

*Approved by the Council of the Adriatic Council
via written procedure, 15.12 .2020*



" STRENGTHENING OF THE WORK OF THE ADRIATIC COUNCIL "

***FRAMEWORK PROGRAM OF THE ADRIATIC COUNCIL,
INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION IN THE REGION FOR THE
PERIOD 2020-25***

***Prepared by Milan Martin Cvikl upon discussion with co-founders
Messrs. Marko Voljč & Dejan Novaković, taking into account
contributions by the envisaged program area coordinators
as prepared after their introductory meeting on 7.7.2020***

Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2020



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Introductory thoughts and context

In the past years, the Institute for Cooperation in the Region, the Adriatic Council (AC or Institute), has set its work well on various activities to strengthen regional cooperation, see more at www.adriatic-council.eu. The institution has a clearly defined mission, which is defined in the seventh article of the Statute of the Institute as follows: *"The mission of the Institute is to ensure peace and security in the region, economic integration and participation of young people. The Institute will seek to develop the region."* As a result, the objectives of the institute described in the same article are as follows: *"The objectives of the Institute are: more cooperation between different stakeholders, a greater degree of security and stability in the region, connecting the region with the rest of the world."*

However, recently the work of the Adriatic somewhat stalled and we have asked Mr. Milan Martin Cvikl, the former member of the Board of Directors of the EBRD to be appointed as Vice President for Programming and Development and to prepare revised Framework Program of the Adriatic Council, recently approved for the period 2020-25. Presented in this paper this Framework Program shall provide a basis for strengthening the work of AC, Institute for Cooperation in the region on sustainable basis. Since the March 2020 in series of working talks with both co-founders and individual envisaged program areas coordinators, the present proposal was formed. It was further jointly debated at the meeting on the 7th July 2020 in the presence of Mr. Voljč, Co-founder and Co-President and Mr. Dimovski, Vice President of the Adriatic Council. Upon this meeting the document was further developed on the basis of individual contributions by envisaged program areas coordinators, as presented below. Note that this a working document, to be further revised upon inputs of other Members of the Council of the Institute of Cooperation in the region, Adriatic Council.

Up to now the sources of financing of the Institute's activities was provided by individual donors, mainly among those with regional economic ties. However in order to ensure sustainable implementation of its mission it is necessary to ensure additional financing by competing for the implementation of different regional projects. The legal basis is provided for in the first sentence of the fifth paragraph of the same article, as follows: *"Institute performs as implementer of various projects."* Obtaining and implementing projects in support of its mission would enable while covering fees for individuals working projects on the basis *"daily-fees"* for specific advisors or subcontractors, that *the overhead fees would cover costs of the institution*, unless individual projects would already cover for some of the activities of the Adriatic Council, like organizing AC's conferences or multilateral or bilateral meetings.



The areas on which projects could be obtained by the AC are legally correctly and broadly well defined in the Article 8 of the Statute, which enables application for various projects related to EU enlargement to the Adriatic region and the program of close technical cooperation or so-called twinning programs. In terms of the content areas of cooperation are described later in this document. By competing for such projects Institute or AC would therefore continue to acquire donations, however would thus not be dependent only on donors' contributions, but rather both on partners' participations and project overhead financing.

In this context, this " Framework Program of the Adriatic Council for the period 2020-25" provides guidelines for the future work of the Adriatic Council, as the Institute for Cooperation in the Region. The Region is defined as an area between the Alps and the Aegean Sea on one side and the Black Sea and Adriatic Sea on the other side, where more than 50 million people live in 10 countries. These guidelines take into account good practice of political, economic, social, cultural and n other aspects of cooperation and integration of inhabitants, companies and institutions from other similar regions in the European Union like Benelux and Nordic Council. All of the above will be feasible, taking into account the establishment of more sustainable functioning of the Adriatic Council as an institution for cooperation in the region and deeper integration of the Adriatic Region into the European and global space.

A common vision of "the Adriatic Council campfire"

Introductory it shall be emphasized (as assessed upon initiative of B. Greganović, current Director of NLB d.d., Serbia) that the Adriatic Council lacks strong foundation as "brand foundation" respectively, strong enough vision and mission, as well as the related program document that would be an infinitive source of generating ideas, projects, initiatives and content for their implementation in the real world.

B. Greganović called this vision "a campfire", as a symbol of the center around which individuals gather, connect and want to continuously unite in the future. Therefore, the biggest challenge of the AC initiative will be to create and maintain a vision that has the power of campfire. Without the "campfire" and continued alliances and associations, meetings and organized conferences gradually weaken and eventually extinguish, as it has been proved in the past already in the series of initiatives, which attempted to gather individuals in the past.

Further AC's development requires above all work on defining the vision and mission of the Council and then to the production of content that such a vision and mission consistently support. It is primarily a vision of long-term peace in the Western Balkans, in an area that many call a "barrel of gunpowder". Geographically it comes to non-EU countries from the area of former Yugoslavia and Albania including, as well as other countries that are economically connected into Adriatic region.

In the context of such a vision it is important to develop contents of the work that could be from legal issues and respect of law in countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina or support for entering countries into the EU enlargement projects, supporting development of the free economic zones, the economic recovery of CEFTA or rather development of Western Balkans Economic Free Trade Area or WBEFTA as well as ensuring mini-Schengen area in the Adriatic Region. One could also appreciate further cooperation of regulators in the banking and financial sector, as currently done (as part of its activities) via Slovenia based Center for Excellence in Finance, see more at www.see-cef.org, especially in the light of the urgent adoption of the euro after EU accession.



Upon review of existing text on the www.adriatic-council.eu the vision AC is closest to the following quote: *"Our Vision is creation of conditions for sustainable peace and the region with a strong Economic Community of free individuals, peoples and nations."* This text is a good starting point for the development of an appropriate vision and content (of this) and other programming documents, in which the *"conditions for sustainable peace in the region"* (of the Western Balkans) would be broken down even more precisely. At the same time, cooperation in all other areas of economic, political, cultural and social life is essential.

Regarding the mode of future operation of AC, it shall be based on data, analysis and research, the closest form being the so-called "think-tank". The latter should generate thoughtful, credible outputs with change-oriented content and solutions, in support of a realization of the mission and vision of the AC, of the forms and statistical data, analysis and research. These should be appropriately communicated via publications, blogs, emailing, tweeting, conferences, webinars and publishing.

AC should avoid one of the pitfalls of regional initiatives in this area, namely that the harmonization of lifestyle and business is often, more or less explicitly, understood as a precondition for achieving the goal of a particular initiative and not as the goal of their operation. The realization of this objective cannot skip a period, in which the region must learn to live in peace and dialogue with their differences and in spite of these differences. Only in this way the countries could integrate into the EU in the next step, together with their neighbors in the region.

