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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME
AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES
**MARITIME POLICY MEDITERRANEAN
AND BLACK SEA**

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR REGIONAL
AND URBAN POLICY
**MACRO-REGIONS AND EUROPEAN
TERRITORIAL COOPERATION**

“DISCUSSION-PAPER” ON A EU STRATEGY FOR THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN REGION (EUSAIR) AUGUST 2013

I. INTRODUCTION

The European Council looks forward to the presentation by the European Commission of a new EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) before the end of 2014¹. The Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, adopted by the Commission on 30 November 2012², will be one of the (main) component of this broader macro-regional strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region, which will cover also the hinterland³. The EUSAIR – like the Maritime Strategy – concerns 8 countries: 4 EU Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia) and 4 non-EU countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia).

A macro-regional strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region aims at bringing a new impetus for co-operation and investment to the benefit of all involved. There are many problems affecting the region which can only be effectively tackled through cooperation among the countries. Likewise, there are also many opportunities for growth and jobs which can only be seized through a regional approach. Moreover, the EUSAIR is intended to significantly contribute to the EU integration of the candidate/potential candidate countries in the region.

Following extensive consultations with stakeholders, analysis of technical data and the drafting of an impact assessment – all to be concluded by end 2013 – an EUSAIR draft Communication accompanied by an Action Plan should be adopted by the Commission during the first semester 2014 and submitted to the Council for adoption in the second semester.

The Action Plan shall be developed around areas of regional mutual interest, with high relevance for the countries of the region. In turn, main objectives and initiatives should emerge as shared aspirations and solutions to common challenges.

In the context of the Communication on a Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, extensive consultations with stakeholders were held in Athens (14 Feb 2012), Trieste (12-13 Jun 2012), Portoroz (17 Sep 2012) and Zagreb (06 Dec 2012). That has formed the basis for the forthcoming macro-regional strategy which will be built around four thematic pillars that, following a meeting of the EUSAIR National Contact Points held on 13 June 2013 in Rome, have been tentatively named: "Driving innovative maritime and marine growth"; "Connecting the region"; "Preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment"; "Increasing regional attractiveness" (see Section III). "Research, Innovation and small-and-medium-size enterprises (SME) development" and "Capacity building" will be cross-cutting issues.

¹ European Council Conclusions of 12-13 December 2012

² COM(2012) 713

³ For the benefit of this discussion paper, “*hinterland*” is understood as any area developing beyond the coastal area.

A maritime and marine focus may appear to prevail at this stage given that the content of the Maritime Strategy's pillars have been reshuffled in the EUSAIR as follows:

- the contents of pillar "Maximising the potential of the blue economy" have been mainstreamed in three EUSAIR's pillars as follows: aquaculture, maritime clusters, Research and Innovation, mobility and qualification of the workforce have been included in "Driving innovative maritime and marine growth"; coastal and maritime transport is embedded in "Connecting the region"; Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management are now included in "Preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment";
- the pillar "Healthier marine environment" has been fully embedded in the EUSAIR's pillar "Preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment";
- the pillar "A safer and more secure maritime space" has been included in the EUSAIR's pillar "Connecting the region";
- the pillar "Sustainable and responsible fishing activities" is now included in the EUSAIR's pillar "Driving innovative maritime and marine growth".

Indeed, this will not pre-empt to widen and extend the scope of the Action Plan beyond the coastal line, without disregarding it, as far as the works and consultations will progress.

In order to develop the EUSAIR Action Plan, 4 Working Groups (one per pillar) will be set up, each of them coordinated by an EU Member State in association with a non-EU country, as follows:

EUSAIR - Working Groups	
Pillar	WG Coordinators
1. Driving innovative maritime and marine growth	Greece, together with Montenegro
2. Connecting the region	Italy, together with Serbia
3. Preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment	Slovenia, together with Bosnia and Herzegovina
4. Increasing regional attractiveness	Croatia, together with Albania

Each Working Group will involve representatives from the 8 participating countries. In the period September-December 2013, the Working Groups will conduct extensive stakeholder consultations in the Region.

The present discussion paper aims at inspiring and guiding the stakeholder consultation process.

II. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES (preliminary outline of the strategy)

General objective: promote sustainable economic and social prosperity of the Adriatic and Ionian region through growth and jobs creation, by improving its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity while at the same time preserving the environment and ensuring healthy and balanced marine and coastal ecosystems.

