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More information on the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region: www.adriatic-ionian.eu

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**ANNEX I: EUSAIR FORUM PROGRAMME** 

# I. INTRODUCTION

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

One and a half years after the launch of this EU macroregional strategy, the Forum gathered together the representatives of the national, regional and local administrations of the eight participating countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) 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 EUSAIR Forum also provided ample possibilities for networking and attracted over 600 stakeholders from the Adriatic and Ionian Region and beyond.

Back-to-back with the event, the Croatian Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Miro Kovač hosted a **Ministerial meeting** gathering the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Ministers responsible for EU funds of the eight EUSAIR countries, with the participation of the EU Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Creţu. The Dubrovnik Declaration adopted at the meeting calls for solidarity with the communities hit by the refugee and migrant crisis, advocates exploring avenues of action that the Strategy could undertake in this regard and invites the Interreg Adriatic-Ionian (ADRION) Programme to provide support to specific actions. Regarding the Strategy's implementation, the Declaration confirms the commitment of the Ministers to devote financial, administrative and technical resources and promote a cross-sectoral cooperation between the countries and across the different levels of government. In order to make it operational, it also calls for a better alignment of the national priorities for funding with the Strategy.

Following the Ministerial meeting, the Ministers and Commissioner Creţu joined other prominent speakers in the Forum and participated in the panel discussion of the **opening session**.

The Forum featured high level speakers in two **plenary** sessions focusing on, respectively, how to make the Adriatic and Ionian Region more resilient and how to unlock the potential of the Region through the added value of multi-level governance.

The Forum's three **parallel sessions** targeted practitioners and provided a space for interactive exchange of experiences and opinions on the following topics:

- 1) Reconciling conflicting interests in a shared maritime space;
- 2) <u>Seeking enhanced cooperation in the transport and</u> energy sectors; and
- 3) Smart approach for a sustainable and attractive region.

The **side event** organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries on 13 May looked at the <u>complementarity and mutual benefits of the EUSAIR and the BlueMED Initiative</u><sup>1</sup> and the need to strengthen coordination in the field of research and innovation across the different pillars of the Strategy.

The **closing session** provided an opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of the Forum's two days and to announce the upcoming hand-over of the EUSAIR chairmanship on 1 June 2016 from Croatia to Greece, symbolised with a handshake between the representatives of the two countries.

Another side event of the Forum, was a <u>Business-to-Business session</u> on 12 May organised by the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) with the support of the European Commission. The scope of this event was to bring together SMEs, universities, chambers of commerce, clusters and other stakeholders in the Adriatic and Ionian Region, with the objective to find partners for new projects and/or explore new business opportunities. The event attracted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The BlueMED Initiative is a research and innovation initiative for blue jobs and growth in the Mediterranean. By developing a strategic research and innovation framework for a healthy, productive and resilient Mediterranean Sea, it aims to create new 'blue' jobs and promote and improve social well-being, sustainable prosperity and environmental status of the area and beyond. The process is coordinated by Italy and it currently involves Cyprus, Croatia, France, Greece, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. It is supported and facilitated by the European Commission (DG Research and Innovation, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and the Joint Research Centre).

over 130 participants. More than 100 meetings were arranged in this occasion.

A **technical meeting** was also organised back-to-back with the Forum on 12 May in order to initiate a sustained dialogue between the Programme Authorities for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and the EUSAIR key implementers (National Coordinators, EUSAIR Pillar Coordinators and Thematic Steering Group members) to consider ways of financing projects with a macroregional added value.

# II. WELCOME AND OPENING SESSION

The conference was opened by **Željko Raguž**, Deputy Mayor of Dubrovnik, who welcomed the participants to his beautiful city in the Dalmatian coast.



He was followed by **Nikola Dobroslavić**, Governor of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County Council, who spoke about connectivity as one of the pre-requisites for any other development in the Region.



In the Forum's opening speech, the EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, **Corina Creţu**, stressed that joint work allows the countries in the Region to tackle challenges and seize opportunities which they fail to do alone. To succeed, countries have to, first, think across borders and sectors, hence go beyond their comfort zone; second, make sure all relevant partners are around the table; and, third, translate political will into adequate resources.

Referring to the refugee and migrant crisis, while acknowledging that the Strategy cannot be the appropriate tool to address emergency situations, the Commissioner recalled that the Strategy framework can play an important role in improving the coordination for a better joint response to this challenge.



"The framework of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region can play an important role in improving the coordination for a better joint response to the refugee and migrant crisis."

Corina Creţu, EU Commissioner for Regional Policy

The Croatian Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, **Miro Kovač**, delivered a keynote address where he acknowledged that the economies of the Region are facing big challenges, and that the most important attribute of the Strategy is the benefits it will bring to citizens in terms of growth and jobs, as well as the contribution to EU



"With the economies of the Region facing big challenges, the most important attribute of the Strategy is the benefits it will bring to citizens in terms of growth and jobs, as well as the contribution to EU integration".

Miro Kovač, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia integration. Referring to the four pillars of the Strategy, the Minister said that blue growth has an important potential to create new jobs in aquaculture and vital research and innovation; furthermore, he advocated for sustainable tourism solutions, the establishment of an integrated low carbon transport network along the entire coastline, and confirmed the need to reduce pollution and improve waste management.

The Minister recognised as well the need to bring EUSAIR actions at all levels to the attention of the public, which can be particularly helpful for the countries not yet in the EU. Finally, he confirmed that Croatia is ready to take up new challenges, such as the large bridge to connect the Croatian peninsula of Pelješac with the mainland, and a LNG terminal which are currently being planned.

