Region of Molise, Italy

Founded: 30 June 2006 in Pula, Croatia

Composition: 23 member regions from 6 Adriatic States

Italy: Region Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Region Veneto, Region Emilia-Romagna, Region Marche, Region Abruzzo, Region Molise and Region Puglia.

Slovenia: City of Izola.

Croatia: Region of Istria, Primorsko-goranska County, Ličko-senjska County, Zadar County, Šibenik and Knin County, Split and Dalmatia County and Dubrovnik and Neretva County.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Hercegovačko-neretvanski Kanton.

Montenegro: Municipality of Kotor.

Albania: Qarku Fier, Qarku Shkoder, Qarku Durrës, Qarku Lezhë, Qarku Tirana and Qarku Vlorë.

Population: 22 millions

Surface: 229, 028 km²

Goals:

- Protection of the cultural heritage
- Protection of the environment
- Sustainable economic development in particular of tourism, fishery and agriculture
- Solution of transport and other infrastructure issues
- Consolidation of an area of peace, stability and cooperation
- Creation of the joint framework for better absorption and more efficient use of EU funds
- Support to all countries in the Adriatic area on their path towards the European Union

C. Realized activities

I. The foundation of the Adriatic Euroregion

- Constitution Conference - 30 June 2006, Pula (Croatia)

4. The idea to launch a concrete co-operation between the regional and local authorities in order to contribute to the development of the Adriatic area – became a reality in Pula on the 30th June 2006 – the day when the founding Conference of the Adriatic Euroregion took place. The event was attended alongside with the representatives of the member-regions, representatives of the Council of Europe and the Committee of the Regions also by the **President of the Republic of Croatia Mr. Stipe Mesić**, by the **President of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Mr. Sulejman Tihić** and by the **Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy Mr. Famiano Crucianelli**.

5. The Adriatic Euroregion is willing to become an effective forum to accommodate different interests on the Adriatic Sea. In the next year the goal is to develop the founding grounds of the organization and to start achieving the commonly defined objectives, namely, peace, stability

and wealth for its citizens.

Following the founding conference of the Adriatic Euroregion, the office of the Secretariat was solemnly opened in Pula. On this occasion a classical music concert conducted by Maestro Riccardo Muti was held in Pula's amphitheater.

II Assembly meeting of the Adriatic Euroregion - 22 November 2006, Ancona (Italy)

6. The second Assembly meeting represented the end of the preparatory phase of the Adriatic Euroregion; from the 22nd November 2006 the constitutive bodies have been elected and the Adriatic Euroregion was able to start its work independently.

7. The members of the **Executive Board** are composed of a balanced presence of representative's from both sides of the Adriatic, namely, the Italian Regions Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Veneto and Marche, the Croatian County of Split and Dalmatia, Montenegro and Albania supported in its work by the President and Vice-president of the Adriatic Euroregion. The Executive Board holds regular sessions at least once in six months and every time in a different member state.

8. Decisions of the Executive Board shall be in effect provided the presence of the majority of its members. The Executive Board is convoked by the President of the AE by his/her decision, or at the demand of the Vice-President, or else when it is demanded by one third of the members of the Executive Board or the Supervisory Board.

The **Supervisory Board** supervises the implementation of acts adopted by the bodies of the AE and the regularity of material and financial business activities. The Board is composed by one Albanian representative, one Croatian (Dubrovnik-Neretva County) and one Italian (Region Puglia) Region.

9. The II Assembly meeting brought the **proposal to constitute the Adriatic Euroregion's Commissions**. The aim is develop the activities of the Adriatic Euroregion in 5 thematic areas, i.e., fishery, environment, transport & infrastructure, culture & tourism and productive/economic affairs. Alongside with the mentioned Commissions an important role is played by the Commission for Institutional matters, chaired by the Italian Region Abruzzo.

III. Working Commission's Constitution - 16th & 17th April 2007, Brijuni Islands (Croatia)

10. In accordance with the proposal taken during the 2nd Assembly meeting – held in Ancona – to officially constitute the thematic Commissions of the Adriatic Euroregion – the initiative was organized by the Secretariat in collaboration with the Region of Istria on Brijuni Islands (Croatia).

The two-days meeting represented the first gathering of that kind, which grouped political and technical representatives of member-regions. The aim was to give a presidency and vice-presidency to each Commission which will be in charge of drafting the annual working programme and coordinate the Commissions work and activities. Every Adriatic Euroregion member has the right to be represented in each of the 5 Commissions with at least one member.

