



EU Strategy for the  
Adriatic and Ionian Region  
**EUSAIR**

# THE EU STRATEGY FOR THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN REGION (EUSAIR)

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Adriatic and Ionian Region  
**EUSAIR**

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*More information:*

[www.adriatic-ionian.eu](http://www.adriatic-ionian.eu)

[www.ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/index.cfm/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/adriatic-ionian/](http://www.ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/adriatic-ionian/)

*Contacts in participating countries:*

National Coordinators <http://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/contact/national-coordinators>

Pillar Coordinators <http://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/contact/pillar-coordinators>

## 1. BACKGROUND & STATE OF PLAY

The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region – the third of its kind after the Baltic Sea and the Danube – aims to strengthen economic and social prosperity, which is a common objective for all macro-regional strategies, and also aims to promote the integration of the participating Western Balkans candidate and potential candidate countries into the EU.

The [European Council of 13-14 December 2012](#) requested the European Commission to present a new EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) before the end of 2014.

Building on the lessons learnt and experience from the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, the Commission adopted on 17 June 2014 a [Communication on the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region](#), accompanied by an [Action Plan](#). The Strategy incorporates the [Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas](#), adopted by the Commission on 30 November 2012.

The Strategy was endorsed by the General Affairs Council on 29 September (see [Council Conclusions](#)) and subsequently by the European Council on 24 October 2014.

The general objective of the EUSAIR is to promote economic and social prosperity and growth in the region by improving its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity. The Strategy should also play an important role in promoting the EU integration of Western Balkans.

Following the **Launch Conference** in Brussels on 18 November 2014 which kicked-off the implementation phase of the Strategy, the EUSAIR governance structures have been put in place in record time. The **Governing Board** has met three times and four rounds of **Thematic Steering Group (TSG)** meetings covering the four pillars of the Strategy were held. In the TSG meetings, in particular, the designated Pillar Coordinators and the TSG members from the eight participating countries have made a valuable effort to agree on the working rules and to define the **priority actions** based on the EUSAIR Action Plan as a guiding framework for implementation.

The **Interreg Adriatic-Ionian Transnational Cooperation Programme (ADRION)**, covering the whole territory of the EUSAIR, will directly contribute to the Strategy's implementation through its thematic priority axes (aligned with the Strategy's priorities) and its support to the Strategy's governance mechanisms and structures (notably via the future Facility Point).

The first **Annual Forum** on 12-13 May 2016 in Dubrovnik, Croatia, is bringing together key stakeholders to take stock of the progress made and to set the way forward.

## 2. TERRITORIAL COVERAGE

The EUSAIR covers eight countries:

- four EU Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia) and
- four non-EU countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia).