In his capacity of representative of the Conference of Speakers of National Parliaments of the Adriatic and Ionian Region, **Željko Reiner**, Speaker of the Parliament of Croatia, referred to the strategic position of Croatia as part of the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian Regions, and stressed the importance of the cooperation between EU and non-EU countries around the same priorities.



Referring to the <u>Joint Statement</u> signed a few days earlier in Split in the framework of the XIV Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, he mentioned the commitment from the Adriatic and Ionian countries to contribute to the overall response to migration, stressing the added value of interparliamentary cooperation.

Ministers, or their representatives, of the eight participating countries joined the stage to participate in a panel discussion moderated by **Ivana Dragičević**, Executive

Producer of the N1 News Channel in Croatia. Questioned about the differences between the EUSAIR and the other existing EU macro-regional strategies in the Baltic Sea Region, the Danube Region and the Alpine Region, EU Commissioner Corina Creţu mentioned that pooling together all possible funds to implement the EUSAIR goes in line with the Juncker Plan for strategic investments. The equal number of EU and candidate and potential candidate countries gives a particular shape to this Strategy, which has enshrined in its raison d'être the objective of turning a page in the history. Moreover, the challenge of weak administrative capacity in these countries was highlighted.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania, **Ditmir Bushati**, reflected on the potential of the EUSAIR to support the European path of candidate and potential candidate countries participating in the Strategy. The Strategy set-up is flexible, meaning there are no specific/dedicated funds, and that there is no new legislation to implement. The Strategy is however not bridging the gap in terms of access to EU funds. The Minister made a plea for the inclusion of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and of Kosovo\* in the EUSAIR. Taking into account the important infrastructure deficits in the Region, the so-called Berlin Process<sup>2</sup> is crucial to put forward the Adriatic and Ionian corridor.

Asked about the priorities for the EUSAIR chairmanship that Greece is taking over from Croatia, **Alexis Charitsis**, Deputy Minister for Economy, Development and Tourism, mentioned that they will be set up through a collaborative effort of all the countries, the European Commission and the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative Permanent Secretariat. The full activation of all the administrations concerned in the Strategy's implementation, counting with the support of the

<sup>\*</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The **Berlin Process** is a five- year process aiming to reiterate the commitment to EU enlargement towards the Western Balkans region by facilitating increased regional cooperation, notably on connectivity. The process began with a high-level Conference on the Western Balkans in Berlin in 2014 and was followed by a summit in Vienna in 2015. The next Western Balkans Summits are planned in July 2016 in Paris and in 2017 in Rome.



EUSAIR Facility Point project (funded under the Interreg ADRION Programme, aiming to support the governance and management of the Strategy), will be a first priority. Secondly, addressing the refugee and migrant crisis is of paramount importance to promote cohesion and stability in the Region. He wished to thank Commissioner **Creţu** for her support during the crisis which has hit Greece in a very acute way.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, **Igor Crnadak**, explained that the EUSAIR is an important forum through which Bosnia and Herzegovina can contribute to improved regional cooperation and reconciliation which are essential conditions to pave its way towards EU accession.

In representation of the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs (who was present at the Ministerial meeting together with the Undersecretary of State responsible for EU funds), Ambassador Adriano Chiodi Cianfarani referred to the coordination mechanism established in Italy for the implementation of the Strategy, which is proving to be an effective way to ensure that all relevant levels of government are involved. He stressed the strong support from Italy to the EU integration of the candidate and potential candidate countries, and informed about the 2017 summit of the Berlin Process to be hosted in Rome. Regarding the refugee and migrant crisis, the Ambassador advocated for the establishment of a coordination mechanism for migration policies in the region.

Andrija Pejović, State Secretary for European integration in the Montenegrin administration, highlighted that participation in two macro-regional strategies – Adriatic and Ionian and Danube – is helping Montenegro to improve cooperation with the other countries in the Region and to effectively prepare for EU membership. In this respect, he informed about the good progress of his country in the negotiations of accession, which include the opening of several chapters related to the EUSAIR objectives.

When asked about the participation of his country in three macro-regional strategies, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, **Karl Erjavec** pointed to the potential for exchange of experiences and know-how. He mentioned a series of events that will take place in Izola from 25 September to 1 October 2016 to explore the synergies between the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region, the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

Jadranka Joksimović, Minister without Portfolio in Charge of European Integration of Serbia, wished to define the Strategy as the "rule of life", to complement the "rule of law", when identifying projects that will benefit our citizens. Despite the limited amount of funds for candidate and potential candidate countries, it is still very valuable for them to fully participate in the process, and propose projects which can then find their way through to the

financing. It is essential to find synergies with the Berlin Process covering crucial issues such as the economy, transport and energy infrastructures, and the exchange of young people.

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Jadranka Joksimović, Minister without Portfolio in Charge of European Integration of Serbia

Finally, Minister **Miro Kovač** recalled the three priorities which guided Croatian chairmanship of the EUSAIR: first, solidarity; second, coordination; and third, strong leadership. They are key elements for the success of the Strategy. He mentioned the strong potential of the eight countries living in a "community of destiny" to change things if they act together.

"There is a strong potential of the eight countries living in a "community of destiny" to change things if they act together."

Miro Kovač, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia

# III. PLENARY SESSION I – For a Resilient and Innovative Adriatic and Ionian Region – Tackling the Social and Economic Challenges

The plenary session aimed to identify ways in which the Adriatic and Ionian Region can tackle the most complex challenges (economic crisis, environmental degradation, refugees and migration flows) spanning national borders.