Scope: the strategy should focus on areas of (macro) regional mutual interest with high relevance for the Adriatic and Ionian countries. Main priority areas and objectives of the Action Plan should emerge as shared aspirations and sustainable solutions to common challenges.

The general objective above will be attained through 4 thematic pillars⁴.

1. Driving innovative maritime and marine growth

Promoting sustainable economic growth and jobs as well as business opportunities creation from blue economy sectors (such as: aquaculture, fisheries, blue biotechnologies, marine and maritime services, etc.).

2. Connecting the region

Connecting the macro-region and reducing the remoteness of island and rural communities by improving the governance of inland and sea corridors (including the interoperability of transport modes) and energy networks and by developing environment-friendly modes of transport and energy supply.

3. Preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment.

Improving the environmental quality of the regional ecosystems and preserving their biodiversity; protecting human health; prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources; ensure environmental integration within the strategy.

4. Increasing regional attractiveness

Increasing tourist attractiveness of the region by supporting the sustainable development of inland, coastal and maritime tourism and the preservation and promotion of culture heritage by, inter alia, improving the quality of tourist services and promoting common regional branding⁵, while reducing seasonality demand and limiting its environmental footprint.

Moreover, "Research, innovation and SMEs development", as well as "Capacity Building" are two cross-cutting aspects which will come across each and every pillar.

The achievement of the general objective would require, inter alia: administrative simplification and harmonisation; good governance; mutual recognition of key common rules; identification of skills needs and related vocational training, education and life-long learning; research, technological development and innovation, including smart specialization, and development of transnational networks and clusters (e.g. maritime clusters), low carbon technologies, environmental standards, smart and climate-proofed infrastructures and integration of climate mitigation issues; and a qualified and mobile workforce.

III DESCRIPTION OF THE PILLARS *(tentative structure and indicative list of challenges/objectives)*

1st Pillar: Driving innovative maritime and marine growth

Problem statement

⁴ Four pillars indicative structure agreed between the 8 Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Commissioner Johannes Hahn on November 2012.

⁵ E.g. under the umbrella of European Destination Europe

The Adriatic and Ionian region remains short on clustering and exploiting the advantages of cooperation and collaboration in full extent. There is a need to support and develop a “business resource efficient culture” in the region through the active involvement of multiple stakeholders and greater interrelation of business, research and the public sector. Some key sectors – such as shipbuilding, the boating industry and logistics – risk losing competitive leverage while others, such as blue bio-technologies, need to develop their full potential.

The Adriatic and Ionian Seas should be seen as a trigger of innovation and growth and bridges among people and countries. Their resources can play a crucial role in both economic recovery of EU countries and the integration process of candidate and potential candidate countries. In turn, this means to maximize sustainable economic growth and jobs and business opportunities creation from blue economy sectors, such as aquaculture, fisheries and seafood processing, biosecurity, blue biotechnologies, marine equipment, boating, shipping and other maritime services.

Fisheries represent an endogenous economic resource for the Adriatic and Ionian coastal areas and their inhabitants. The predominance of small-scale fisheries at sea basin level has important social, economic and ecological implications on coastal communities. Given that some resources are shared, a level playing field and a higher international collaboration and stakeholders involvement should be pursued in fishery planning and management. By analogy, in the field of control, monitoring and surveillance, the culture of compliance needs to increase and the transfer of information to be facilitated in order to complete the shift towards sustainable and responsible fisheries in the sea basin.

The development of a strong, high-quality aquaculture sector that is environmentally and economically sustainable has the potential to contribute to the creation of jobs and to the supply of healthy food products, respecting the EU and international rules. Aquaculture can also alleviate fishing pressure and thus help to preserve fish stocks. A number of barriers prevent the development of the full potential of EU aquaculture: limited access to space and licensing; industry fragmentation; limited access to seed capital or loans for innovation; time-consuming administrative procedures and red tape.

Building on the existing framework for scientific cooperation on fishery⁶, common research initiatives should be developed to address the needs of fisheries and aquaculture. Development of joint technological platforms and innovation should become a must for making seafood businesses more competitive and capable to adapt to market needs, while adding value to its products/services and promoting a green evolution towards a seafood responsible and sustainable production and consumption model.

Specific challenges/objectives:

1. Adapting to a resource efficient seafood production and consumption

- Developing market intelligence and services to ensure that marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products in the region is clear, efficient and fully compliant with applicable rules.
- Promoting common marketing and consumer awareness on Adriatic-Ionian seafood products, including seafood traceability and quality certification systems.
- Improving good management for sustainable fisheries, including through the development of multiannual plans and other measures such as, inter alia, Marine Protected Areas in their wider sense.
- Increasing the profitability and sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture activities.

