

Stakeholder Conference on the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region

Athens
6- 7 February 2014

DRAFT PROGRAMME

DAY 1

13:45 - 14:00	Registration
14:00 - 14:30	Welcoming Addresses <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Antonis Samaras</i>, Prime Minister, Greece (tbc)• <i>Johannes Hahn</i>, Member of the European Commission responsible for Regional Policy (tbc)• <i>Maria Damanaki</i>, Member of the European Commission for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
14:30 – 15:30	Plenary Session: The EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region – A vehicle for growth and jobs <p><i>The general objective of the Strategy is to 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, coastal and hinterland ecosystems.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statements by Ministers of the 8 Participating States
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00- 16:30	State of Play of the Strategy: <p><i>Presentation by the European Commission of the "working paper", the outcomes of the stakeholders' consultation (general & per pillar), and the draft structure of the Action Plan.</i></p>
16:30-17:00	Q&A
17:00-18:15	The role of other Institutions in the Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perspectives from the EU Institutions• Perspectives from the Western Balkans• Perspectives from the Regional Organisations (inc. Adriatic-Ionian Initiative)
18:15- 20:30	Welcome Event

DAY 2

09:00- 12:00 Parallel Thematic Workshops on the four pillars of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region

(a Q&A Session is foreseen as a vital part of every thematic workshop)

Thematic Workshop 1 "Driving innovative maritime and marine growth"

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

The resources of this Region can play a crucial role in both economic recovery of EU countries and the integration process of candidate and potential candidate countries. We must maximize growth, jobs and business opportunities, especially from blue economy sectors such as aquaculture, fisheries and seafood processing, biosecurity, blue biotechnologies, marine equipment, boating, shipping and other maritime services.

Thematic Workshop 2 "Connecting the region"

The Adriatic and Ionian Seas are an important transport route for goods, passengers and energy (east-west and north-south axes of Europe).

We need especially interoperability of transport modes, by integrating sea-borne, inland water-borne and land transport. We need to develop quicker TEN-T (Trans-European Networks –Transport) links, and resource efficient and environmentally friendly models. Safety and sustainability are important parameters to consider for efficient transport modes and connections.

The shipping industry, a strong asset of the macro-region is also a basis for further economic development. In addition, we need also to improve energy infrastructure (e.g. 'energy gas corridors').

Thematic Workshop 3 "Preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment"

The Adriatic and Ionian coastal and marine environment is home to a high diversity of habitats and species. Economic uses have increased the pressures on these and the natural and the cultural heritage of the region is highly susceptible to pollution. Major sources of marine litter are land-based activities: household waste, releases from tourist facilities and run-off from waste dumps. Moreover, roughly one-third of the Mediterranean's source water flows into it from the hinterland of northern and central Adriatic Sea. Resulting eutrophication is another threat to this area that a macro-regional Strategy can address.

Thematic Workshop 4 "Increasing regional attractiveness"

Tourism is economically significant as one of the main and fastest growing activities of the Region. In many cases, it drives the economy of coastal regions and, increasingly, of the hinterlands as well. It boosts 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 youth employment. When properly developed, based on local knowledge and safeguarding natural and cultural diversity, it strongly benefits the regional economy by creating quality and sustainable jobs and promoting the conservation of cultural heritage. Good development of intensive tourism activities is fundamental in order to avoid negative effects on the coastal, marine, and hinterland environment on which it strongly depends.

12:00- 13:30 Buffet Lunch

13:30- 15:00 Conclusions of the Conference (Plenary).

- Panelists: moderators of the 4 thematic workshops
 - Q&A
 - Closure statements
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