By centering the discussion around resilience and innovation, the speakers concluded that a new approach based on strengthened cooperation is needed to deal with these interdependent challenges and that the EUSAIR framework has great potential to act as a region-wide platform for stimulating collaborative action. The plenary session showcased examples of resilience and solidarity in communities overcoming natural disasters and dealing with the refugee and migrant crisis.

Catherine Wendt, Acting Director in European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, in her opening remarks as Chair, reminded that, perhaps more than any other macro-region, the Adriatic and Ionian Region needs to be resilient. It has had its fair share of crises and is now at the heart of one of the biggest challenges facing Europe - the migration crisis. Cooperation among neighbouring countries and joint decision-making as well as strategic use of available funding are essential for building a resilient Region. An important potential of the EUSAIR is that it allows issues to be addressed across not only internal but also external EU borders, thereby supporting the EU integration process.

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Catherine Wendt, Acting Director, European Commission's Directorate for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations

Setting the scene for the panel discussion, **Jack Jacometti**, contributor to the <u>report of the European Commission's</u> <u>Joint Research Centre entitled "The Challenge of Resilience in a Globalised World"</u>, explained that increased globalisation has brought complex inter-dependencies between sectors (finance, economy, energy, natural resources, climate change, digital society and health). At the same time, all sectors are changing at unprecedented pace, posing formidable challenges to policymakers.

Therefore to avoid a state of permanent crisis, policymakers need to shift from crisis management to collaborative strategic foresight in order to be able to shape a resilient future. As these challenges exceed national borders, the Region needs to base its resilience capacity on the common vision of like-minded leaders and on concrete actions stemming from trilateral collaboration between government, business and civil society. Parallel to this, bottom-up initiatives, such as Transition Movement, are needed to strengthen community resilience and self-sufficiency. Examples in Italy and Croatia were mentioned.



"Policy makers need to shift from crisis management to collaborative strategic foresight in order to be able to shape a resilient future."

Jack Jacometti, contributor to the report of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre entitled "The Challenge of Resilience in a Globalised World"

In her key-note address, **Olivera Shejbal**, Assistant Minister of Tourism of Croatia, highlighted the importance of sustainable tourism as an engine of growth for other sectors and for providing socio-economic stability - the basis for resilience. She pointed out that trans-regional



connectivity and cooperation is needed to reduce disparities and address the seasonality of tourist flows.

Patrizio Bianchi, Regional Minister of the Emilia-Romagna Region, Italy, in his key-note speech emphasised that social dialogue and investments are critical for building a resilient community. This strong sense of community and solidarity was demonstrated by the citizens of Emilia Romagna during the earthquake in 2012. He referred to the strong positive correlation between social resilience and innovative capacity and pointed out that they need to be strengthened in order to cope with extended periods of slow growth. To consolidate the common resilience capacity, social capital, innovation and territorial policies must be strengthened via networks covering the Adriatic and Ionian Region. Europe needs a resilient society in the macro-region, not only to cope with external shocks, but also to strengthen its identity and its global role.



"Social resilience and innovative capacity need to be strengthened in order to cope with extended periods of slow growth."

Patrizio Bianchi, Regional Minister, Emilia-Romagna Region

The panel discussed further the issues of economic development and managing labour migration, as well as solidarity in dealing with the refugee crisis in the Region.

**Tanja Dedović**, from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), explained that migration is one of the megatrends of the century, which will continue to



challenge governments all over the world in many years to come. The Region therefore needs to build a governance capacity in relation to migration and to look at how societies can benefit from the trend. The EUSAIR framework can be used to develop a coordination mechanism for migration policies in the Region, including a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to effectively manage migration flows. IOM is looking at ways to mainstream migration into the Danube and the Adriatic-lonian macro-regional strategies.

**Dimitris Dimitriadis**, member and former President of the European Economic and Social Committee, emphasised the crucial role of the business sector in developing the Region and the need for its active involvement in implementing the EUSAIR, while **Marko Šantić**, vice President of the Chamber of Economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, representing the Forum of the Adriatic-Ionian Chambers of Commerce, spoke about the importance of strengthening the networks of SMEs in the Region and of encouraging an entrepreneurial culture.

**Hubert Gambs**, Director in European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime affairs and Fisheries, described challenges such as youth unemployment, migration, environmental pollution and climate change which can heavily undermine the resilience of the Region. Due to their cross-border nature, these challenges need to

be addressed through a regional cooperation framework. He pointed out that the added value of the macro-regional strategy is to implement projects of common value. Security, stability and economic growth go hand-in-hand, and the EU Maritime Security Strategy is a means of achieving these objectives via enhanced cooperation and quick reaction to crises and disasters. Maritime Spatial Planning is also crucial to ensure that activities take place without conflict and damage to the marine environment.

"Security, stability and economic growth go hand-inhand."

Hubert Gambs, Director, European Commission's
Directorate for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

**Christiana Kalogirou**, Governor of the North Aegean Region, described the magnitude of the refugee crisis and its impact on the Greek North Aegean Islands whose inhabitants have demonstrated humanity, maturity and solidarity. She highlighted that this solidarity needs to be strengthened at the level of the Adriatic and Ionian Region and Europe as a whole.

The panel debate was followed by an interactive session with the audience.

In response to the question on whether specific initiatives recognised as best practices in candidate and potential candidate countries and financed under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), could be extended into the whole EUSAIR Region benefitting also of EU Structural and Investment funds (ESIF), Ms Wendt explained that, while the two envelopes for EU and enlargement countries cannot be merged, there is scope for establishing a clearer link between the planning done at national level and the strategic planning within the EUSAIR.