⁶ E.g. the multilateral framework of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and FAO regional projects (Adriamed and Eastmed).

- Improving the culture of compliance, saving resources, facilitating the collection, and transfer of data and information and enhancing cooperation for the monitoring and control of fishing activities.
- Developing tools to properly site aquaculture, including tools to identify activities for potential co-location with other economic activities.

2. Boosting blue research, innovation and skills

- Assisting interregional collaborative processes among private, research and public sector (also in connection with smart cities development), aimed at exploiting research results, develop technological and innovative capacities and create and exploit knowledge.
- Stimulating the development of maritime clusters and research networks, as well as the formulation of research strategies to develop blue bio-technologies and spur innovation in fisheries, aquaculture, biosecurity, blue energy, seabed mining, marine equipment, boating and shipping.
- Assisting to adapt fishery methods and gears to the new obligations deriving from the Common Fishery Policy reform.
- Performing regular stock assessment for mixed fisheries in the Adriatic and Ionian Sea within a precautionary and ecosystem approach to fisheries management (state of stocks, fishing pressure levels, catch/discards composition, habitat mapping, genetics, tagging, etc.), in close cooperation with FAO and GFCM initiatives, as well as with the Regional Advisory Council for the Mediterranean (RACMED).
- Establishing Adriatic-Ionian technological platforms for collaboration amongst the scientific community, public authorities and seafood industries and operators in the area of aquaculture (e.g. to develop new fish feed formulations and test their environmental effects and clinical/sanitary aspects; to study new/emerging species for aquaculture, with a greater potential for processing into value-added products; to promote selective breeding).
- Establishing Adriatic-Ionian technological platforms for collaboration amongst the scientific community, public authorities and maritime industries on areas such as boating, shipping and marine equipment.
- Increasing the academic and professional mobility and the level of qualification of the workforce, including taking into account transparency and frameworks of qualifications (notably with regard to candidate and potential candidate countries).

3. Building capacity to implement the EU *acquis* on fisheries

- Ensuring full compliance to EU fisheries legislation in candidate/potential candidate countries (e.g. through IPA).

2nd Pillar: Connecting the Region

Problem statement

Given their position both on the cross-roads of east-west and north-south axes of Europe, the Adriatic and Ionian Seas constitute an important transport route for goods, passengers and energy.

Several central European and landlocked countries depend heavily on the ports of the macro-region for their exports and imports. The competitiveness of those ports depends, amongst others, on their capacity to enhance interoperability of transport modes by integrating sea-borne, inland water-borne and land transport, including TEN-T (Trans European Networks –Transport), and to adapt towards resource efficient and environmentally friendly management models. The Adriatic

Motorway of the Sea⁷ exemplifies efforts to provide a viable, reliable and competitive transport service of goods and passengers through a trans-European multimodal transport system.

The shipping industry, a strong asset of countries in the macro-region, could serve as a basis for further economic development. Rigorous implementation of the EU and international rules will eventually contribute to the development of quality shipping, resulting in a level playing field, encourage mobility and progressively prepare candidate and potential candidate countries for accession to the EU. The establishment of a culture of compliance with existing EU and international rules shall be pursued.

There are also more passenger ships' crossings per year compared to other regions, even if there is still a gap in terms of regular international maritime passenger transport services, while oil and gas transportation is increasing. Beyond commercial maritime traffic, the Adriatic and Ionian Seas are also used by criminal networks engaged in irregular migration and other illegal trafficking.

Sustainable and safe land and sea-borne connections are fundamental to strengthen social and commercial links across and outside the Adriatic and Ionian region and are critical to preserve the vitality of remote communities.

The Adriatic-Ionian region is an important cross road for energy issues. Energy infrastructures need be developed and optimised in the area (e.g. 'energy gas corridors', based on intergovernmental memoranda of understanding).

In the coming years, no significant new source of gas supply in south-east Europe is foreseeable. Therefore, creating solid market conditions in this area will be necessary in order to avoid monopoly pricing by dominant suppliers. In the absence of large new quantities of gas, and also of large new infrastructures (like Nabucco West), the countries of the region will have to optimise the assets they have and those which will be built under the Projects of Common Interest programme, and also other programmes.

In addition, the Energy Community Ring concept will allow the region to increase cooperation on energy infrastructure projects taking into account cross-sectorial aspects (environment, transport, maritime affairs). Links between gas pipelines are also about to be explored (Trans Adriatic Pipeline and the planned Ionian Adriatic Pipeline).

