

Italian Presidency of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative

Round Table on Education and Inter-university Cooperation ***“Building the European Higher Education Area - A further step forward”***

The UNIADRION network : state of the art of the last achievements

Speaker: Prof Pier Ugo Calzolari, Chairman of UNIADRION, Rector of the University of Bologna

Introduction

UniAdrion, the Virtual University of the Adriatic-Ionian Basin, represents the first concrete step in the realization of the interuniversity cooperation in this region, as promoted by the Ancona Declaration. Exactly this document - approved during the Conference on Development and Security in the Adriatic and the Ionian, in May 2000 - launched the AII, to encourage dialogue and cooperation in the region. The conclusions of one of the four Round Tables namely, convened during the Ancona Conference, on the Interuniversity Cooperation, posed the basis for the establishment of the first Virtual University of the Adriatic-Ionian Basin

Just few months after the inauguration of the AII, the Universities of Bologna and Ancona, with the support of the Italian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Education, University and Research, organized in Ravenna the International Conference “Culture as a Bridge: the Interuniversity Cooperation in the Adriatic-Ionian Basin”, where academic representatives of all the seven AII member countries were present. More than twenty Rectors and high representatives of the universities from this area signed the Ravenna Declaration, the formal act of engaging the academic community of the AII countries in the cultural and scientific cooperation aiming at the creation of UniAdrion, the Virtual University of the Adriatic-Ionian Region.

Thanks to the approval of the UniAdrion project and its financial support by the Italian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Education, University and Research, the Virtual University was officially inaugurated at the presence of the academic signers of the Ravenna Declaration in October 2001.

In that occasion, the intent to create a permanent connection among Universities and Research and Development Centres of the Adriatic Ionian Basin- through inter-university cooperation- was confirmed with the deliberation of the UniAdrion Charter.

Membership and Fields of Interest

At the moment of its constitution, UniAdrion was composed of 22 Universities from the seven AII countries: Universities of Tirana and of Shkodra from Albania; Universities of Sarajevo, both Universities of Mostar (Sveuciliste and Dzemal Bijedic) and the University of Banja Luka from Bosnia Erzegovina, the University of Rijeka and Split as well as the Inter-University Center of Dubrovnik and the Institute for International Relations Zagreb from Croatia; the University of Patras, of Ioannina, the Ionian University of Corfu from Greece, the Universities of Belgrade and Podgorica, the Alternative Academic Educational Network from Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the University of Maribor and the University Centre of Koper from Slovenia. Furthermore, it's my pleasure to affirm that the interest in the UniAdrion project is growing among universities from the Adriatic-Ionian region. In fact, in October 2002 three new Universities have become UniAdrion partners, namely, Lecce, Teramo and Udine from Italy and the University of Skopje has been

accepted as member with special status, because of its lack of access on the Adriatic-Ionian sea. Moreover, the University Ca' Foscari of Venice has recently presented its candidature for the membership.

The inter-university cooperation promoted within UniAdrion is multidisciplinary and covers different fields of interest such as protection, cataloguing and promotion of cultural heritage; environment (including also environmental physics) and sustainable development; cultural tourism and development; economy, communication, harbours and trade relations. Besides these four fields of interest, one of the most important aspects in this starting phase is the creation of the specific organisational and technical structure of the Virtual University.

Structure of Uniadrion

Even though UniAdrion is created as a virtual university, it has its proper structure, composed by a President, a General Assembly, a Board of Advisors and an Executive Secretariat.

The President legally represents UniAdrion, and is elected every two years by the General Assembly. The latter is the forum of the Universities, being composed of all the Rectors or their Delegates of the UniAdrion Members. The Executive Body of the Universities is the Board of Advisors, while the Executive Secretariat coordinates the progress of the implementation of each projects and the running of the organisation. It is situated in Ravenna, where the official seat of the Virtual University of the Adriatic-Ionian Basin is located.

Focal Points

As I mentioned before, thanks to the funds allocated for the UniAdrion Project by the Italian Ministries, the establishment of the net connection among the countries of the Adriatic-Ionian Region, will be realized through the universities Focal Points, the main points of junction through which the Network will be created. At present, there are seven FP, one from each UniAdrion country member: the University of Tirana is the FP for Albania, the University of Sarajevo for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the University of Rijeka for the Focal Point for Croatia, the University of Belgrade for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the University of Patras for Greece, the University of Bologna is the F.P. for Italy and the University of Maribor for Slovenia.