Regarding participation of the business community in the Forum, Mr. Dimitriadis noted that while business associations actively participate in such events, of prime interest to the business community is the availability of funds in support of concrete projects.

Ms Dedović pointed out that to tackle high unemployment and lack of skilled labour, a framed and organised labour mobility is an effective answer. In that context, it is important to harmonise educational standards and strengthen capacity of recruitment agencies such as public employment services.

IV. PLENARY SESSION II: Unlocking the Potential of the Adriatic and Ionian Region – the Added Value of Multi-Level Governance

The second plenary session focused on effective multi-level governance system as a key prerequisite for the sound implementation of the strategy and achieving its goals.

In her introduction as Chair of this session, **Lena Andersson Pench**, Director in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, underlined the need to 'think outside the box' emphasised by Commissioner **Creţu** as an overall condition for effective implementation of the EUSAIR. Referring to the Commission's report on governance of macro-regional strategies, she highlighted a set of pre-conditions for good governance of the EUSAIR,

namely (1) securing political leadership and commitment, that is to say, allocating resources to all levels of government in all eight countries; (2) decision-makers positioning actions, programmes and projects in a geographical context going beyond the standard territorial units; (3) continued support to EUSAIR key implementers via a clear mandate and sufficient resources – both financial and in terms of staff. The EUSAIR Facility Point project, funded under the ADRION Transnational Programme to support the governance and management of the Strategy, can obviously complement each participating country's effort in this regard, but can in no way act as a substitute for this effort; (4) strong involvement of civil society at large. The Commission for its part is ready to continue to

"The EUSAIR will be judged against its results."

Lena Andersson Pench, Director, European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy

play a strategic coordination role and to help bring funds and people together. EU resources will thus be used for filling data gaps, in particular in the non-EU countries, by collecting and harmonising them for the purpose of planning and reporting. This is particularly important since the Strategy will be judged against its results.

In his scene-setting intervention, Joaquim Oliveira Martins, Head of the Regional Development Policy Division in the OECD's Directorate of Public Governance and Territorial Development, presented the findings of the recent OECD review on multi-level governance in the context of public investments. These findings included the positive correlation between the level of development and the degree of decentralisation. In developed countries an average of 60% of public investments are made at the subnational level. The review also disclosed three interconnected dimensions and dynamics of multi-level governance: (1) institutional (reorganisation of powers); (2) territorial (re-design of territorial units and structures); (3) public management (reorganisation of administrative processes). Mr. Oliveira furthermore pointed to an OECD

tool-kit, indicators and country studies developed for monitoring alignment of policies and coordination of public investments across levels of governance and underlined the importance of capacity building among national and regional civil servants to these ends. Available on the OECD website, this toolkit could prove useful for the EUSAIR's key implementers. He concluded by pointing to the possibility for the OECD to contribute to the collective endeavour of implementing the Strategy. This contribution would comprise two steps: (1) a diagnosis, based on statistical data, of existence or not of multi-level governance frameworks in each of the eight EUSAIR countries; (2) a methodology for monitoring institutional and administrative and capacity building.



"There is a positive correlation between the level of development and the degree of decentralisation."

Joaquim Oliveira Martins, Head of the Regional Development Policy Division, OECD

In his video key note address, **Ivan Jakovčić**, Member of the European Parliament and *rapporteur* on the EUSAIR, invited all participants in the Forum to reflect on the need to change decision making if we want the Strategy to be successful. In his view, there is a need for a strong sense of ownership from the participating countries and regions. To deliver on expectations, the Strategy needs quality and creative leadership by local actors, with the support of the European Commission and of the European Parliament.

As first panellist, **Nikola Dobroslavić**, Governor of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County Council, Croatia, and Member of the Committee of Regions (CoR), underlined the support of

this institution for the EUSAIR through adopting Opinions on the Strategy and through setting up an Adriatic-Ionian Inter-regional Group. In 2010 the CoR was the first EU institution to propose a strategy for the Region and was successful in mobilising many sub-national actors to this end. He also pointed to the CoR's working group with the Western Balkans and joint consultative committees with Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. The EUSAIR and the refugee and migrant crisis are very high on the agenda of these bodies within which local and regional representatives meet regularly. Innovative governance is the main challenge for implementing the EUSAIR. The CoR has insisted on multi-level governance, and on involving ministries other than those of foreign affairs, sub-national (local and regional) participation in the Thematic Steering Groups, involvement of national and regional parliaments and capacity building at the sub-national level. For the CoR. the EUSAIR shall rely on bottom-up structures, such as permanent platforms of cities, ports, universities, etc. There are great expectations with respect to the ADRION Programme and in particular its Facility Point project which will provide support to the governance of the EUSAIR. Pending open guestions include how to combine structural funds and investment funds in support of the Strategy.

For **Andreja Jerina**, National Coordinator for macroregional strategies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia, in light of her country's experience with three EU macroregional strategies, the main conditions for successful implementation are: (1) having the right people at the right place (with expertise in the policy areas of the strategies and with a position which would allow them to take decisions and to influence national policies); (2) networking and communication (transparency about who these 'right people' are and an open dialogue between them); (3) being patient – macro-regional strategies are processes that do not bring visible results overnight. They require stability and continuity and, above all, visibility of what is being done.