B. Greganović further emphasizes the fact that a large number of regional initiatives already exist in the narrower and wider region. Therefore, it should be one of the tasks of the AC to facilitate and accelerate the realization of its goals in cooperation with existing initiatives. List the individual component of regional initiative, projects and information portals with this line of work are as follows:

WB6 Chamber of Commerce <https://www.wb6cif.eu/>

West Balkans Investment Framework <https://www.wbif.eu/>

CEFTA: <https://cefta.int/>

SEE cooperation process <https://www.rcc.int/pages/111/south-east-european-cooperation-process-seecp> established Regional Coordination Center www.rcc.int publisher of Balkan Barometer 2020 (RCC) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1V1klzPeas>

Regional Youth Cooperation Office <https://www.rycowb.org/>

Adriatic Ionian Initiative <https://www.aii-ps.org/>

Three seas initiative <https://3seas.eu/>

Podgorčki klub <http://podgoricki-klub.me/index.php>

European Policy Center Center for European Policies <https://cep.org.rs/en/#>

Center for Contemporary Politics <https://centarsavremenepolitike.rs/about-us/> (EU-RS Think Tank), founder of the European Western Balkans portal www.europeanwesternbalkans.com

EU enlargement framework https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/eu-enlargement_en (all WB6 countries, only Turkey out of all candidates is not within our focus) and



Institute for Strategic Studies <https://www.isr.si>, issuing the The Adriatic Journal on geopolitics, economic and life style on the Western Balkans.

Four basic program area

Taking into account the above and upon discussions within a wider group of potential future contributors to the work AC and in consultation with the co-founders, we propose to strengthen the work program in four basic areas:

- i. Political integration
- ii. Further Economic integration
- iii. Integration in social fields
- iv. Integration and Cooperation of researchers and technical advisers in order to cooperate in joint acquisition of projects

By individual basic areas, it is proposed to connect individual at different levels of political power and at the same time a detailed program areas with the planned contents of work in economic and social fields areas, for which joint acquisition of projects is envisaged.

For individual fields area coordinators are envisaged staff as carriers of program areas (from Slovenia) in order to extend operations of the Institute, as described below. It is envisaged that next to their primary activities individuals or their organizations would work complementarily for the common good of the mission and goals of the institute in the Adriatic region.

Activities in the **four main areas are envisaged** as follows:

- I. **Connecting to the political sphere of the wider Adriatic region** through gatherings and integrative work of the highest representatives (former and current) Heads of State, while searching for alliances with governments, ministries and executive branch and the integration of parliamentarians as legislative authority. Connecting of Executive Branch is proposed in order to enhance the unbundling of the region and the subsequent integration into the formats of the European Union - formations of the Council of Ministers and country's leaders within the European Council. Connecting parliamentarians is proposed in order to achieve mutual integration in the region and cooperation in the framework of the IPU - Inter-Parliamentary Union and for the current and subsequent integrations but within the European Parliament. Ultimate form could be Adriatic Council Parliamentary Body as periodical meeting of Friendship Groups from individual National Parliaments.
- II. **Connecting peoples, countries and economies of the Adriatic region through strengthening regional economic ties** by individual program areas through the integration of national chambers of commerce, economic interest associations in banking and in other areas in order to discuss, analyze and provide advice in areas like banking, public financial management, protection of competition, improving a corporate governance, energy and infrastructure development, industrial policy, clustering and the development of service activities and the integration of companies, agricultural policy and rural development area, the digital economy and online activities, and the vector process of promoting the circular economy. All this is to help the process of joining Euro-Atlantic alliances, e.g. support for the creation of "mini Schengen" in the Balkans in through the development and hardware and software of the SISNET I, II, and other



elements that enhance the free flow freely from the movement of capital, goods, services and people.

The ultimate goal is to create an open economy and support of companies, regionally integrated and thus more integrated economies and business supporting environment, especially in the post CORONA period and as an incentive for the process of joining the EU. The forms of the work require active participation of peoples and institutions of the Adriatic region as well as the transfer of best experiences connecting nations and countries from the Benelux Union, Scandinavia and the Baltic countries.

III. **Integration for the purpose of strengthening a free society, media and other freedoms, social responsibility and equal opportunities through integration in the field of arts and cultural exchange.** It is about defending and supporting a free society, which cannot exist without free media, and it is about strengthening the social responsibility of related policies, including ensuring equal opportunities, protecting women and girls and empowering them. In the field of art and culture n e exchanges to work for the integration of the best creators in order to achieve an internal cohesion and artistic cultural integration in the Adriatic region and their integration with other global artistic cultural centers.

IV. **Integration and Cooperation of researchers and technical advisors for the joint acquisition of technical assistance and twinning program projects** at the time of accelerated enlargement process of the remaining non-EU countries of the Adriatic region into the European Union. These could include joint candidacy on programs of DG NEAR (which now includes the former DG Enlargement and thus includes EU Neighborhood Policy e and enlargement negotiations), DG SRSS programs - Structural Reform Support Service as well as programs of individual EU agencies and bodies and their technical assistance calls. At the same time AC shall aim to obtain twinning programs on a bilateral basis with the BeNeLux Union and Scandinavian, i.e. Nordic Council entities with institutions from Slovenia and the wider region in order to transfer their best practices in the region and simultaneously to ensure sustainable operations. Applying for projects has already been foreseen in the founding legal basis of the Institute, but has not been sufficiently developed.

Below we provide more details on the proposed four main areas of activities.



Ad I) Political, governmental, parliamentary cooperation

In the past, meetings of AS generally well received as the process of gathering of important stakeholders at the highest level. In this sense, the meetings act as the playful element of the Brdo – Brijuni process and of other integrative processes. It would be even better if the meetings and events like those of the Three Seas Initiative, the 17 + 1 meeting and EU gatherings, mostly when individual EU events took place, especially when Presidency of the Council is chaired by countries from the Adriatic region or countries with similar regional experiences, are accompanied by AC meetings or events. So far in this AC was not fully effective, not least because the activities tie e mainly on individual donors. The AC meeting at the highest level, such as the meeting in Maribor in the autumn of 2018, was the last major one, also because the funds were exhausted.

However, work at the political level should be continued in order strengthen regional integration, with meetings of the Adriatic Council in its role of "a think tank" around ideas or further integration in a number of program areas (see section II and III). It is thus necessary connecting current governments and economic actors on the topic of strengthening the Adriatic region through the organization of conferences and consultations such as:

- 1. Meeting of Presidents - former and current**
- 2. Meetings of representatives of the executive branch in the region**
- 3. Meetings of MPs from the Regions with likely minded one**

Similarly operated the Hanseatic League already in previous centuries and so does the Union Benelux, Scandinavia and of the Baltic countries work in recent decades. The latter is particularly strengthened within the EU institutions and during operations in the EU. All these connections are here to ensure that the common interests of the countries of the region are pursued. In a larger group of countries, the needs, opportunities and interests of individual countries with the support of other countries in the region could be more appropriately (re)presented.

