

UniAdrion

Virtual University of the Adriatic-Ionian Basin

RESUME OF THE UNIADRION INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP (Ravenna, 5-6.12.02) on
“SUSTAINABLE TOURISM, SEAPORTS AND URBAN ATTRACTIONS IN ADRION”.

The Workshop, organized by the Universities of Bologna and Rijeka, was attended by numerous participants from Croatia, Yugoslavia, Albania, and Greece. University professors, port authorities and local administrators debated the future of AdrIon and shared experiences.

The Municipality and the Province of Ravenna, together with the local Chamber of Commerce, sponsored the meeting jointly with the Emilia-Romagna Region. Among the participants were the Vice Mayors of Pula, Mr Tullio Persi, and of Rijeka, Ms. Vesna Lukanovic, of Ravenna, Mr Giannantonio Mingozzi, and the President of the regional Chambers' Union, Mr Pietro Baccarini. The Councillor for Tourism, Mr Elio Gasperoni, took part in the Workshop. The latter was officially opened by Prof. Paolo Pupillo, Pro-Rector for Romagna, and chaired by Prof. Zdravko Lenac, Vice-Rector of Rijeka. Also present were the Pro-Rector of Vlore, Prof. Spiro Koco Caushi, and the Director of the Greek Tourist Board, Ms. Tesy Markatou, from Athens.

Of paramount importance were the technical and cultural examples of initiatives useful for the sustainable tourism development and active preservation of resources applicable to the whole “Adriatic Ionian Euroregion”. In the last decade we have witnessed a rush on the part of the institutions to make up for lost time, an attempt to re-establish historical contacts between opposite coastlines, so as to overcome the frailty of the old models of tourism and contain the vulnerability of the marine system: “cultural bridges” and a number of different enterprises were launched over quite some time. But the existing initiatives are still scattered and do not constitute a system.

There is a widespread belief that a common strategy is needed for the single actions to make sense and for cultural tourism to fulfil its “great expectations” and reveal the urban development of the entity called “Adriatic multi.city”.

Therefore we need to define strategic views based on the containment of illegal building, the upgrading of historical seaside resorts, widespread quality, international co-operation, pilot projects in the different coast places, so as to define the “limits and maximum capacity” for tourisms. It is high time for an “ADRION SEA AGENDA 21”, similar to the “Baltic Sea Agenda 21” that has been implemented for years.

The participants agreed that the environmental sustainability of tourism must be supported by advanced control inspection procedures and quality certification for the environment, the resorts, and the hosting facilities. As a consequence, “territorial laboratories” for cultural tourism will be launched, “nurseries for tourism enterprises” opened, and “international observatories” founded. UniAdrion will facilitate the emergence of that support.

Fully equipped ports and attraction rich coastal towns will constitute the junctions in the network of relationships, exchanges and territorial nomadism in the euroregion: in the name of cultural exploration, experimental surveys, and environmental challenges (the corresponding training courses will be held long distance through the UniAdrion net). Besides the rapid growth of boating, we watch faster and faster (over 35 knots) ferries prevail and more and more economic “coast to coast” transport take place with helicopters taking aboard 10/15 passengers.

The Adriatic Ionian is almost an inland sea –the point was stressed- and can be considered a large lake, which constitutes a possible model. Its waterfront requires tackling a wealth of morphological differences and cultural identities, but it also calls for unitariness of strategic objectives and co-operation in structural actions.

The progressive development of cruising and transport, both logistic and coastal, nevertheless reveals a contradiction between the obvious benefits and the impending disaster risks.

Indeed a warning was issued during the Workshop against the risk of accidents with worn-out tankers that cross the Adriatic without bothering to meet the safety requirements. The need was stressed for the introduction –the feasibility remains to be checked- of strict control measures in the whole region, from the Ionian to the entry points in the Otranto Channel. There was a serious request to prepare ports equipped for the berthing and discharging of ships in trouble and with dangerous cargos (oil, bitumen, fuel oil). A recommendation was also put forward to ask industrial harbours to refuse entry to unsafe ships, i.e. single-hulled ones, and in general to ships not abiding by the safety rules (safety certificates are sometimes ambiguous, issued by countries flying flags of convenience, and anyhow not valid beyond one year). Another request was for insurance companies to be held jointly responsible for environmental damage, so as to involve them in advance.

Official Seat of the Virtual University: UniAdrion
(Dipartimento di Storie e Metodi per la Conservazione dei Beni Culturali),
Via degli Ariani, 1, 48100 Ravenna

Executive Secretariat of UniAdrion: Francesca Regoli and Dominika Stojanoska

Tel: +39/0544/48 47 78/80 Fax: +39/0544 48 47 81

E-mail: fregoli@ambra.unibo.it; dstojanoska@ambra.unibo.it; Web site: www.uniadrion.unibo.it

In 2003 the proceedings of the WorkShop will be published along with documentation about all Adr.Ion ports: from the state of the art to the reorganization projects. The proceedings will be used as study materials in the subsequent MA programmes.

Another meeting will follow, probably at Split, on the Isle of Vis, on “Adr.Ion’s Islands: between fantasy and reality”. This résumé will be sent on-line to everyone on UniAdrion’s mailing list, the institutions involved, the Italian Government –who is at present in the chair of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative and will soon take the rotating presidency of the EU- and the bodies of the EU. The city of Rijeka, represented at the Workshop, is holding the presidency of the Forum of the Adriatic cities, which has already fixed the date for the AGENDA 21 for the Adriatic and the Ionian.

Giorgio Praderio,

(Coordinator of the Project “Tur-Adrion:
a Networked Multipurpose Tourist Region”,
University of Bologna, Italy)

Christos Stremmenos

(Coordinator of the Project “MA in Economics
for Sustainable Transport Development” and
Scientific Co-ordinator of the UniAdrion Working
Groups, University of Bologna, Italy)

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