11. The agreed Commissions' composition is as follows:

1. COMMISSION FOR CULTURE AND TOURISM

Presidency: Region Puglia, IT

Vice-presidency: Region of Istria, HR

Vice-presidency: Qarkut Lezha, ALB

2. COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

Presidency: Zadar County, HR

Vice-presidency: Region Veneto, IT

Vice-presidency: Qarkut Vlore, ALB

3. COMMISSION FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Presidency: Primorsko-goranska County, HR

Vice-presidency: Qarkut Shkoder, ALB

Vice-presidency: Region Molise, ITA

4. COMMISSION FOR ENVIRONMENT

Presidency: Emilia-Romagna, IT

Vice-presidency: County of Sibenik and Split, HR

Vice-presidency: Municipality of Kotor, CG

5. COMMISSION FOR PRODUCTIVE & ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Presidency: Qarku Fier, ALB

Vice-presidency: Region Marche, IT

Vice-presidency: Municipality of Kotor, CG

IV. Opening of the Liaison Office in Brussels

-11th June 2007, Brussels (Belgium)

12. After the important achievements reached in this year, the opening of the liaison office in Brussels the 11th June 2007 represented the definitive next step. The opening event was attended by important political and diplomatic personalities, the Secretary General of the Committee of the Regions Mr. Gerard Stahl, the Croatian State Secretary Mrs. Marija Burić Pejčinović, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy Mr. Famiano Crucianelli, representatives from DG REGIO, which contributed to enrich the programme through enhancing the diversity of perspectives and content represented. The office is located in the premises of the Regional representation office of the Region Molise.

V. Assembly meeting

- 21st September, Shkoder (Albania)

13. The third assembly meeting of the Adriatic Euroregion organized in collaboration with the qarku of shkoder and the albanian ministry of interior was a definitive step towards the formalization of the work and activities of the association. the event was attended by prominent representatives of the Council of Europe, Albanian Government and the **Albanian President Rami Topi**.

During the 3rd Assembly meeting the President of the Adriatic Euroregion was reconfirmed for a mandate of 2 years in the person of **Mr. Ivan Jakovčić**, President of the Region of Istria (HR). The Vice-president, **Mr. Michele Iorio**, President of the Region Molise (IT), was reelected for a mandate of 2 years as well. The Composition of the Executive and Supervisory board was reconfirmed as in the previous temporary mandate. The Working Programme for 2008 was unanimously accepted by all members, stressing the importance of integrated and coordinated

actions in the whole Adriatic area.

VI. Commissions working conference - 3rd and 4th December 2007, Venice (Italy)

14. The working meeting of the Adriatic Euroregion's Commissions took place in Venice (Italy) the 3rd and 4th December 2007 organized in co-operation with the Region Veneto. The meeting was attended by member-regions from 6 Countries; moreover the prefecture of Corfu (Greece) and the Council of Europe were present as observers. During each of the 5 Commissions' meetings, namely, Commission for Culture and Tourism, Commission for Transport and Infrastructure, Commission for Environment, Commission for Fisheries and Commission for Economic affairs, the working plan for 2008 was presented and some project ideas were shared between its partners.

15. Those project proposals are the result of the technical coordination and the harmonious work between the Commission's members; moreover, they represent the common needs of the Adriatic regions and are aimed at solving issues which may affect all the members. The project results will have integral effect for the Adriatic as a whole.

The final say concerning the best projects was given by the Members of the Executive Board. At present it is up to the Commission's members to develop and extend those proposals for the beginning of 2008. The common will of the Adriatic Euroregion's members is to candidate the projects through the new instrument IPA CBC and others.

VII. Proposed project ideas

1. COMMISSION FOR CULTURE AND TOURISM

- Long term programme of sustainable touristic development in the Adriatic area – and **the development of the Adriatic Brand**
- Gourmet Adria – Presentation of typical products and plates of the Adriatic regions
- Itineraries and places in the culture of the Adriatic Sea
- Creation of a virtual Médiathèque of visual and audio-visual production of the Adriatic regions & technical assistance in the process of digital production
- Project of **co-operation in the field of archaeology**
- Creation of an **audio and visual archive** of the popular musical production and oral tradition of the Adriatic Euroregion
- **Adriatic Underwater museum**

2. COMMISSION FOR FISHERIES

- **E.COMP.** – Development and innovation of enterprises in the fisheries field & qualification of its operators
- **INITIA 013** – Logistic and infrastructure for the fisheries sector
- **ECO.SEA** – Management and improvement of the maritime ecosystem & of the cross border natural resources
- **PRO.ACQUA** – Sustainable development of the peripheral areas related to water through the tourism
- Construction of a **port of embarkation for fishery boats** on the island of Vis