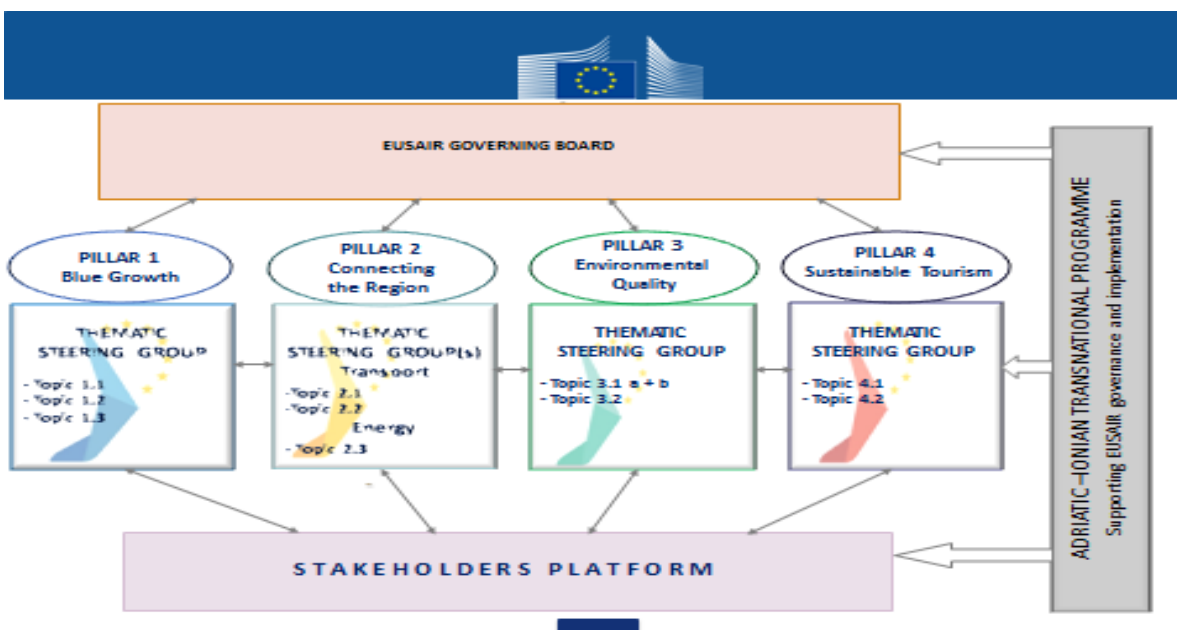
### 3. GOVERNANCE MODEL

In addition to the political level, the EUSAIR architecture involves two main levels: the coordinating level represented by a Governing Board and the implementation level represented by Thematic Steering Groups.

- **EUSAIR Governing Board (GB)** - The Governing Board (GB) coordinates the work of the Thematic Steering Groups in charge of implementation through strategic guidance with respect to management and implementation of the EUSAIR and its Action Plan.
- **Thematic Steering Groups (TSGs)** - The EUSAIR Communication identifies four interdependent pillars of strategic importance: Blue Growth - Pillar 1; Connecting the Region (transport and energy networks) Pillar 2; Environmental quality - Pillar 3; Sustainable tourism - Pillar 4. It is proposed to set up one thematic Steering Group per pillar. However, special arrangements have been set under Pillar 2 (transport and energy).

The TSGs are chaired for an initial period of 3 years by a tandem of countries, on a rotating basis, starting with those that acted as coordinators for the pillar of their choice during the consultation process, namely: Greece and Montenegro for Pillar 1, Italy and Serbia for Pillar 2, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina for Pillar 3, and Croatia and Albania for Pillar 4. These arrangements may be reconsidered in due course by the Governing Board, as appropriate.

Operational and administrative support, which is of utmost importance for an effective and efficient performance of the functions attributed to the GB and the TSGs, will be provided by the **Interreg Adriatic-Ionian (ADRION) Programme**. The governance and implementation of the EUSAIR will be supported through a Priority Axis: "Supporting the governance of the EUSAIR" which envisions a specific Action "Operational support to the key EUSAIR governance actors and stakeholders in their respective role". This Action will be coordinated by a "EUSAIR Facility Point" to be established in the Slovenian administration.



## **4. PRIORITIES: PILLARS, TOPICS AND CROSS CUTTING ISSUES**

### **PILLAR 1 - BLUE GROWTH**

#### **Topics**

*Blue technologies*  
*Fisheries and aquaculture*  
*Maritime and marine governance and services*



### **PILLAR 2 - CONNECTING THE REGION**

#### **Topics**

*Maritime transport*  
*Intermodal connections to the hinterland*  
*Energy networks*



### **PILLAR 3 - ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

#### **Topics**

*The marine environment*  
*Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity*



### **PILLAR 4 – SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

#### **Topics**

*Diversified tourism offer (products and services)*  
*Sustainable and responsible tourism management (innovation And quality)*