Adriatic region would have, especially in the de-globalization period and with the collapse of multilateralism, greater role in pulling together the region to make it more investment friendly and an interesting one for all in order to realize closely linked economic interests. And the Adriatic Council could play in this an important positive role, especially via the enhanced integration of Presidents, the executive and parliamentarians with all other stakeholders like business representatives and their associations. This requires strengthening the work and team of AC while connecting and integrating with all similar institutions in the region.

Meetings of Presidents

In order to strengthen the work in the highest political area, consideration would be given to strengthening the content of the summit at the highest level of the countries. As example of good practice was when the President of the Republic of Slovenia in years 2003-05 held talks of different partners on various topical issues under overall title "Talks on Slovenia's future". Current President of the Republic of Slovenia could upon his initiative held series of meetings Presidents and other partners from the Adriatic region and EU under overall title "Talks on the future of the Adriatic region". This could over the following potential topics:

- i. An active and recognizable Adriatic region in the EU and the world
- ii. EU accession negotiations and the process of approaching Euro-Atlantic integration



- iii. Competitiveness of companies, economies and the climate change in the Adriatic region
- iv. Values of nations and development of democracy in the Adriatic region
- v. Cooperation of the countries of Union Benelux and Scandinavia in European Union and the Adriatic region

These “Talks” should take place within or on the margins of the meetings of the Adriatic Council and / or Presidents with the participation of representatives of the executive and legislative branches of government and partners of AC. On content it should be closely linked with the program of individual activities and cooperation with twinning partners from the Union Benelux and Nordic Council and associated with processes and procedures on accession of candidate and potential candidate countries to the European Union as well as to the NATO. As introductory speakers to those “Talks” we envisage participation of key Members of the Adriatic Council that works on specific topics (points under Ad II) and Ad III), as described below. At the same time, the holders of individual twinning and advisory projects would also participate (as explained under Ad IV) below. On the sidelines of these meetings, parallel artistic and cultural events could be organized, in line with the point in Ad III).

Meetings of representatives of the Executive branch of Government

Meetings of Presidents shall encourage participation of high Governments’ representatives at the events on each of the topics presented above and others, a form of AC 10 or AC 10 plus meetings. These meetings should take place regularly or at least on an annual basis as well as on the sidelines of European Council meetings, in order to ensure mutual regional coordination and harmonization within the EU by current and future new EU members. In doing so, it would be necessary to work closely with the League of Northern Seas, i.e. the Benelux, Scandinavian and Baltic Union countries. Such is the cooperation among countries of the Benelux Council and the Nordic Council with visible results on many fronts, from harmonization of legislation, bilateral cooperation as well as personnel representation.

It would be very important that the Government of the Republic of Slovenia envisages in the program of the EU Presidency in the second half of 2021 the organization of the so-called EU-Western Balkans Summit along with the work on the so-called Conference on the Future of the EU. Adriatic Council could contribute to the content and side discussions at both events.

Meeting of representatives of the legislative branch of government - the Parliament of the Adriatic region

The cooperation of parliamentarians could be strengthened primarily via an active initiative of the Slovenian National Assembly. AC and Slovene Parliament could jointly prepare “1st Adriatic Region gatherings of Parliamentarians” on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Slovenia’s independence, with a set of topical meetings on the review of the legislative path to independence and the positive (and negative) consequences of independence, and the positive (and negative) parliamentary experiences on the accession to the EU. The former President of the National Assembly Mr. Dejan Židan has been in favor of the idea, similar is the position of the current President of the National Assembly Mr. Igor Zorčič, confirmed the idea at the recent meeting. An important role due to their historical memory could be played by the former members of the EU Troika, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, Hans van den Broek and Jacques Poos, or their successors at foreign affairs.



It is important also to ensure better coordination also of parliamentarians in the Inter-Parliamentary Union – IPU. This call for coordinated action of committees for foreign policy and of “friendship” groups for individual countries and to establish an initiative for a "Parliament" of the Adriatic region. This would be reinforced through the participation of European Parliamentarians (MEPs) from the countries of the Adriatic region and through committees for cooperation with individual and potential European Parliament candidates. The initiative could be developed in cooperation of the AC with members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, as well as Austria and Italy, preferably with representatives of all major political groups, especially PES , EPP and ALDE. Activities of Benelux Parliament and cooperation of Scandinavian MPs and MEPs as well as those from Baltic States could provide good examples to be followed.

In the legislative field, both in preparation of as well review of legislative environment, cooperation of the AC on the establishment of electronic legislative platforms, taking into account best practices of the Official Gazettes of the EU Member countries could be established with Slovene Government legislative service, Slovene Official Gazette (both of them expressed a positive interest) and Parliamentary legislative service.



Ad II) Economic cooperation and strengthening the competitiveness of the region

In the Adriatic Council we want to strengthen the integration of peoples, countries and economies of the Adriatic regions. The aim is to strengthen regional economic links so that the Adriatic region is fully active and recognizable in the EU and in the world. The Adriatic region has as an economic power as it is a home of almost 50 million people across 10 countries, and this would be even more important in the de-globalized after the Corona crisis. Further regional integration could have additional boost for a range of industries, services and economic operators of individual countries of the Adriatic region, as well as its near and far neighboring countries and partners.

Exiting the economic crisis and adapting economy in the post-Covid period, combined with the challenges of climate change, requires strengthening the competitiveness of individual companies and economies. This can be achieved on the one hand by enhanced cooperation within the Adriatic region and on the other hand by accelerated and successfully completed accession's negotiations and membership of the remaining countries into the EU in order to protect "this soft belly of the EU." This would enable full integration with existing EU members in the Adriatic region and better internal regional relations among countries: from Italy, Slovenia, Austria, Hungary on the Northwest of the region, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia and, Albania in its center to Romania and Bulgaria on its Eastern border all the way to the Greece at its Southeastern border of the region. At its heart there are more than 50 million people, and with neighboring countries, economic potential grows to some 200 million people, including Italy, Austria and the countries of the Three Seas Initiative, which extends all the way to the Baltic Sea. Comparison of the map of infrastructure in the Western Europe and in this part of the world clearly shows the potential for development in this part of the world.

Economic cooperation would undoubtedly strengthen the development of democracy and emphasize the values of the peoples of the Adriatic region, in particular the rule of law, human rights and freedoms and free enterprise, taking into account the same rules of the game for all market participants.