This pillar intends to address regional gaps and barriers by removing bottlenecks in key transport and energy infrastructures. It will focus on the governance of inland and sea corridors and the interoperability of transport modes.

Specific challenges/objectives:

- Optimizing interfaces, procedures and infrastructure to facilitate trade with southern, central and eastern Europe, also by ensuring the rapid implementation of a maritime transport space without barriers.
- Improving hinterland connections of seaports to TEN-T and enforcing the development of intermodality in the Adriatic-Ionian region through the establishment of freight villages and land corridors.
- Enhancing cooperation between national or regional maritime authorities with the EU, establishing mechanisms to enable maritime traffic information exchange between national VTMS systems through SafeSeaNet, notably for candidate and potential candidate countries.

⁷ It is included in the Motorway of the Sea of south-east Europe, which connects Adriatic and Ionian Seas to the South-East Mediterranean Sea.

- Improving the culture of compliance in flag and port state control, liability and insurance of shipping, accident investigation and port security.
- Developing modern security technologies in the ports of the region.
- Reducing isolation of islands and remote areas by improving their access to transport and energy services.
- Increasing efficiency and reducing the environmental impact of transport systems, notably by providing alternative, sustainable and environmentally friendly, combined transport solutions.
- Minimisation of pollution from ship traffic, in particular oil, emissions to air and litter.
- Continuing improving sub-regional cooperation and monitoring the existing mechanisms, as regards prevention, preparedness and coordinated response to major oil spills.
- Increasing the resilience of infrastructure to natural and man-made disasters (including the accompanying coastal development and infrastructure).
- Addressing energy dimension, as far as a macro-regional approach may facilitate a positive impact on accessibility, energy efficiency and environment.
- Preserving security of environment during transport of dangerous goods and activities related to the energy sector.
- Developing environment-friendly fuels in marine transport as well as implementation of renewable energy sources.
- Creating energy seasonal balancing opportunities.
- Regulatory reform and rationalisation at each energy interconnection point in the regional system.

"Research, innovation and SME development" and "Capacity building"

- Stimulating the setup of maritime clusters, platforms and research networks as well as the formulation of a research strategy to spur innovation in maritime transport and surveillance, including energy saving and efficiency in the nautical sector, smart transport systems, freight tracking.
- Exploring the setup of specific innovative financial instruments supporting research, innovation and SME development in the pillar's areas.
- Increasing the academic and professional mobility and the level of qualification of the workforce, including taking into account transparency and frameworks of qualifications (notably with regard to candidate and potential candidate countries).
- Developing low carbon transport systems: transforming the challenge of decarbonisation in a driver for innovation, by developing the clean economy and the renewable marine energy sources (waves, seawater streams).
- Supporting capacity building in safety and security matters in national and regional administrations, in particular in candidate/potential candidate countries.
- Encouraging the development of decision support systems, accident response capacities and contingency plans.
- Promoting the adoption of e-services and e-government solutions, including open data production and use.

3rd Pillar: Preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment

Problem statement

The Adriatic and Ionian coastal and marine environment host a high diversity of habitats and species. The combined action of high anthropogenic pressure and topographic characteristics make these habitats highly susceptible to pollution, but also affects the conservation of the rich cultural heritage of the region. Cooperation between coastal states takes place within the regulatory frameworks of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Barcelona Convention and its protocols, as well as the Joint Commission for the Protection of the Adriatic Sea and its Coastal Areas.

A significant impact on the Adriatic Sea comes from river runoff. Roughly one-third of the Mediterranean's continental water flows into the northern and central Adriatic Sea. Resulting eutrophication is one of the main threats to this area. Implementing the provisions of the Water Framework Directive and reducing nitrate emissions from agriculture is thus relevant to achieving good environmental status of the marine environment.

Marine litter often poses significant risks to marine life. The major sources of the litter are land-based activities: household waste, releases from touristic facilities and run-off from waste dumps.

The sea basin is also characterized by intensive maritime transport, which implies ships and port emissions, noise pollution (disturbance for marine mammals), risks of accidents and the introduction of invasive alien species through ballast water discharges.

The increased economic use of the marine and coastal space has intensified the pressures on marine and coastal environment as well as competition for space on one hand, while on the other there is a growing awareness of functional relationship between maritime, coastal and hinterland activities and important role of maritime economy for continental parts. In this context, coordination and harmonization of approaches related to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) need further elaboration in order to be efficiently implemented⁸.