### **CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

*Capacity-building, including communication*  
*Research and innovation*

### **HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES**

*Climate change mitigation and adaptation*  
*Disaster risk management.*

**List of priority actions per Pillar endorsed by TSGs in their 3rd round meetings**

<b>Pillar I - Blue Growth</b>			
<b>Topic 1</b>	<b>Priority Actions</b>		<b>Project Ideas (tbd)</b>
<b>Blue-technologies</b>	R&D platforms on green sea mobility, deep sea resources, bio-security and bio-technologies		
	Macro-Regional cluster development		
<b>Topic 2</b>	<b>Priority Actions</b>		<b>Project Ideas (tbd)</b>
<b>Sustainable and responsible tourism management</b>	Scientific cooperation on fisheries and fish stocks		
	Diversification and profitability of fisheries and aquaculture		
	R&D platform for seafood Ref. Ares(2015)5590570 - 04/12/2015		
<b>Topic 2</b>	<b>Priority Actions</b>		<b>Project Ideas (tbd)</b>
<b>Maritime Governance</b>	Maritime Spatial Planning		
<b>Cross-Cutting Issues</b>	<b>Priority Actions</b>		<b>Project Ideas (tbd)</b>
	Research, Innovation and SMEs development as a cross-cutting issue related to pillar IV		

Pillar II - Transport			
Topics	Priority Actions	Priority Sub-actions (Pillar 2 only)	Project Ideas (tbd)
<b>Maritime transport</b> <i>(Specific objective: To strengthen maritime safety and security and develop a competitive regional intermodal port system)</i>	Improving and harmonizing traffic monitoring and management	1) Enhancement and simplification of the existing ADRIREP Mandatory Ship Reporting system and proposal for the amendment of the IMO Res. MSC n.139(76). Implementation of an integrated Adriatic and Ionian common VTMISS, the related alerting system and the common training and certification schemes of the operators.	
	Developing ports, optimizing port interfaces, infrastructures and procedures/operations	1) Adoption of a common framework for the development of Single Window systems (Directive 2010/65/EU) allowing exchange of information between the ship and the onshore competent authorities and operators for streamlining administrative procedures (e.g. customs clearance, phytosanitary controls, etc.).	
		2) Adoption of a common framework for the development of internal and external port infrastructures (road/rail/berths/equipment) to support the ports' intermodality and related SSS transport flows by aligning them with TEN-T requirements.	
		3) Adoption of a common framework for the development of green shipping solutions as the necessary facilities for bunkering with alternative fuels (LNG) and cold ironing in Adriatic-Ionian ports.	
<b>Intermodal connections to the hinterland</b> <i>(Specific objective: To develop reliable transport networks and intermodal connections with the hinterland, both for freight and passengers)</i>	Developing the Western Balkans transport network	1) Supporting the TEN-T extension (Networks and Corridors) to the WB - taking in to account the so-called "Berlin process" - by identifying and developing infrastructure projects aimed at complementing the networks with intermodal and strategic links improving the connectivity in the Adriatic Ionian Region.	
	Developing motorways of the sea	1) Identifying transnational IT tools for tracking and tracing of ITUs using MoS in the Adriatic Ionian Region, supporting intermodality through its integrated with inland terminals and port / inland operators and improving last mile connections.	
	Cross-border facilitation	1) Adoption of common standardized administrative procedures at border crossings (e.g. for security, phytosanitary and custom controls) and implementation of small and target scale investments and joint training programmes.	
2) Facilitation and implementation of rail services (passengers and freight) and simplification of crossing border procedures among Member State and non EU countries.			
Cross-Cutting Issues		Priority Actions (Pillar 2 only)	Project Ideas (tbd)
<i>(Specific objective: To improve the governance and build an efficient institutional and administrative capacity)</i>		1) Removing of barriers for the mobilization of cross-border investments in transport networks by the definition of agreements and memorandums of understanding	
		2) Development of a joint lifelong learning plan, training tools and methodologies	