The main institutions that at the present and in the future will shape economic cooperation and integration are national chambers of commerce, bank interest and other interest and economic association, cooperation among regulatory institutions in the field of competition law, banking and insurance regulation and the like. Immediate first step could be a support to the internal economic integration among EU candidate countries through strengthening the free movement of people, goods and services. In this context, EU assistance through the European Commission, with the support of Member States for the creation of a "Mini Schengen" in the Adriatic region, would be extremely important step forward. Specifically, the development and establishment of an "Schengen Information System" (SIS) for the candidate countries from the Adriatic region would be welcome. It shall start with an internal connection between these countries and possibly the EU countries that are in SIS now, but are not yet part of the area without controls at internal borders (Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria). Let us point out that before the actual Schengen system was established, free movement of people and goods was ensured in a similar way - that is, well before the formal EU system itself -by abolishing and facilitating the crossing of borders between the Benelux countries.

Economic integration between several countries takes several forms. The most famous is, of course, today's European Union in all its dimensions. People and countries of the Adriatic region are



certainly most interested for stronger internal connection of individual countries, their enterprises, government and other institutions in various forms. As an example for the integration of the North Sea countries, which includes the countries of Benelux Union and in Scandinavia in the so called Nordic Council (linking parliamentarians) and the Nordic Council of Ministers (presided by individual countries) linked with the Baltics, where Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers meet in the so-called NB8 format. Practice shows that next to Scandinavia among the most developed is the Benelux Union, which has been during the case of integration of the Baltic States prepared to transfer their best experiences through the Benelux Parliament and through the Secretary-General of the Union of Benelux, for more info at www.benelux.int.

In order to identify substance and areas of activities and cooperation on economic front to support further integration in the Adriatic region a set of conversations was carried with individual potential leaders for particular areas of activities in cooperation with colleagues from individual countries of the region. Thus, we identified the following twelve areas of economic cooperation with identified potential area leaders:

1. **Banking - Branko Greganović with colleagues from the countries of the region**
2. **Public finance management - Slaven Mičković with colleagues from the countries of the region**
3. **Industrial policies, clusters and competitiveness - Vladimir Kreačič with colleagues from the countries of the region**
4. **Tourism and services e activities - Darja Radič with colleagues from the countries of the region**
5. **Energy and infrastructure projects - Anton Žunič with colleagues from the countries of the region**
6. **Agriculture and Rural Development - xxx with colleagues from the countries of the region**
7. **Corporate Governance - xxx with colleagues from the countries of the region**
8. **Competition law and protection of competition - Andrej Krašek with colleagues from the countries of the region**
9. **Legal issues, rule of law and regional economic arbitrage - Dominika Švarc Pipan with colleagues from countries in the region**
10. **Encouragement of Foreign Direct Investment - Janez Pergar and Mark Boris Adrijanič with colleagues from the countries of the region**
11. **Digitization of the economy, public administration and education - Andrej Mertelj , Edvard Sternad, Dare Stojan and Renato Burazer with colleagues from the countries of the region**
12. **Promotion of Circular Economy Policies - Ladeja Godina Košir with colleagues from the countries of the region**

On the basis of this on the July 7, 2020, the first joint discussion of individual area leaders was held and they have had consequently prepared contributions on more details. The conversation and individual contributions of individuals summarized below show how important it is that the team AC gather around the "campfire" or the vision of the work AC n the Adriatic region as a lever for (joint) cooperation, as presented in the introductory part of this document.

It is proposed that we identify individual content leaders for the individual areas, which bind other individuals from countries of the Adriatic region, depending on the content and inclusion of individual project. It is difficult in fact to rely solely on one leader, one person for each country, as



envisaged in the present organizing structure of the AC, as indicated on the web site links below. We would argue that the individuals "responsible for particular countries" would work even better, also with the support of individual content institutions and vice versa content leaders urgently need support and cooperation by individuals "responsible for particular countries".

<http://adriatic-council.eu/organizational-structures/>

<http://adriatic-council.eu/our-experts-staff/>

Ad 1. Banking area

B. Greganović in introduction emphasizes first that for the banking area activities and for other areas important that AC could and should contribute to the development of capacities of the Adriatic region to be able live with its differences. Also with the development of information platforms, to be done by AC itself or together with complementary institutions, where those interested shall be able to find in one place most relevant business related data and information. From the general economic to financial statistics and legislature bases (i.e. with the IUS regional platform) in a structured format, which enables comparability, it saves time and reduces the possibility of misunderstandings by those who want to live and operate in different countries in the region.

For cooperation in the field of banking the key is co-operation with banking, financial sector regulators from neighboring EU countries, mainly because most banks in the region are owned by the system important banks from the EU. These institutions act through the Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) and work via joint control to teams as follows:

ECB's bodies that could support the WB6 regional initiatives in banking: ECB Joint Supervisory Teams <https://www.bankingsupervision.europa.eu/banking/approach/jst/html/index.en.html>

ECB Supervisory Colleges

https://www.bankingsupervision.europa.eu/about/ssmexplained/html/supervisory_colleges.en.html

As a next step in banking we suggest possibly a repeat Banking Conference on "green economy technology" green banking, which is organized by the Bank Association of Slovenia in November 2020 and could be in 2021 organized under wider platform for regional banks with a conference in Belgrade, Sarajevo or Dubrovnik. AC could couple on this organization with Slovene based Centre for Excellence in Finance CEF - regional institution www.cef-sef.org and/or with National Bank of Croatia which is traditionally organizes in the spring International Central Banking/Commercial banking conference at the Adriatic Coast, usually in Dubrovnik.

Ad 2. Public finance management

S. Mičković emphasizes the need to include fiscal policy issues in the AC program. It follows from the mission of AC: *"The mission of the institute is to ensure peace and security in the region, economic integration and participation of young people. The institute will strive for the development of the region."* In doing so, economic or fiscal policy must have its place in the JS program. The 1994 Human Development Report explicitly lists the economic dimension of human development as one of the key ones. Lack of economic security affects the investment climate and consequently economic growth, which Adriatic region as a whole and the individual countries of the region in the past have experienced to often. In this context, fiscal discipline is a necessary precondition for achieving economic security.



At the same time he points out that an outbreak of any crisis (economic from 2009 or COVID and related economic stagnation in 2020) cause that "fiscal activism" become popular: calls for fiscal stimulus are now directed to the governments of individual countries practically from all international institutions and parts of the economy. However, a sufficiently large "fiscal space" is also necessary for the preparation of appropriate measures. All in all, it means that pursuing a sustainable fiscal policy is a condition for achieving sustainable development of the region.

Therefore, the important question is how shall we begin the work of AC on the segment of fiscal policy, especially in the context of EU enlargement for the remaining countries of the region. In this respect, the countries of the Adriatic region have a great need for assistance in the area of fiscal policies. Transfer of the content of many chapters of the European *acquis communautaire* (i.e. Economic and monetary union, the rules of the Stability Growth Pact – SGP, etc.) demand introduction of methodology and a number of fiscal models, needed for:

- Preparation of the national budget memorandum
- The Stability program and Programs for the adoption of euro, and
- consequently of the individual country's national budgets.