A small administration like the Slovenian one relies on existing structures (e.g. Rectors' Conferences, business angels associations and other stakeholder platforms) and has one single inter-ministerial coordination structure



covering the three strategies. Managing Authorities responsible for programmes are invited to be kept abreast of the developments within the strategies. Moreover, an annual report presenting outcomes of activities under each strategy is discussed during a public hearing in the national parliament. Finally, the Slovenian National Coordinator organises every year a number of events, together with all levels of government, civil society and other interested stakeholders, to discuss options for synergetic actions. Ms. Jerina reiterated the invitation extended by the Slovenian Minister to attend the macro-regional week in Slovenia at the end of September 2016 during which the thematic coordinators responsible for environment under EUSAIR,

"Macro-regional strategies require patience. They do not bring visible results overnight. They require stability, continuity and, above all, visibility of what is being done."

Andreja Jerina, National Coordinator for macro-regional strategies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia

EUSDR and EUSALP will coordinate their efforts to bring together people from the wider region to discuss good practices and possibilities for joining forces.

**Goran Svilanović**, Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), drew attention to the South East Europe 2020 Strategy and the mechanisms supporting it. The result of a two-year long collaboration process involving seven ministers of economy of the region (six from the Western Balkans and Croatia), it sets 11 targets starting from 2010 to be reached by 2020 related to, among others, trade, jobs and growth. A programming committee composed of National Coordinators for the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, is in charge of preparing concrete projects which are implemented by the RCC itself or in cooperation with 15 partner regional organisations. A quantitative monitoring committee brings together national statistical offices and EUROSTAT with a view to harmonising data in line with the acquis. To supplement quantitative data, the RCC launched a qualitative survey, the Balkan Barometer, based on the same methodology as the Eurobarometer, aimed at capturing the perception of citizens and the business community regarding the progress achieved by this Strategy. The RCC organises an annual donor coordination meeting involving over 150 representatives of the seven governments, donor countries and funding institutions. A donor database will be available from June 2016 presenting the amount of funds and types of projects supported in the Region. Two out of the 11 targets were fulfilled at the end of 2014. Two will be fulfilled over the coming year and two by 2020. The greatest difficulty relates to the employment target. Concrete projects are closely linked to the Berlin Process.

Eleni Marianou, Secretary General of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR), underlined that the member regions (160 peripheral and maritime regions) have long been organised in macro-regional commissions (Baltic, North Sea, Mediterranean, Atlantic, etc.). Multi-level governance is above all a matter of inclusiveness for all actors, synergies between funding in pursuit of strategy objectives and harmonisation of rules. She underlined the importance for regions as major investors to take coownership of the Strategy and to become involved both in implementing the EUSAIR and shaping its priorities. After signalling that the CPMR was actively preparing for post 2020 Cohesion Policy and is open for discussions, she concluded that a new narrative was needed about how European solutions are the only ones that will get us out of the present crisis.

In the interactive session, the Coordinator of Thematic Steering Group (TSG) for EUSAIR Pillar III - Environment, Mitja Bricelj, asked who would educate civil servants and public institutions on the comprehensive approach required for implementing maritime spatial planning and enabling them to accelerate the process. In reply, Ms. Jerina acknowledged the gap since no single institution was currently in the position of fulfilling this important task. There was therefore a clear need for a common approach to be developed and implemented for all involved in institution building.

For Sergio Garribba, Coordinator of EUSAIR Pillar II - Energy, key issues are supporting entrepreneurship, reducing fragmentation and ensuring capacity building, including training.

In reply to the remark on fragmentation, Mr. Oliveira underlined the importance of shaping policies and of implementing plans at the right scale (i.e. the scale matching the geographical scope of the issues addressed).

# V. CLOSING SESSION

The closing session began with the **reports from the thematic parallel sessions** held in the morning of 13 May 2016, as well as from the Business to Business session which took place back-to-back with the Forum on 12 May 2016 in the morning.



Reflecting on the outcomes of the Parallel Session I: "Reconciling conflicting interests in a shared maritime space", Christos Economou, Head of Unit in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, mentioned the three following aspects which were examined during the session: the legal aspects, the ecosystem aspects and EUSAIR project ideas. Concerning the first item, the legal political framework including international legislation (Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, Barcelona Convention) was considered a starting point for the discussion. Secondly, the already existing databases and tools through transnational cooperation projects prove to be a good basis, although there are still gaps to be filled and more integration would thus be welcomed. Concerning the ecosystem aspects, the



Barcelona Convention is a key element and several options identified in the discussion should be used and replicated.

Finally, concerning EUSAIR project ideas, the discussion focused on three main areas: the integration of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM); the capitalization of knowledge; and sustainable aquaculture. Projects should build on current practices and crucially involve the private sector.

For Parallel Session II: "Seeking enhanced cooperation in the transport and energy sectors", Fabrizio Barbaso, expert and former Deputy Director General in the European Commission, pointed out several challenges which were discussed during the session. There is a consensus on the need for long term investments in the transport and energy sectors in the Adriatic and Ionian Region, as well as the paramount importance of these sectors to promote sustainable, inclusive and smart growth. Connectivity has to be supported by innovation capacities in terms of businesses, investments and jobs. Non-EU countries have fragmented, small and often isolated markets that need to



be interconnected – the EUSAIR offers an opportunity for upgrading the existing networks, making them more competitive and able to face the challenges of open economies. This requires efforts by all stakeholders, through strengthened cooperation and a multi-level governance approach. Common legal, contractual, environmental rules will facilitate the implementation of the politically agreed projects with a macro-regional dimension. To overcome the barriers and bottlenecks, increased coordination regarding the analysis, monitoring and evaluation activities is required. Positive examples of existing initiatives, such as the Central and South Eastern Europe Gas Connectivity (CESEC) and the Association of

Ports of the North Adriatic were highlighted. Further joint efforts aiming at interconnecting the Region should be carried out.