3. COMMISSION FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- **SEEMS** – Integrated transport management of the maritime highway of the South-

East Europe

- **CRISE** – Risks and cross border maritime security management of the Adriatic Euroregion
- Creation of a **Centre for Information and Communication** for the Adriatic Euroregion

4. COMMISSION FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- **Monitoring and research of mucilage, eutrophication and climate change in the Adriatic**
- **ADRIAGIZC** – Integrated management of the coastal areas

5. COMMISSION FOR ECONOMIC/PRODUCTIVE AFFAIRS

- **A.R.A.NET** – Adriatic Regional Agencies Network
- **Research project on the typical autochthonous olives in the Adriatic area**
- **Development of typical products in the rural and marginal areas of the Adriatic Euroregion**
- **Human resources, worker's mobility and entrepreneurship**

VIII. First Joint Initiative



Project Adri.Eur.O.P. Financed by the European Union

16. The **project Adri.Eur.O.P.** aims at offering operational support (in technical-administrative terms) to the political process for the establishment of an institutional body of the Adriatic Euroregion (AE), created in order to promote sustainable development in territories of the Adriatic regions. The goal of the project is to realize the activities necessary for the start-up of the Adriatic Euroregion in the short term. The main activities, which are integrated and implemented by all partners, can be outlined as follows:

- Support the work coordination between the cross-border bodies involved in the AE project
- Relationships with international European bodies and institutions
- Establishment of technical-administrative service structures
- Start up of the Adriatic Euroregion through organizational and structural processes in the initial phases
- Assessment of the *in itinere* situation regarding the AE sectors of interest
- Strategic design and new Governance on which to realize the EA structure
- Creation of a communications and information strategy
- Realize a true Partnership in the Area

Adri.Eur.O.P. is an integrated project which is under Priority 3 (Action of Strengthening of Cooperation), Measure 3.2 ("Cooperation and Strengthening in Communications, Research and Systems Harmonization between Institutions") for the creation of service structures in order to promote activities between Adriatic partners. Moreover, the will is to encourage the relationships between the latter and the European Union in order to establish a network of local bodies (municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, universities, research centres, etc).

PROJECT PARTNERS:

ITALY, Adriatic Regions – Molise (Lead Partner), Abruzzo, Marche, Emilia Romagna, Puglia, Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia.

Eastern Adriatic Countries - Croatia, Region of Istria (Primorsko-goranska region, Region of Split and Dalmatia and Region of Dubrovnik and Neretva), **Montenegro**, Municipality of Kotor.

TIME SCHEDULE:

Implementation date: from January 2007 to June 2008.

TOTAL AMOUNT: 1,125.000€

D. Future initiatives and challenges

17. We may conclude that the Adriatic Euroregion has already justified its reasons for establishment in this initial phase, namely;

- AE has become a well-known and unique institution in the Adriatic area in line with the contemporary societal and political requirements
- The dialogue between regional and local political actors on both sea banks of the Adriatic, in six different states, has been fostered
- AE has developed into an inevitable political instrument for the rethinking of the Adriatic future
- AE represents the institutional background for the identification and solution of shared problems
- AE has acquired an institutional form, legal identity, the organizational structure and has accomplished in the foundation of its organs
- Two offices have been opened in Pula and Brussels, the Secretariat is successfully running, the basic funds for its operation have been obtained and its modus operandi has been well accepted

These points represented the preconditions for the continuation of the future activities, which are focusing on the following:

- Further empowerment of the financial, organizational and staff capabilities
- Further presentation and promotion of the activities of the Adriatic Euroregion before the EU institutions and other international bodies
- Further strengthening of mutual dialogue and cooperation between the member regions
- Continuation with the work of the thematic Commissions and the additional creation of concrete projects with integral impact
- Detect further financing possibilities for the implementation of joint ideas

18. As it is clear from this short outline, the Adriatic Euroregion is still developing and growing in the European scenario, its positive accomplishments' and future outcomes will depend on the continuation of the effective work of its members. A new model of cooperation on the Adriatic has been developed as well as a new construction model for a stable European Adriatic home. Furthermore, the Adriatic Euroregion may be distinguished as an instrument for faster integration of the South Eastern European states into a common Europe and as an example of a modern regional European political infrastructure – a model that could be implemented on other European maritime area.

19. This brochure represents a means of public information and an outlook of what has so far been achieved and in which direction the Adriatic Euroregion is willing to proceed.

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