One of the growing challenges to sensitive and vulnerable marine ecosystem is adaptation to climate change. Climate-proofed infrastructures and integration of climate mitigation issues can mainly be treated in this pillar. In April 2013, the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change has been adopted which encourages, among others, the development of macro-regional and local adaptation strategies based on risk and vulnerability assessment. A more effective and coordinated approach to the challenges of climate change should be facilitated within the EUSAIR.

Loss of biodiversity due to degradation and loss of habitats lead to loss of valuable ecosystem goods and services they provide, affecting the overall quality of environmental health.

This pillar will focus on implementing cross-sector dialogue and initiatives aiming at improving the environmental quality of the regional ecosystems and preserving their biodiversity; protecting human health; prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources; ensure environmental integration within the strategy as well as implementation of tools for balanced management of marine resources and coastal areas.

Specific challenges/objectives:

- Addressing eutrophication (mainly in the Adriatic Sea) by transnational coordinated actions on both point sources (e.g. nutrients and nitrogen discharges from municipal waste and wastewater treatment facilities or industries) and diffuse sources (e.g. nitrates from agriculture) and by enhancing the recycling of nutrients.

⁸ The Priority Action Plan of UNEP/MAP plays an important role in supporting ICZM by Mediterranean countries implementing the ICZM Protocol of the Barcelona Convention.

- Preserving biodiversity, habitats and ecosystems and their services by implementing the European ecological network Natura 2000 and managing it, considering also related work within the Barcelona Convention.
- Dealing with Invasive Alien Species. Ensuring good environmental and ecological status of the marine and coastal environment by 2020 in line with the relevant EU *acquis* and the Ecosystem Approach of the Barcelona Convention.
- Reducing marine litter, including through cleaning programmes and better waste management in coastal areas.
- Improving harmonisation and coordination in MSP and ICZM, also by facilitating related conflict resolution between local and national or supranational approaches. Supporting waste and waste water management, in particular in urban areas along the coast and rivers.
- Preserving and improving coastal environmental quality by protecting cultural and natural heritage such as coastal and maritime cultural landscapes, including from the impact of climate change.

"Research, innovation and SME development" and "Capacity building"

- Strengthen interregional cooperation of research and innovation stakeholders (private, research and public sector) by means of existing and new cluster-type cooperation initiatives in order to develop missing monitoring tools for the identification of sensitive areas and areas important for the protection of biodiversity, for the determination of ecological status indicators, for developing management plans for migratory marine species.
- Strengthening cooperation and exchange of best practices among managing authorities of Marine Protected Areas aiming to improve capacity to preserve biodiversity and ecosystems.
- Increase cooperation in marine research on issues regarding impact of climate change on coastal areas and marine ecosystems.
- Introducing integrated coastal zones management and maritime spatial planning through exchange of best practices, comparing methodologies and pursuing a participative process of collaboration.
- Developing planning capacity on adaptation to climate change at regional and local level and encouraging the development of a macro-regional climate adaptation strategy based on risk and vulnerability assessments.
- Exploring the links with relevant Horizon 2020 research agendas (i.e. maritime research and biotechnology research).
- Increasing the academic and professional mobility and the level of qualification of the workforce, including taking into account transparency and frameworks of qualifications (notably with regard to candidate and potential candidate countries).

4th Pillar: Increasing regional attractiveness

Problem statement

Tourism is economically significant as one of the main and fast-growing activities⁹. In many cases, it is the economic backbone of coastal regions and, increasingly so, the hinterland as well. When properly developed by enhancing local knowledge and safeguarding natural and cultural

⁹ UNWTO expects the number of tourist arrivals worldwide to increase by 3.3 % on average per year until 2030. See further UNWTO highlights 2012 edition at WWW.UNWTO.org. Europe accounts for over half of the international arrivals, is the fastest growing region.

diversity, it strongly benefits the regional economy by creating quality and sustainable jobs and promoting the conservation of its cultural heritage. It can be a driver for growth and employment in remote areas (e.g. islands, rural and mountain areas) and areas with otherwise limited economic activities, contributing to promote social inclusion and interesting opportunities for youth employment¹⁰. However, proper management of intensive tourism activities is fundamental in order to mitigate possible negative effects on the coastal, marine, and hinterland environment on which it strongly depends.