Reporting on Parallel Session III: "Smart approach for a sustainable and attractive region" was Andrea Mairate, Head of Unit in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy. The session was divided into two main parts, one related to improving knowledge about EU funding instruments for sustainable tourism initiatives and projects; and the second on fostering





cooperation and exchange of experience through concrete "best practice" presentations. The session aimed to look at tourism in a more integrated way to create linkages with other activities and all ESIF Thematic Objectives. Three key areas for further work were identified: 1) how to promote a better use of the funds, through more strategic thinking, e.g. in terms of smart specialization strategies (value chains, synergies and collaboration between actors); 2) how to promote sustainable tourism in a transnational context; what can we do together knowing that this is by definition a highly competitive sector, for example in cultural routes; and 3) what is the right governance framework to involve the private sector, and ensure a partnership with the

regional and local authorities as well as non-profit organisations.

The floor was then given to **Vesna Torbarina**, Senior Advisor of the Croatian Chamber of Economy, who gave a short overview of the Business-to-Business session (B2B) organised by the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), with the support of the European Commission. The session brought together over 130 participants from SMEs, universities, chambers of commerce, business angels' network, representatives of the European Investment Bank, the European Commission and other stakeholders from the whole Adriatic and Ionian Region. More than 100 prearranged business meetings on topics such as maritime industry, maritime biotechnology, aquaculture, tourism, innovation in tourism and extending the tourist season offered the opportunity for exchanges in order to find partners for projects and/or explore new business opportunities. This first-ever event organised in the framework of a macro-regional Forum received an extremely positive feed-back from the participants, who are expecting concrete results out of the contacts held in Dubrovnik.

Following the reports on the sessions, a hand-shake between the representatives of Croatia and Greece gave the starting signal for the hand-over of EUSAIR chairmanship on 1 June 2016.

Speaking on behalf of Croatia, **Dragan Jelić**, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Regional Development, highlighted that the conference served to confirm the common socioeconomic challenges, including energy, tourism and infrastructures; not to forget the migration flows and its management. He stressed that the countries of the Region are bound together not only by geography and history, but also the common challenges which are better tackled jointly. The EU integration path of partners in the Region remains a key objective, while the crucial target must be the citizens, as final beneficiaries of this shared exercise. He recalled the solid basis for the future work established in the Dubrovnik Declaration, and wished the best of luck to the next chairmanship.

Immediately after, **Alexis Charitsis**, Greek Deputy Minister of Economy, Development and Tourism, reflected on the importance of the EUSAIR in the context of globalisation. "Unless we all join forces and try to create synergies between countries and economies, it will be hard to survive the international competition", he said. The synergies are not only related to the economy or trade, actually what is important is that the countries share many similar and



common historical and cultural background, which should be translated into a common effort for growth. The Deputy Minister acknowledged that this is a good time to take over the chairmanship after a difficult period for his country. Four words will be the motto for the next year: "Think macro-regionally, act locally".

"Next year's motto under the Greek chairmanship of the EUSAIR: Think macro-regionally, act locally."

Alexis Charitsis, Deputy Minister of Economy, Development and Tourism of Greece

"Ownership is a key word: everybody should feel as being part of the Strategy, and that their contribution counts."

Walter Deffaa, European Commission's Director-General for Regional and Urban Policy In his closing remarks, **Walter Deffaa**, European Commission's Director-General for Regional and Urban Policy, referred to the event as being a successful "première" for the implementation of the EUSAIR, mainly for three reasons: because this is the first Forum of the Strategy; because it is the first time that a joint ministerial meeting with Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ministers of EU



funds took place; and because this is the first time that so many people representing administrations but also stakeholders (business sector, academia, civil society)

gather together with this common objective. He stressed the fact that beyond political statements, there is now a need to move from words to action, because "action speaks" louder than words". While the foundations for this joint work are good (governance structures are in place, funding is available), it is now time to demonstrate that the key activity, in order to deliver concrete results for the benefit of the region. Speaking about the refugee and migrant crisis, he reflected on the positive side of making it a showcase of regional cooperation: it is only when solidarity is shown that it will be possible to achieve stability and prosperity. Ownership is another key word: everybody should feel as being part of the Strategy, and that their contribution counts. He finished his intervention by thanking the Croatian authorities for the hospitality and good cooperation with the European Commission during their period of chairmanship, while wishing good luck to Greece for taking over next year.

# **ANNEX I:**

# 1ST FORUM OF THE EU STRATEGY FOR THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN REGION PROGRAMME

DUBROVNIK, CROATIA 12-13 MAY 2016

# 12 MAY 2016, THURSDAY

### SIDE EVENT

# 09:00-12:30 Business to Business (B2B)

The B2B session aims to facilitate meetings and exchange between SMEs, universities, chambers of commerce, clusters and other stakeholders in the Adriatic and Ionian Region with the objective to find partners for new projects and/or explore new business opportunities. The session is organised by Enterprise Europe Network (EEN). More information: <a href="http://b2beusair.talkb2b.net/">http://b2beusair.talkb2b.net/</a>

# **EUSAIR FORUM**

# Moderator

• Ivana Dragičević-Veličković, Executive Producer International News, N1 News Channel, Croatia

# 12:30-14:00 Networking lunch

# 14:00-16:00 Welcome and Opening Session

# Welcome speeches

- Želiko Raguž, Deputy Mayor of Dubrovnik, Croatia
- Nikola Dobroslavić, Governor of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County Council, Croatia