Pillar II - Energy				
Topic	Priority Actions	Priority Sub-Actions (Pillar 2 only)	Project Ideas (tbd)	
<b>Energy Networks</b> <i>(Specific objective: To achieve a well-functioning internal energy market supporting the three energy policy objectives of the EU: competitiveness, security of supply and sustainability)</i>	Construction and establishment of a well-connected power system and well-functioning electricity market	1) Construction of new transmission capacities and smart grids to achieve a balanced, sustainable and timely development of an interconnected electricity system		
		2) Development of a regional efficient, integrated and transparent electricity market (including a co-ordinated auction office) with the aim to provide competitive and secure power supply through the Region		
		3) Integrate energy efficiency and development of conventional and renewable energy sources with aim at environmental concerns and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions		
	Construction and establishment of an integrated natural gas infrastructure and a well-functioning gas market	1) Diversification of natural gas sources, infrastructures, and routes (notably, TAP, IAP and other pipelines) to promote security of natural gas supply and competitiveness		
		2) Development of interconnections, counterflows and natural gas storage along a regional perspective		
		3) Establish an efficient gas trading hub towards an integrated natural gas market for the Region		
	Clean fuels for maritime transport and their logistics	1) Developing a master plan for the use of LNG and other clean fuels in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas with a view to an Environmental Controlled Area		
		2) Establishing a few ports with infrastructure to allow fuel switching to LNG in shipping and wider LNG deployment (by the year 2020)		
		3) Converting ship engines to dual fuel use (by the year 2020)		
		4) Harmonising security norms and technical standards for LNG deployment and direct use while adopting EU directives and reducing risk (by the year 2020)		
	<b>Cross-Cutting Issues</b>	<b>Priority Actions</b>	<b>Priority Actions (Pillar 2 only)</b>	<b>Project Ideas (tbd)</b>
	<i>(Specific objective: To improve the governance and build an efficient institutional and administrative capacity while promoting participation and partnerships)</i>	Simplification of border-crossing procedures among Member Countries and non-UE Member Countries, while removing of barriers to investments by the definition of agreements and common rules	1) Coordinate and align permits, technical standards and regulation (by the year 2020)	
2) Adopting rules and legal frameworks to protect cross-border investments (by the year 2020)				
3) Adoption of relevant EU Directives and policy frameworks (by the year 2020)				
Development of joint lifelong learning, training tools and industrial partnerships		1) Joined capacity building for implementing a common (energy) market		
		2) Development of small and medium-size enterprise partnerships across the Region while promoting private-public dialogue and collaboration on innovative technologies		

Pillar III - Environmental Quality			
Topic 1	Priority Actions		Project Ideas (tbc)
The marine environment	<b>a) Threat to coastal and marine biodiversity</b> Increasing marine knowledge, with focus on maritime spatial planning (including interaction with the coast through integrated coastal zones management) and marine protected areas, also beyond territorial waters; enhancing the protection of marine species by		
	<b>b) Pollution of the sea</b> Implementing a life cycle approach to marine litter (with focus on floating litter and micro-litter), supporting clean-up programmes in coordination with relevant stakeholders (i.e. fishery); addressing diffuse pollution sources (both land and maritime sources), also from agricultural practices, waste water and solid waste; drafting and implementation of a large-scale pollution Contingency Plan;		
Topic 2	Priority Actions		Project Ideas (tbc)
Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity	Developing joint management plans for transboundary habitats and ecosystems and for managing population level of large carnivores;		
	Protection and restoration of wetlands and karst fields relevant for the Adriatic Flyway.		

<b>Pillar IV - Sustainable Tourism</b>			
<b>Topic 1</b>	<b>Priority Actions</b>		<b>Project Ideas (tbc)</b>
<b>Diversified tourism Offer</b>	Development of sustainable and thematic routes		
	Fostering Adriatic – Ionian cultural heritage		
<b>Topic 2</b>	<b>Priority Actions</b>		<b>Project Ideas (tbc)</b>
<b>Sustainable and responsible tourism management</b>	Training and skills in the field of tourism business (vocational and entrepreneurial skills)		
	Expanding the tourism season to all-year round		
	Developing network of sustainable tourism business and clusters		
<b>Cross-Cutting Issues</b>	<b>Priority Actions</b>		<b>Project Ideas (tbc)</b>
	Research, Innovation and SMEs development as a cross-cutting issue related to pillar IV		