Given the sequence order of potential projects S. Mičković proposes that we shall start at the beginning: to define the fiscal target (Medium Term Objective) that it would embrace an European concept that asymmetrically considers both explicit and implicit liabilities, and treatment costs of aging (aging related expenditures). In addition, the EU methodology for calculating the medium-term fiscal target does not take into account the specifics of each country, as well as the adequacy of the level of pensions. According to him, the first project in the field of fiscal policy could be "Development of a methodology for calculating the medium-term fiscal target", which will eliminate the shortcomings of the EU methodology - setting a fiscal target (fiscal balance and debt), taking into account the specifics of each country. This can be a key starting point for the countries of the region, enabling them to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

Next to cooperation of S. Mičković with colleagues from Slovenia and the region, according to the common opinion in this area AC shall cooperate with Center for Excellence in Finance (which connects ministries of finance and central banks of the Adriatic region, see www.see-CEF.org), Representation of the European Commission and the European External Action Service and in individual countries, the Joint Vienna Institute of the IMF and WB in Vienna, and in particular the SIGMA program of the OECD and the European Commission, as well as bilateral institutions from the partner countries of the Benelux countries Nordic Council. Given the importance of government control in the future EU Member States is considered to associate the European Court of Auditors e m www.eca.eu including its 'Contact Committee' supreme audit institutions of the candidate countries to the EU.

Ad 3. Industrial policy clustering and competitiveness

V. Kreačič believes that there is a long path to establish and implementation AC as a *think tank*, and this can be undertaken in the medium term. With AC as an institution we should move faster and take advantage of the present moment - with the pandemic linked new economic crises and opportunities. As a niche operations the work of the AC can be defined "Troubleshooting Covida consequences on the economy and welfare in the region," and in the short to prepare projects that:

a) enable economy to reach quicker to the level before the Covid pandemic.



b) helping to achieve this new level in the new situation through improved connect -making in the region.

Pandemic in Europe revealed that we are over dependent on Asian countries and thus long supply chains, and for example in Slovenia far too little food is produced locally. At the same time, we realized that much more could be done from home or remotely. It is the latter that will bring major changes in business.

In the JS we have to look cohesive in regional integration connecting projects, which will be of great interests to donors as could increase the likelihood that parts of chains that would return from Asia to Europe come also in our region. Projects are to be found in the area of digitalization, logistics, energy, tourism, industry and manufacturing at large. Which of the project is the *first mover* depends on what we have already done in Slovenia or in another country in the region. It could be project with some experience in cross-border cooperation or a new project for which investor interest is shown and can be "re-packaged" as a regional project.

Covid-19 has and will continue to have severe social consequences. Also in this area it is possible to develop new projects, which could be successful in the obtaining of funds, as they would be packaged as post - Covid crisis projects.

Ad 4. Tourism and services activities

D. Radič agrees that it would be wise to focus activities on finding common opportunities to adapt the economy and social life for the period after or with COVID-19 in the region. On this theme we can quickly found contacts throughout the region, where they are looking for solutions to mitigate the negative consequences in the short run and thinking about how to move forward. During this time, in late Spring 2020, series of videoconferences were held on the topic of exchanging best practices, experiences and measures taken by individual countries. D. Radič had namely chaired at the invitation of the OECD Conference in the field of tourism for the Western Balkans 6, which was attended by representatives of ministries of all six economies from the RCC (Regional Cooperation Council) and GIZ.

During the conference, the pandemic began slowing you (Montenegrins were happy because they were "corona free country"), the summer season started so the focus was more on the "reopening", around the search for solutions of how to ensure the safety of tourist workers and guests who will come how to adapt business models, marketing and adapt to changing market demand. According to her, this is a topic on which a lot is to be considered including in Slovenia, and AC's activities in in this field would certainly be welcome. Personally, she is quite engaged in this field - for the OECD she works on Competitiveness Outlook 2021, Tourism Policy Chapter, where the emphasis will be on recommendations to governments on conducting tourism policy in the new situation. Something similar is being prepared by the RCC under GIZ project in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This engagement could be linked to a broader initiative with other activities in the framework of the JS.

Recommendations to governments, at least for tourism, were prepared on time. One of the main recommendations is certainly of how to adapt tourism strategies to the new situation. Existing strategies are more or less unrealistic, and if ever, then is now an opportunity for the fundamental principle - sustainable tourism development - to finally be put into practice through concrete measures and projects. This is an opportunity to design a project to be run through Adriatic Council. In this context it is important that we have the so-called Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism in Slovenia, see the link: [https:// www.slovenia.info/sl/poslovne-strani/zelena-shema-slovenskega-turizma](https://www.slovenia.info/sl/poslovne-strani/zelena-shema-slovenskega-turizma) .



In short, the mentioned scheme is a certification system, on the basis of which the destinations, hotels, parks, travel agencies obtain the Green Destination Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum badges. The approach to sustainable tourism development is recognized in the world as one of the best, if not the best. So Slovenia, we can say, is the world champion in this field as evidenced by numerous awards and invitations to authors of this model in many countries of the world.

It is proposed to transfer our excellent practices to the wider region and thus promote the sustainable development of tourism in the region. Why not make the whole Adriatic region a GREEN DESTINATION? Slovenia started with this, we have knowledge and good experience. According to Radič's assessment, such an initiative or project would be gladly accepted in the Western Balkans countries. In BiH, it has already been largely "sold" (it will work as a pilot in selected destinations), which can be used as a test for the preparation of a regional project. She is convinced that such a project is interesting for donors and investors, as the implementation of required investments in green public and private infrastructure (energy restoration, green energy, sustainable mobility, environmental solutions, etc.), and opening of opportunities for the production of new green products, including digitization, social innovation and ultimately training. The project is therefore realistic mainly from the point of view of obtaining development funds.

Tourism is definitely an area that would be developed within the AC:

- one of the development priorities in the region;
- the foundations for regional integration and the creation of joint tourism products have been laid, and regional tourism products have been developed in the segment of cultural and adventure tourism (but limited to Western Balkans 6);
- The Balkans is a new destination in Europe, which is fully in line with the trend of discovering new destinations;
- "playground" for digitalization projects, creative industries, culture, sports, sustainable mobility, environmental technologies,...; and
- connective, friendly, understands cultural diversity, cares for security and stability, opens borders and connects the region with the world.

Ad 5. Energy and infrastructure projects

In his contribution, A. Žunič focused on the question: Can the common "campfire", the work of AS in the Adriatic region, illuminate energy and infrastructure in a better light? In the introduction he stresses that the substantive broad strategy of the Adriatic Council is the right approach and that his experiences in some countries of the Adriatic region were mainly from the fields of banking on the development of risk management systems in Slovenia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia.