# Keynote addresses

- Corina Cretu, EU Commissioner for Regional Policy
- Miro Kovač, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia and pro tempore Chair of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (All)

# Special address

• Željko Reiner, Speaker of the Parliament of Croatia, pro tempore Chair of the Conference of Speakers of Parliaments of the All

# Panel discussion [order of intervention]

- Corina Cretu, EU Commissioner for Regional Policy
- Ditmir Bushati, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Albania
- Alexis Charitsis, Deputy Minister of Economy, Development and Tourism, Greece
- Igor Crnadak, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Adriano Chiodi Cianfarani, Ambassador of the Republic of Italy to Croatia
- Aleksandar Andrija Pejović, State Secretary for European Integration and Chief Negotiator, Montenegro
- Karl Erjavec, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia
- Jadranka Joksimović, Minister without Portfolio in Charge of European Integration, Serbia
- Miro Kovač, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Croatia

# 16:00-16:30 Coffee break

# 16:30-18:30 Plenary session I: 'For a resilient and innovative Adriatic and Ionian Region — tackling social and economic challenges'

Today's challenges strongly test the capacity of countries to grow more resilient to shocks and sustained stress. Faced with concomitant and often interconnected security, resource, climate, migration and technology issues, individual countries can no longer hope to address such complex issues in isolation. Choices need to be made, based on close cooperation and coordination with other countries exposed to similar challenges. The Plenary session will discuss how jointly tackling the challenges at stake, developing our knowledge base accordingly, exchanging experiences, pooling resources and coordinating efforts at the EU and macro-regional levels can help building a more resilient Adriatic and Ionian Region. This is key to job creation, economic growth and environmental sustainability as common challenges for the EU and participating countries, the business community, universities and research bodies, NGOs and more generally the citizens living in the macro-region.

# Chair

Catherine Wendt, Acting Director, European Commission, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

# Scene sette

 Jack Jacometti, Contributor to the report of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre on 'The challenge of resilience in a globalised world'

# Keynote addresses

- Olivera Sheibal, Assistant Minister of Tourism, Croatia
- Patrizio Bianchi, Regional Minister of Education, Vocational Education, University and Research, Labour, Emilia-Romagna, Italy

# Panel discussion

- Tanja Dedović, Labour Migration and Human Development Coordinator, Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe, International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
- Christiana Kalogirou, Governor of the North Aegean Region, Greece
- Dimitris Dimitriadis, Member and former President, European Economic and Social Committee
- Marko Šantić, Vice-President of the Chamber of Economy of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, representing the Forum of the Adriatic-Ionian Chambers of Commerce
- Hubert Gambs, Director, European Commission, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

# Q&A

20:00 Evening reception and cultural programme

# **13 MAY 2016, FRIDAY**

### **EUSAIR FORUM**

08:30-09:00 Welcome Coffee

09:00-10:45 Parallel sessions

# Parallel session 1: Reconciling conflicting interests in a shared maritime space

This session will focus on Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Adriatic and Ionian sea basin. The aim is threefold: a) to take stock of evidence-based knowledge regarding interactions between anthropogenic activities, as well as the impacts of such activities on the Adriatic and Ionian sea basins and on their coasts; b) to highlight best practices (including with respect to capacity building) and possible actions for transcending sector-based, jurisdictional/institutional and administrative compartmentalisation, by means of Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management; c) to identify one or two strategic projects in support of such practices, to be funded under relevant ESIF/IPA and/or by national and subnational resources.

# Co-chairs

- Christos Economou, Head of Unit, European Commission, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
- Sofia Loukmidou, Ministry of Rural Development & Food, EUSAIR Pillar 1 Coordinator, Greece

# **Panellists**

- Mauro Randone, Marine Programme Officer, WWF Mediterranean, MEDTRENDS project
- Pierpaolo Campostrini, Director of CORILA, ADRIPLAN project
- Zeljka Skaricic, Director, PAP/RAC, UNEP
- Nikos Anagnopoulos, Panhellenic Association for Small-Medium sized Aquaculture Enterprises
- Mitja Bricelj, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, EUSAIR Pillar 3 Coordinator, Slovenia
- Vesna Marohnić-Kuzmanović, Head of Department, Croatian Institute for Spatial Development

# Rapporteui

Giacomo Luciani, European Commission, DG Environment, European Commission

# Parallel session 2: Seeking enhanced cooperation in the transport and energy sectors

The cooperation in the transport and energy sectors in the Adriatic – Ionian region is not always effective. Often the priorities (eg. infrastructure – management of operations) differ from one country to the other. Furthermore, there is still a gap in the cooperation between EU Member States and their neighbours in the Western Balkans. This session aims at identifying the potential for improvement in order to achieve an efficient functioning of the energy and transport networks and the respective regulatory frameworks in the region. For both sectors, the panellists will be asked to propose potential operational solutions which could be implemented through cooperation in the framework of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

# Chair

Fabrizio Barbaso, Expert, Former Deputy Director General, European Commission

# Introduction by Pillar 2 Coordinators

- Transport: Tatjana Jovanović, Assistant Minister, Ministry for Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, Republic of Serbia
- Energy Networks: Sergio Garribba, Counsellor for Energy Policy, Ministry of Economic Development of Italy

# **Panellists**

- Baher El-Hifnawi, Lead Transport Economist, World Bank
- Janez Kopač, Director, Energy Community Secretariat

- Yanni Papapanagiotou, Transport Sector Key Expert, COWI-IPF Consortium
- Marko Senčar, Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators

# Rapporteur

Fabrizio Barbaso, Expert, Former Deputy Director General, European Commission

# Parallel session 3: Smart approach for a sustainable and attractive region

This session aims at facilitating cooperation among tourism SMEs and public or private entities in the Adriatic-Ionian region for the development of viable projects eligible for EU funding. It focuses on the better use of EU funding opportunities for tourism, culture and creative industries. Representatives from other macro-regional strategies could be invited to share their experiences. The participants will discuss how EU instruments can finance sustainable tourism initiatives and projects, as well as how to foster cooperation and exchange of experiences through concrete 'best practices' presentation.

