



3RD FORUM OF THE EU STRATEGY FOR THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN REGION

CATANIA 24-25 MAY 2018



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PRESS RELEASE

Launch of the Third Forum of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region marking the conclusion of the Italian Presidency.

The Forum of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (All) and EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region (EUSAIR) will be held in Catania on 24-25 May 2018, marking the conclusion of the Italian Presidency. The Forum will start at 2:00 p.m. on 24 May, following the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the eight Countries involved in the EUSAIR Strategy: Italy, Croatia, Greece and Slovenia, as EU Member States; and Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia as candidate Countries.

The EUSAIR macro-regional Strategy plays a remarkable political role for the Countries involved and the EU itself: by failing to provide additional funds, legislations or institutions (according to the so-called "*Three Nos Rule*"), the Strategy is aimed at capitalising on available resources at European, national and regional levels) providing a boost both to the process of EU integration of the Balkan Area and, in general, promoting better use of Community and national funds.

The EUSAIR Strategy benefits from the experience developed, over a couple of decades, within the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, which is a point of reference for the civil society that operates and works in the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region and promotes specific project activities in several cooperation fields such as tourism, environment, education, and culture.

The Strategy, currently under implementation, relies on a thorough and complex governance system, involving, on the Italian side, both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (*MAECI*) and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers – *PCM* (Department for Cohesion Policies, and Department for EU Policies).

Italy, which has held the EUSAIR Presidency this year, is a leading supporter, together with Serbia, of interconnectivity as a fundamental instrument for Adriatic-Ionian area's development and integration and is strongly committed to detecting priority projects (notably in the energy and transport sectors) and identifying the funds necessary for their related implementation.

The Catania Forum will be attended by commissioners and senior representatives of the European Union together with representatives from national, regional and local governments of the eight Countries involved, with the aim of jointly stimulating a comparative analysis of the EUSAIR perspectives, by encouraging dialogue between financial partners (including EU Programmes Authorities) and strategic actors, in order to overcome the gaps between Strategy objectives and financing opportunities related to programmatic actions.

The Forum will also be the context to identify development and growth opportunities within the four pillars of the common strategy, namely: sea sustainability, transport and energy networks (Italy will be leading the related Panels), environmental quality and sustainable tourism. The Event will also be an opportunity to strengthen collaboration and partnerships between the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region and all the actors involved.

For registration: <https://www.adriatic-ionic.eu/event/3rd-eusair-forum/>. For further information, please contact Ms. Chiara Santoro (Tel. +39 06 67792135) – forum3eusair.org@governo.it.