

Consultation on the ESPON Territorial Vision for Europe 2050 (ET2050)

Emilia-Romagna Region contribution and response

The synthesis of the report Territorial vision 2050 and the "Macro-regional reports" do not consider in an adequate way the theme of "Adriatic and Ionian Region". The part of the reports regarding Mediterranean sea consider only the western part (relations between Spain-France on one side and the northern shore of Africa on the other), the effects of "Arab spring" and the situation and perspective of eastern Mediterranean sea, Egypt and Middle-East.

A territorial vision for Europe in 2050 has to adequately consider the Adriatic-Ionian Region, an inland, coastal and marine area so relevant for the future of UE, for the integration between Italy and an important area like the Balkans and for the role that the Adriatic and Ionian seas can play for the development of new and stronger relations between the core of Europe and Central-South Mediterranean sea.

For these and other important reasons, the European Commission has adopted a specific strategy regarding the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) involving 8 countries: 4 EU member state (Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia) and 4 non-EU countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia).

Some weeks ago Italian Government informed the Regions that the Adriatic and Ionian Region strategy will be one of the topic on which the semester of Italian Presidency of UE in the second part of 2014 will be committed.

Here some relevant issues on this theme to be considered:

- 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). The Adriatic Motorway of the Sea will 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, will be a basis for further economic development.
- Sustainable and safe land and sea-borne connections will be fundamental to strengthen social and commercial links across and outside the Adriatic and Ionian region and will be critical to preserve the vitality of remote communities.

- The Adriatic-Ionian region will be an important cross road for energy issues. Energy infrastructures will be developed and optimized in the area (e.g. 'energy gas corridors', based on intergovernmental memoranda of understanding).
- Tourism is economically significant as one of the main and fast-growing activities. It will be 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 diversity, it strongly benefits the regional economy by creating quality and sustainable jobs and promoting the conservation of its cultural heritage. It will 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 employment.
- The tourism sector is facing constant challenges to innovate and improve its competitiveness. The macro-regional strategy will help tourism stakeholders to tackle internal and external challenges such as increasing competition from other destinations, seasonality, growing requests for customized experiences. The development of coastal, maritime and other forms of tourism, will be the outcome of a macro-regional approach.
- The Adriatic and Ionian coastal and marine environment is of particular relevance for the European landscape and environment; it 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.