# Chair:

 Andrea Mairate, Head of Competence Centre, Macroregions and European Territorial Cooperation, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO)

# Panel 1: EU policy framework and financial resources

### Moderator

• Blanka Belosević, Head of Department for international cooperation, Ministry of Tourism, Croatia

# **Panellists**

- Joanna Mouliou, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO), European Commission;
- Donatella Soria, Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), European Commission;
- Miroslav Vesković, International, Inter-institutional and Stakeholder Relations, Joint Research Center, European Commission;
- Maria Spyraki, Member of the European Parliament, REGI Committee:
- Sonia Popa, Director General of Tourism Development-Ministry of Economy of Albania

# Panel 2: Stakeholders and transnational project experiences

# Moderator

Francesco Di Cesare, Chairman Risposte turismo

# **Panellists**

- Marija Rajaković, Head of Sector for Competitiveness, Ministry of Economy, Croatia
- Roberto Perrocchio, Chairman, ICOMIA Marinas Group and Assomarinas
- Andrea Novakovic, CEO from the City of Dubrovnik, Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian cities
- Johannes Volkmar, International Projects, Tourismusverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
- Pierre Frustier, tourism expert, Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe
- Konstantinos Nikoloutsos, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Ilia (Greece) and member of AIC Forum

# Rapporteui

Cinzia De Marzo, Legal advisor and expert on European Sustainable tourism

# 10:45-11:30 Networking Coffee break

# 11:30-13:00 Plenary session II: 'Unlocking the potential of the Adriatic and Ionian Region – the added value of multi-level governance'

A high degree of ownership, commitment and leadership by participating countries – as well as close cooperation and coordination among them – is a precondition for the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region to be successful. This implies recognising the Strategy as cutting across sector policies and involving every level of government. It also implies allocating sufficient and competent administrative and financial resources to carry-out the Strategy Furthermore, an effective multi-level governance system is essential for a sound implementation and achievement of the EUSAIR goals. This Plenary session aims at highlighting available options for securing active involvement of the different actors and tiers of government, including national, regional and local authorities, member of parliaments – regional, national and European – regional organisations, economic and social actors, private sector, civil society, academia and NGOs.

# Chair

• Lena Andersson Pench, Director, European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy

# Scene sette

Joaquim Oliveira Martins, Head of Regional Development Policy Division, Directorate of Public Governance and Territorial Development, OECD

# Video message

Ivan Jakovčić, Member of the European Parliament

# Panel discussion

- Nikola Dobroslavić, Governor of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County Council, Croatia, Member of the Committee of the Regions
- Andreja Jerina, Macro-Regions Coordinator, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia

- Goran Svilanović, Secretary General, Regional Cooperation Council
- Eleni Marianou, Secretary General, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)

# Q&A

# 13:00-13:30 Closing session

# Reports from the parallel sessions and side events

- Christos Economou, Head of Unit, European Commission, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (Parallel session 1)
- Fabrizio Barbaso, expert, former Deputy Director General, European Commission (Parallel session 2)
- Andrea Mairate, Head of Unit, European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (Parallel session 3)
- Vesna Torbarina, Senior Advisor, Croatian Chamber of Economy (B2B session)

# Concluding remarks

- Dragan Jelić, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds, Croatia
- Alexis Charitsis, Deputy Minister of Economy, Development and Tourism, Greece
- Walter Deffaa, Director General, European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy

# 13:45 Networking lunch

# SIDE EVENT

# 15:00-17:00 The EUSAIR and the BlueMED Initiative: complementarity and mutual benefits

The BlueMED Initiative (and its related Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda – SRIA) aims at developing a strategic research and innovation framework for a healthy, productive and resilient Mediterranean sea. It is the result of a joint effort of a group of EU Member States with the support of the European Commission. Building on the existing complementarities with the EUSAIR, the case will be made for strengthening coordination in the field of Research& Innovation across the different pillars of the Strategy. Discussion will focus on fostering integration of knowledge and efforts to develop the blue economy in the region, exploring with industries, clusters, research centres and training institutes how to jointly implement priority actions in view of maximising the leverage effects of the research investments. It will also provide the opportunity to bring in the perspective of candidate countries with a view of a possible enlargement of the BlueMED Initiative's geographical scope.

# Co-chairs

- Sigi Gruber, Head of Unit Marine Resources, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission
- Luca Marangoni, Team Leader for Maritime Policy in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission

# Panellists

- Fabio Fava, University of Bologna
- Ivica Vilibić, Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries, Croatia
- Apostolos Sigouras, ECOMASYN Coop. Director, former CEO of NAFSOLP S.A
- Lucio Sabbadini, Maritime Representative of the Italian National Technology Cluster on Surface Transport
- Vangelis Papathanassiou, Director, Hellenic Marine Research Centre
- Maria Cristina Pedicchio, National Institute of Oceanography and Experimental Geophysics, Italy