He assesses the role of the Adriatic Council mainly from the point of view of examining the possibilities for the realization of higher potential economic growth than in recent years and especially from the point of view of the perspective in 2020, when the effects of the corona virus will worsen existing statistics. It is about potential economic growth made possible by factors in individual countries and it is about the synergistic effects of mutual cooperation.

Therefore, in terms of activities in the Adriatic Council, he emphasizes the importance of the intra and interstate approach. In Slovenia we have managed to prove that at least two fold higher



economic growth than the euro area average is possible. It can be achieved if the economy (with the support of appropriate economic policy) maintains export performance and competitiveness of the appropriate economic policies to promote employment potential factors that are unused. In Slovenia, we found that these are mainly the following potentials until 2030:

- Energy: Lower and Middle Sava and restructuring of inefficient areas of energy production (Slovene Sovereign Holding, Holding of Slovene Power Stations, Hydro Power Stations on lower Sava; with contribution to annual GDP growth 0.3%)
- Telecommunications: FTTH on electricity distribution (0.2% potential growth)
- Smart grids on electricity distribution FTTH (0.2% potential growth)
- Forestry and wood processing (> 0.2% potential growth)
- Second Railways track (> 0.2% potential growth)
- Foreign Direct investment
- SMEs (access to finance and development of secondary markets; > 0.3% potential growth)
- Stimulating the domestic bond market.

There are several sources of funding. On the one hand, the EFSI enables the merging of several projects and platforms, synergy effects (EU funds, Development Bank, EIB, EBRD, commercial banks). Following an agreement at European Council level, a new resource is being added - the Post-Corona Crisis Recovery and Resilience Fund (RRF) in the form of grants and soft loans.

Slovenia has potential in knowledge, natural resources and capital. The individual factors are, of course, interrelated. Empirically, for example, a very important link between the quality of banking assets and the level of quality economic growth at the state level has been proven. Quality economic growth is the basis for improving social policy, employment, culture, health, science and education, and so on.

In the field of infrastructure and energy, we will try to obtain such projects that should help individual countries, firstly, to realize their potentials as quickly as possible, and secondly, to enable their mutual cooperation. As an example of the involvement A. Žunič mentioned Sincro grid between Slovenia and Croatia, which was developed in 2017 and will allow for more efficient transmission of large amounts of renewable energy between the two countries on existing infrastructures and of course a more reliable supply of electricity. Within individual countries concerning energy it is required to review their energy balance and potential of all resources, especially in the field of renewable energy sources.

In terms of infrastructure, it would be interesting to check potential projects in the areas of: transport infrastructure - air transport, railways, roads, river and sea transport, telecommunications infrastructure (especially broadband networks), logistics, drinking water supply, etc. All the potential energy sources and infrastructure are also interesting from the point of view of international cooperation. In Slovenia, for example, we have very good experience in the field of hydroelectric power plant construction. With the transfer of knowledge in the region will directly help other countries while at home we preserve domestic knowledge in good condition.

In the field of health, for example, there is an interesting project: the “Proton Therapy Center”, which has excellent opportunities in Ljubljana, if we include other countries that would provide a sufficiently high number of patients.



Regarding the approach in the work of JS, complementary cooperation is needed, as we must also be aware that we are not the only ones who would deal with exactly the same topics. For example, the EU already has policies and integration of the Western Balkans into the Western Balkans Investment Framework, incorporating the objectives and instruments of development cooperation in the economic, social, energy, infrastructure, legal issues, housing construction, security and human capital. See more at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en /FTU_5.5.2.pdf in www.wbif.eu.

The project "Initiative 3 seas" further illuminates interest policy with exactly the same themes. There are, of course, other strong interest groups. In this conglomerate of interests, as Adriatic Council and from Slovenia, we will look for projects even where we probably have a relatively very important comparative advantage. These are based on historically grounded economic relations and common interests in other areas.

Ad 6. Agriculture and rural development

In the field of agriculture and rural development, talks on potential carriers from Slovenia with colleagues from the countries of the region are still ongoing.

Ad 7. Corporate governance

In the field of corporate governance, talks on potential stakeholders from Slovenia with colleagues from the countries of the region are still ongoing.

Ad 8. Competition law and competition protection

A. Krašek in his preliminary point emphasizes that the law of competition is a minor part of the legal services, which however is of great importance in the economic and political life. Events that are deeply resonated and in Slovenia are, for example, merger of breweries Laško and Union, multiple attempts to take over Mercator, Delo, Večer etc. The proper functioning of the market, where providers can benefit consumers by improving products and services, is one of the preconditions for the success of economies. It is therefore logical that every country should want a functioning system of competition protection, even if the actual situation is often just the opposite. Compliance with competition law and protection of competition is not sufficient in all countries of the Adriatic region.

Recently in the field of competition more and more topics are becoming interesting for more and more countries in the area, which "is covered" by the Adriatic Council. A. Krašek assesses that it would be prudent to prepare an informed public discussion event or an appropriate analysis on the following two topical issues:

- Gradual take over and restructuring of the system of Agrokor, which is associated with more concentration and competition assessment procedures in Slovenia and abroad. At least two countries adopted special laws (so-called Lex Agrokor in Croatia and Lex Mercator in Slovenia), which significantly changed and limited rights of creditors and other market participants. In addition, the Agency for Protection of Competition Agrokorju handed down by € 53.9 million penalty. As a result, the Republic of Slovenia received serious allegations about the political activities of its competition authority.



- Consolidation in the field of telecommunications and media content in the countries of Western Balkans, with concentration in this area having not only economic but also political consequences, as commercial television is still the most effective mechanism for shaping public opinion. Of particular importance is the ownership of rights to retransmit sporting events.

Consequently, it would be good, as a next step in the work of the AC, to establish a greater system of integration of competition authorities. Similar programs dealing with integration and cooperation are already quite few. As the most typical, Krašek pointed out the case of the Sofia Competition Forum: <https://unctad.org/en/pages/MeetingDetails.aspx?meetingid=970>.

It operates within the framework of the United Nations and annually organizes specialized events in this field, which take place in Sofia. It is suggested that team from AC attend these events in order to present the work of the AC and experiences from the region in this field.

Ad 9. Legal issues, rule of law and regional arbitration

Scope of legal issues, the rule of law and regional arbitration is in preparation D. Švarc Pipan with colleagues from the countries of the regions. In this area, too, the cooperation could be established on preparing an appropriate legal platforms, especially with regard to modern, digital technologies (see above under activities of the Legislative arm, i.e. Parliament,

Ad 10. Promotion of foreign direct investment and return of young people in the region

In the introduction J. Pergar emphasizes that the AC is a non-political and non-partisan association, in which we participate as advocates of social democratic, liberal and other progressive orientations, for a successful Slovenia, countries of the region and Europe. In this context, he highlighted the basic objective of the AC, which is to promote cooperation in the region for its rapid progress, fostering enlargement process for all the countries of the Balkans into EU and Schengen system, in that the EU member states from the region helps non-member countries.

