

PRESS RELEASE

Bologna hosted *Meet the challenges to build a better future in the Adriatic – Ionian area*, the kick-off of the Adriatic Ionian - ADRION programme

Bologna, 9 – 10 December 2015

The scope of the event was to present the ADRION programme, to contribute to the discussion on the implementation of the EUSAIR and to highlight the relevance of the Adriatic- Ionian area. 300 participants attended the event and more than 200 viewers watched it in video streaming.

The event was opened by Stefano Bonaccini, president of the Emilia-Romagna Region, who said “The launch of Interreg ADRION finally brings together an international community interested in understanding the context of the programme geographical area in order to endorse the objectives as well as actively participating in project generation with a view to contributing to the achievement of economic and social welfare of the area, which is becoming more and more important for Europe and beyond.”

After the president's introduction, Silvia Grandi, Managing Authority Coordinator of the programme, outlined the ADRION programme, to which participate eight Partner States: four Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia) and four non-EU countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia). The main objective of the Programme is to act as a policy driver and a governance innovator fostering the European integration among Member States and non-Member States, taking advantage from the rich natural, cultural and human resources that surrounds the Adriatic and Ionian seas as well as enhancing economic, social and territorial cohesion.

To achieve this objective, the Partner States have allocated to the programme area almost MEUR 118. For the priority axis Smart and Innovative Region, MEUR 23,16 have been allocated, whereas MEUR 53,49 for the Priority axis Sustainable Region and MEUR 20,83 for the priority Connected Region respectively. MEUR 11,50 will be devoted for supporting the governance of the EUSAIR strategy.

The ADRION programme is one of five transnational programmes in the Mediterranean area, which contributes to the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic – Ionian Region (EUSAIR), which was jointly developed by the Commission, together with the Adriatic-Ionian Region countries and stakeholders, in order to address common challenges together. The Strategy aims at fostering coordination among all territories in the Adriatic-Ionian Region. The EUSAIR covers the same geographical area of the ADRION programme.

The launch event was also an opportunity to present the main features of the forthcoming call for proposals, in which 40 % of the budget priorities 1-3 is going to be allocated: Innovative and smart region (MEUR 7,88), Sustainable region (MEUR 18,19) and Connected region (MEUR 7,08).

In order to be eligible for funding, the partnership must consist of at least three partners, one of them coming from an EU Partner State. The maximum number of partners is ten, which can be



exceeded in duly justified cases and the project maximum duration is 24 months. It is expected that projects make effective contribution to the programme results through the realization of programme outputs.

The event was also a possibility for the Partner States' representatives to share their ideas and understanding on the potentials of the Adriatic – Ionian area. Patrizio Bianchi, regional minister for coordination on European development policies, school, vocational training, noted that the prosperity of Europe can start from the south of Europe. The Albanian Minister of European Integration, Ms. Klajda Gjoshaj, pointed out the importance of mutual cooperation for ensuring a peaceful co-existence among nations. Moreover, the Italian Secretary of State for European Affairs Sandro Gozi emphasized the role of EUSAIR as a multiplier for opportunities in the Adriatic – Ionian region.

On second day, representatives of European Commission, Greece, Italy, Serbia and Slovenia discussed the challenges of the area. Andrea Mairate, representative of the European Commission – DG REGIO suggested that the ADRION Programme and other transnational programme in the area have an opportunity to meet the objectives of the EUSAIR by working together thematically on a cluster basis. Sanda Simic, Assistant Director at the EU Integration Office of the Government of Serbia, highlighted the huge interest among Serbian stakeholders for the Interreg ADRION Programme, underlined the relevancy of the Adriatic – Ionian Region, while Bojan Suvorov, Director at the Slovenian Government Office for Development and EU Cohesion Policy, stressed that the responsibilities for implementing the ADRION Programme lay with all stakeholders.

In the afternoon, four thematic sessions have been organized, covering four specific objectives of the Programme: development of innovation system; valorization and preservation of cultural and natural assets; enhancement of the capacity in the field of ecosystem services; and enhancement of capacity for integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality. The scope of these thematic workshops was to give an opportunity to the stakeholders of the Adriatic – Ionian area to exchange their ideas and initiatives. Altogether, twenty-nine project ideas have been presented and discussed.

The digital record of the event and the presentations are also available on the programme website at: <http://www.adrioninterreg.eu/>.