For UniAdrion the establishment of the technological Network is fundamental to guarantee the regular connection among all the members and in order to promote and develop training courses and research projects through distance learning. In specific, two of the eight projects-promoted within UniAdrion- "Technical Realization of the Focal Points" and "Course on the Use of Multimedia Technologies" deal with the technical aspect for the implementation of the Network. The first one aims at the establishment of a common technical basis for the production of the multimedia products in the seven FP and to endow this structure with all necessary tools. The activities have already started at the end of January 2002, when experts in information technologies of the Universities FP gathered in order to discuss all the possible technologies that can be used to achieve UniAdrion educational goals. Thus, according to what is already available at the Universities FP, a common list of equipments has been created for the acquirement of the technical instruments necessary for the launching of the UniAdrion Network. In meantime, while all the bureaucratic procedures will be completed for the purchase of the technical equipment, the coordinator of the projects (prof. Roberto Guidorzi, University of Bologna) is organizing a brief course of one week that will be held in mid February 2003 (the programme of the course is already available on the UniAdrion web site). The aim of this course, promoted within the second project, is to establish a common basis of knowledge in the application of multimedia technologies among the technical staff that will operate inside the seven FP.

Working Groups

These two projects have been inserted in the UniAdrion Working Group 5 which is related to the the implementation of the technical network and should be add to other 4 WGs convened since the Ravenna Conference.

Considering now the other 4 WGs, I can say that the first WG is related to Protection, Cataloguing and Promotion of the Cultural Heritage and within this WG one Master programme project on "Rehabilitation and Conservation of Historical Buildings". The project is intended to establish and strengthen an enhancement process of the land and of the historical memory of the cultures involved through a comparison between the various experiences in the Region.

The Master aims at training as many as 12 management technicians in charge of cultural and architectural heritage rehabilitation tasks with the opportunity to involve them in specific restoration and rehabilitation projects in the cities of Split, in Croatia, and of Gjirokastër in Albania.

The project shall have a duration of 2 years and it shall be subdivided into two mutually synergic educational pathways, which also specifically benefit from the contribution provided by the UniAdrion computer network and from the setting up of a data base on restoration.

As far as it concerns the second working group, the one on environment and sustainable development, training courses have been created. The first one is a Master Programme on "International Cooperation and Sustainable Development of Agricultural, Environmental and Rural Systems". The Master's Programme seeks to offer a deep analysis of the theoretical, legal and operational aspects related to planning and management of agro-environmental systems, and, on this basis, to develop sound methodologies for an active policy of sustainable development in the rural and coastal areas of the Adriatic-Ionian Basin.

Within the Master, a Summer School on "International Cooperation and Sustainable Development of Agricultural, Environmental and Rural Systems" was organized in September 2002 in Cervia (IT) in order to approach the main topics concerning sustainable agriculture and rural development on the regional and international level to favour an interdisciplinary perspective, linking the scientific community of the different countries involved in the Ionian-Adriatic Initiative, which is one of the main objective of UniAdrion.

The idea is to expand and to deepen the scientific programme, as well as the academic linkages, already experimented in the Summer School, in order to develop a three year programme.

The students admitted to the First UniAdrion Graduate Summer School were 22 , they were graduates with at least a three-year degree, as well as officials already working in local, national or international agencies belonging to the countries of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative.

The second project related to environment and sustainable development is titled "Rural Areas Sustainability in the Adriatic-Ionian Basin: Multicriteria Evaluation of the Agricultural and Coastal Systems (the Albanian Case)". Its main objectives are the realisation of a territory information system (TIS); the calibration of simulation models on a sample area (the Albania territory) for their subsequent use on a national scale.

Therefore the project aims at constructing, in the first two year period, a data base with the existing hydrological, ecological, agro-environmental and managerial parameters necessary for the application of the models. The data base will be consequently integrated with on field surveys in order to develop and implement the integrated management model, the territory information system and the decision support system. On this basis the first base and thematic maps will be prepared to apply then the chosen simulation model to a sample area. Last year of activities will deal with further investigations necessary for model validation with reference to the sample area, the application of the models on a national scale and the production of the definitive thematic maps. The project wants to favour co-operation among experts in the agro-environmental matters to develop a decision support system (DSS) for the planning and management of the local agricultural systems.

The third Working Group on Cultural Tourism and Development comprises one training course and one research project. The “Training Course for Experts in Development, Programming and Management of Cultural Tourism in the Adriatic –Ionian Regions” has a two years duration and it will start on January 2003. The lectures are organized in traditional courses, divided in intensive seminars, to be held on the whole- in 4 weeks, as well as, in distance learning and experiences in the field.