The start shall be cooperation of existing institutions also in areas, such as environment, health, education, science, legal system and solution and the effectiveness of the public administration. All these with the aim of economic cooperation in the fields of environment, transport, energy, communications, new technologies, digitalization.... This shall start with regionally oriented enterprises from the northern part of the region, i.e. Slovenia, Croatia and expand into the region. It would be worth looking at which countries have similarly ambitious development programs in the fields of transport infrastructure, energy, environment, health... as Slovenia. We shall attempt to connect these programs.

We support the growth of goods, services, capital and people, which is the basic idea of the EU. Therefore, let us propose the establishment of a free trade area for the Balkans on the EU model. It is necessary to prepare an analysis of the differences in the legal system of individual countries and to propose harmonization with the basic *acquis communautaire* in the EU as soon as possible. Expansion of best practices in selected areas is highly recommended. The media support will be the key, so we should plan strategic communication with the media, where we would present our key objectives and ensure that they would follow us.

It is important that in order to regulate the financing of AC, we must have projects that can be the basis for funding by EU, state, contracting authorities and donors. In his opinion, "think thank"



is therefore not an appropriate form of our activities. In terms of content AC's projects shall include project preparation or participation in projects that promote regional cooperation, the so-called "Cross Border" project. Projects can be of research, consulting, organizational nature... and also include finding knowledge and investors.

AC can also participate in investments, so J. Pergar suggests that we shall:

- a. be acquainted in details with the investment program for the development of transport infrastructure, logistics, energy, environment... and to identify which projects under this program can be the basis for cross-border cooperation (to focus on some concrete projects that can be implemented as soon as possible, starting with connecting Slovenia and Croatia, as both have an indisputable Adriatic attribute)
- b. propose organizational models and financing models, we offer our professional help
- c. propose concrete solutions to reduce administrative barriers (spatial planning, construction legislation)
- d. suggest promoters for attracting investors (concrete activities, subsidies, tax reliefs...)

Regarding the models of financing development projects, we propose the establishment of (national and regional) development investment funds, in which funds from the budgets of the EU and individual countries, development banks, private (domestic and foreign) investors as well as citizens would participate, the latter purchasing government guaranteed bonds. On which research and consulting projects can we expect support from EU funds? Probably in accordance with the programs of the competent EU institutions:

- harmonization of legislation in the AC region with the *acquis communautaire*
- AC as a single trade area (EU model)
- projects arising from EU programs and EU financial perspective for the period 2021-2027, from "green agenda" (green mobility, green energy, circular economy, support for digitization and the like.
- education (new advanced knowledge and new methods of education, cooperation of educational institutions...)

At the same time, J. Pergar supports some of the projects from other areas for which we can obtain funding for the:

- schemes of supporting the return of young people in the region
- supporting the placement of production from the global to the regional environment, shortening supply chains (near-shoring)
- making the Adriatic region as "the green region" (sustainable, ensuring subsistence, tourism connected...)

In view of encouraging a return of young personnel in the region M. B. Adrijanič stresses that young people are already for decades of mass emigration from the countries of the Western Balkans, where Slovenia is unfortunately not an exception. In 2019 alone, more than 6,500 Slovenes emigrated abroad. Among them are many highly educated staff who today create value added elsewhere. Demographic trends in other countries in the Adriatic region are even worse.

The reasons for the mass emigration of young people are mostly of an economic nature. There is a lack of promising jobs and affordable housing in the region, but at the same time our tax and other environment does not encourage entrepreneurship. Structural reforms are needed to raise the



region's competitiveness, increase investment and thus bring many new opportunities for young people.

In addition to long-term measures to increase competitiveness, measures that directly encourage the return of staff to the domestic environment are also important. Such measures are known even in large and successful countries such as France, the Netherlands, Italy and Austria. Most often, these are tax benefits enjoyed by those who return to their homeland and their employers. Measures that encourage the construction of staff housing, simplify administrative procedures and open state universities to top domestic experts from abroad are common.

The Adriatic Council could make recommendations in the field of both structural measures to increase competitiveness and measures to encourage young people to return to the region. These recommendations would be based on the best foreign practices and guidelines of reputable international organizations such as the OECD. They would then be presented to governments in the region and the general public through a brainstorming conference and at seminars with key decision makers.

Ad 11. Digitalization of the economy, public administration and education

E. Sternad and D. Stojan, who has been working for decades in the field of digitalization of the economy, service activities and the processes of education and research, summarizes his discussion with the fundamental idea that digitalization is the fuel for the "campfire". The Corona crisis has fundamentally changed the way of work we practiced before the pandemic, work itself, collaboration and distance education is a new reality with all its advantages and disadvantages. We need to look at which areas Slovenia has the greatest potential for an important contribution to the development of the region (this is not **all 9 SRIP** areas) and for which areas we have the right people in the JS program / steering group.

It is essential to acquire the projects, through which it will be to finance the AC's operating costs. It makes sense to rely primarily on the priorities of the new EU crisis mechanism (Next Generation EU and Recovery and Resilience Fund) and new Multiyear Financial Perspectives (Green deal, Digitalisation, Health Union, Security...). It is important to support the proposal on young people, especially returning from abroad or participating in projects in the home environment. They point out that we need to create a hybrid environment for ongoing activities in various verticals. E.Sternad and D.Stojan have already completed some successful projects, which they have recently implemented with the support of the MiTeam digital environment.

In the area of digitalisation (as a new approach) propose the following as preferred areas of functioning AC, namely:

- analysis of the situation, which SLO projects from the new program of strategic projects can be a lever for regional action/cooperation and scale-up, transfer to the Adriatic region
- analysis of the opportunities that are hiding in the energy sector
- in conjunction with innovative solutions for efficient energy use and the Company 5.0 should be given to the potential that it brings Slovene-Japan cooperation (the idea is favored by the president of the National Council of Slovenia A. Kovšca, which provides an opportunity for collaboration with other Upper Houses in the region)
- With Slovenia in three EU macro-regions in EUAIR presiding vertical and manage the environment, which should be sought synergy effects