The cruise sector alone is showing a strong potential for growth. Over the past 10 years, the demand for cruising has roughly doubled worldwide. This is reflected in the Adriatic and Ionian area which is already seeing rapid growth. However, to locally capture the economic benefits and mitigate the possible negative effects of short and massive tourist arrivals, cruise sector should be better integrated in the tourist offer of the Adriatic-Ionian territories.

Moreover, cultural and archaeological heritage in the region represents a strong asset which should be duly exploited. Alternative or innovative and sustainable forms of tourism (e.g. sports, eco, cultural, nautical, thermal, rural, religion, scholastic, business, etc.) and their integration with festivals and creative industries have also interesting potential for development.

Trans-border co-operation within the strategy does also offer possibilities for developing the hinterland of coastal areas (e.g. by targeting rural areas, or through joint identification and promotion of transnational thematic tourist products and routes). Joint action in that area should be based on an analysis of large-scale spatial development tourism trends and its potential impact on the wider socio-economic development, as well as on systematic exchange of know-how. Given the importance of maritime and coastal tourism within the tourism sector and in the framework of the Integrated Maritime Policy, the Commission has been starting the development of an integrated strategy for coastal and maritime tourism through two main policy documents, in line with Europe 2020 objectives¹¹. This would ensure a stronger focus and clearer prioritization of the actions and projects in tourism activity.

The tourism sector is facing constant challenges to innovate and improve its competitiveness. The macro-regional strategy should help tourism stakeholders to tackle internal and external challenges such as increasing competition from other destinations, seasonality, growing requests for customized experiences. Best practice in particular on the development of regional clusters and diversification should inspire local communities (e.g. coastal, rural and urban) in developing their integrated territorial development action plans.

A macro-regional approach to coastal, maritime and other forms of tourism could be an incentive to strengthen governance and to mobilize participation of private actors and International Financial Institutions.

Specific challenges/objectives:

- Capitalising on existing tools and initiatives in the framework of EU tourism policy¹².
- Supporting the sustainable development of coastal, maritime and hinterland tourism while reducing seasonality of demand, limiting its environmental footprint and taking into consideration the impacts of a changing climate¹³.

¹⁰ E.g.: Calypso EU initiative and platform (www.ecalypso.eu)

¹¹ COM(2010) 352 Tourism Communication (action 16), which refers to the maritime and coastal tourism strategy; COM(2012) /494 Communication on Blue Growth which clearly identified coastal and maritime tourism as one of the key areas for future jobs and growth from the Blue Economy.

¹² COM(2010) 352 "Europe, the world's Nr. 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe"

¹³ The European Tourism Indicator System – ETIS, for the sustainable management at destination level

- Promoting the sustainable development of cruise and nautical tourism. Establishing links of those forms of tourism with other forms of regional economic development.
- Enhancing the value and appreciation of culture and natural heritage, also including links with the development of creative enterprise and services.
- Encouraging innovation, clustering and developing of new common marketing strategies and products, including tourist promotion through common branding.
- Improving coordinated governance in the tourism sector among private and public entities.
- Enhancing and improving safety and security of all tourism products, especially diving, sailing and adventure tourism type of products.
- Improving quality management and sustainability, e.g. through the European Tourism Quality label (ETQ) or other joint labels, as well as the promotion of service innovation (e.g. through the use of ICT).
- Developing the links between health tourism and active ageing (Life-science industry)¹⁴.
- Promoting tourism activities and services based on local products (agro and sea foods), cultures and values, to support active social inclusion and opportunities for youth in remote areas and areas exposed to demographic changes.

"Research, innovation and SME development" and "Capacity building"

- Fostering competitiveness of tourism SMEs, improving quality of tourism services and supporting innovation.
- Stimulating Smart Specialisation and Smart communities (and coherence amongst Smart strategies) through the creation of Adriatic-Ionian thematic tourism platforms (including resources efficiency in the tourism sector) for collaboration amongst the scientific community, public authorities and businesses, as well as the formulation of research and innovation strategies to spur innovation and creativity in the tourism and cultural sectors.
- Increasing the academic and professional mobility and the level of qualification/skills of the workforce, including taking into account transparency and frameworks of qualifications (notably with regard to candidate and potential candidate countries).
- Facilitating inter-cluster and inter-platform connectivity.
- Facilitating networking and mobility of artists and cultural operators in the frame of contemporary production and creative industries, as festivals.
- Promoting exchange of experiences on education, skill development and lifelong learning for tourist and cultural operators.

¹⁴ E.g.: AGE platform (<http://www.age-platform.eu/>)

ANNEX I

EUSAIR

NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS / NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS

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