The Training Course for Experts in Cultural Tourism will include subjects from the following areas: Anthropology, Sociology, Economics and Geography, Linguistic, History and Archaeology, Communication and Information Technology. During the first trimester all activities will be directed on the preparation of the Training Course data base, containing the teaching programmes and materials from each disciplinary area, that will be inserted on the web site of UniAdrión. Following this first stage, an intensive seminar of one week will be held during the month of March or April in order to discuss the didactic material of the course. At the conclusion of the latter, students could start their researches and initiate with the preparative for their individual projects (thesis). In the month of September a Summer School of two weeks will take place (2nd Seminar). The last seminar of one week will be held in order to discuss the thesis and individual works of the students and to assign their diplomas. Experiences of work on the field will also be realized during the Training Course through the conducting of a brief period of stages.

The Training Course is addressed to 10-12 recent graduates in various fields related to the disciplinary areas mentioned above; to operators working in cultural, educational and leisure institutions; to officers working for local authority bodies (related council departments and cultural institutions); government workers involved in the field of educational, cultural and tourism planning.

At the end of October 2002, an International Seminar related to this project was held. In that occasion, concrete decisions concerning the activation of the training project have been taken. First of all, the International Teaching Staff was constituted, then, the working plan of the activities for the two years course, as well as the content of each disciplinary area and the number credits assigned, were approved.

The Research project on “Tur.Adrión: a Networked Multipurpose Tourist Region” will contribute to the training course for experts on Cultural Tourism, providing the Framework of the current knowledge and structure of the “Adriatic and Ionian Tourist Region”. Then a complete definition of such Regional Framework and the understanding of its trends (Tourist Scenario) will follow. The principal aim is to contribute to the creation of a “SEA. ADRION - AGENDA 21” within the year 2012/2015.

On this purpose, last week an international workshop on “Sustainable Tourism and Transport Development in the Adriatic Ionian Region: Seaport and Urban Attractiveness” took place. It aimed at discussing issues related to the opportunities for a sustainable tourism and transport development in this important region. Direct and indirect links between infrastructures and tourist areas were investigated by pointing out environmental problems, by tackling cultural differences while protecting local values, and finally by evaluating the opportunities for further development (e.g. promoting co-operation, increasing coast to coast exchanges, activating historical and cruising maritime routes). Sophisticated demands require diversified offers; the difficulties must be met by fostering the complementarity of the two coasts and the completion of the transport network, be it by sea, land or air. At the meeting participated experts on the field of tourism, port authorities and administrators of the coastal sea cities with own seaports. The results of the Round Table will be published later on; this publication will be a useful didactic material both for the project on Cultural Tourism and that on “MaEST – Master in Economics for Sustainable Transport Development”, belonging to the WG 4 on Economy, Communication, Ports and Economic Relations. In fact the workshop was organised by a collaboration among the coordinators of the research project on Tourism and those of the Master in Economics for Sustainable Transport Development.

The latter intends to sensitise public authorities and private operators in the region, making them

aware about environmental and economic subjects, so that they will be able to endow the territory with economically and environmentally sustainable transport systems.

Target participants are mainly graduate students coming from all Member States who intend to take offices related to planning and management transport systems at various levels within Local and National Institutions (Regions, Provinces, Port Authorities, Public Companies, International entrusted structures, Governmental and non- Governmental agencies, Research Institutes and Universities, and private engineering and consulting consortia).The Master will be composed of three cycles, the first one will deepen the knowledge on transport economics, engineering and law. The Second one will connect these previous topics to the logistics, the information technology. The last cycle will be a research and practical activities.

The aims of UniAdrion is to foster peace and security in the area trough interuniversity cooperation. to increase its activities and master programmes. On this purpose, during the last meeting of the Board of Advisors a new project proposal has been presented by Mr. Ennio Grassi, a member of the Italian Parliament uncharged by the Italian Government with an important project. Mr. Grassi presented this draft to the Board of UniAdrion: the Italian cooperation (from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) has proposed to develop the inter-university cooperation with special regards to Albania. The aim of the proposal is to internationalize the academic system, to create an Albanian inter-university centre with its own focal point. This request has been presented by the Albanian Government in order to modernise the educational field and to prepare itself for approaching the UE. Mr. Grassi asked for presenting this project to the UniAdrion Board of Advisor in order to test UniAdrion's disposability towards this proposal, as a preliminary phase.

This proposal is a clear example on how cultural and scientific synergy, to reach also other political and economic objectives (such as EU enlargement, economic stability).

Address

Dr. Francesca Regoli, Dr. Dominika Stojanoska
Executive Secretariat of UniAdrion
Dip. di Storie e Metodi per la Conservazione dei Beni Culturali
Vicolo degli Ariani 1, Ravenna 48100, Italia
Tel:+39-0544-48 47 78/80
Fax:+39-0544-48 47 81
e-mail: fregoli@ambra.unibo.it; dstojanoska@ambra.unibo.it

www.uniadrion.unibo.it