- In creating a secure digital communication, collaborative, counseling, mentoring and educational environment, added value can be important both because of effective work and the need for an inclusive approach.
- for Smart & Circular transition there is establishment of Slovenia as center in cooperation with the EIT Climate KIC, emerging center has a region ambition. In this area we are EU and world-recognized (Janez Potočnik, as co-chair of the IRP, Ladeja Košir leads Coordination Group ECESP, which is a joint project of the EU Commission and the EESC), Slovenia was chosen as an example of successful practices at webinar "Making circularity work for a just transition to climate neutrality" <https://www.pscp.tv/w/1zqjVeoXDgnGB>
- the foundation of the transition to a post-corona economy is the financial sector, including knowledge of the "market" of EU grant and soft loan funds, considering the competencies and influence of AC experts from this sector can be major advantage
- the success and speed of the transition will depend on the awareness, knowledge and skills of the citizens of the region. In doing so, we can bet a lot on global leadership in OER, such as the 'Open Education for a Better World' event in the MiTeam environment in collaboration with JSI and UNG. The highlight of the 4-day on-line events accounted for the Open Education for SDG7 with unprecedented participation of speakers/gurus from around the world, which is via the registration available on the following link - <https://oe4bw.miteam.si/asset/bXPcR3oQmvmRgA3JY>, about the event there was an article published is a total L is N article on <https://www.energetika.net/eu/novice/envision/towards-an-energy-transition-with-active-consumers-and-open>
- Slovenia prepares adult education project, which connects the two priorities of the EU (labor market in post Corona economy and digital competences, including the digitalization of education), the project is suitable for 'scale- up' in the region, more at <https://www.facebook.com/102109006581226/videos/307010133991586> on digital education and AI support, Slovenia acquired the first UNESCO AI research innovation center: IRCAI). Given the not the best forecast for the autumn and the lack of medical staff, the ESS initiatives also include the implementation of rapid hybrid training for additional training waiting for work.
- in the digital environment we can develop for the example arbitration at distance, it would be interesting to verify the usefulness of functioning Digital Business Collaboration Environment for Slovenia-Netherlands-Luxembourg supporting the ambitions of the Adriatic Council
- for the inclusion of influential persons from other countries in the region: in autumn 2018, carried out a virtual part of the NSF (<https://www.nsf.gov/>) - Serbia and West Balkans Science Data Workshop, which was largely financed by the NSF, the main organizers they are influential in Serbia as well as in the region, the EU and the USA. If activities of AC would go into the direction of RDI, E. Sternad and D.Stojan suggests that it is by invite to participate
- in Slovenia there is a lot of knowledge and excellent solutions for the control and management of entry into public institutions and other public spaces with the overall management via these digital twins, which will, for the duration of the epidemic, a prerequisite for successful control of it and just passed the financial the EU framework is the largest for this area.

They made the proposal on how to establish digital environment with support of donors that needs solutions to digitalize their operations. This helps the judgement of the Court of Justice of the EU 16.7. 2020, which abolished the EU-US shield and consequently the use of American based or U.S. owned communication - educational solutions (MS Teams, Cisco Webex, Zoom, Skype...) from the point of view of personal data leakage across the Atlantic, is contrary to EU law. It would be sensible to build the costs of establishing and supporting the operation of the digital environment into one of the first projects to be launched with AC.



R. Burazer is highlighted positivity of open discussions on mission, vision and operation of AC, which have been exposed to the risks and potential obstacles, ideas and critical view of the previous operation, which should be the starting point for improvements. Experience, social network and initiatives are important for the future operation of AC. The success and implementation of projects in accordance with the mission and vision of AC are highly dependent on the contribution of individuals.

He agrees that the vision of "camping fire" is very important. The key seems to be full transparency of the operation of the Adriatic Council in all areas. It is important to involve young people as well. He himself participated in non-profit associations as a former member of the supervisory board of the management consultants association and as a former president of the ISACA association in Slovenia (Information Systems Audit and Control Association). He notes that realization of outputs in particular was always a challenge. And he points out the fact that AC is not the only player to compete for a "first league appearance" where global consulting houses, specialized interest groups, freelance consultants directly engaged by the World Bank and similar institutions are already routinely operating.

How to obtain projects - applying for tenders is important when we place ourselves on the market, where projects are obtained on the basis of criteria . Therefore, it can be expected that the JS in obtaining the mandate to carry out projects succeed one if we:

- are better professionals
- have more relevant experience
- are more efficient and therefore more affordable
- and have knowledge of the structure of the operation and contacts to obtain resources from "donors" to make the previous three indents less important.

For acquiring projects - our own design of ideas and unique projects, it is important that we are able to build an exciting mission, vision, values, strategic goals, projects, products and measurable added value for them, where we approach the start-up company. If we manage to do this well, then various stakeholders at home and abroad, as well as stakeholders in individual areas, will want to invest in it . R. Burazer further suggests that AC:

1. Focus on low-hanging apples
 - a. We identify the sources of funding with the highest probability of obtaining the first project
 - i. Record and manage the "sales pipeline" opportunities, status, who, what, when,..
2. Conduct a strategic coordination workshop of the whole Adriatic Council on here defined:
 - a. Mission, vision, strategic orientations, values and the way of management and operation

Ad 12. Promoting circular economy policies

L. Godina Košir presented some starting points for Slovenia's activities in the Adriatic region in the field of promoting circular economy policies by linking content and activities - climate crisis, corona crisis, sustainable development and the circular economy.

The main idea is, that to create international network of stakeholders focused on the Western Balkans and the EU with a view to crisis solutions that countries are adopting to cope COVID-19, take into account the principle of sustainability, circularity, sustainable development goals (SDG's) and



thus the medium and long term enable a quality life in a new reality for all. The national and regional framework of cooperation is becoming crucial in the new situation - the neighbors are the first with whom we can (co) operate! An example to follow is <https://www.ukcop26.org/>

The goal is to position sLOVEnia as a focal point in the region, which has the knowledge, experience, vision and action plan for the development of a sustainable society and economy based on the principles of the circular economy - the starting point for the EU Council Presidency in 2021.

The principles of operation are interdepartmental, systemic, strategic, interdisciplinary, inclusive - connecting the principles of "bottom up" and "top down". With fewer resources (financial, human and material) we want to achieve greater positive effects. It is imperative in blocking digitization.

So far, we have already established in Slovenia in the field of circular economy:

- Interdepartmental group for the transition to a green economy in the PV cabinet
- Slovenia's membership in the CE100 program of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation
- Signpost for the transition to the circular economy of Slovenia (2017)
- Interdepartmental group at the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (led by Tanja Bolte)
- SRIP for the circular economy
- Initiative for the establishment of the Circular Economy Junction (MOP)
- Circular Change Conference - internationally renowned event, held 4x, 5th implementation planned for 2020 together with BSF (included MESP, MFA, MGRT)
- Presidency of the European Platform for the Circular Economy in Brussels - ECESP (2019/20 for the second time in a row Ladeja Godina Košir elected Chair)
- Climate KIC - preparation for the demo project (Circular Change also participated in the consultations)
- Circular Change active role: ECESP, Circular Hotspots, Circular Economy Club, Circle Economy, World Economic Forum - PACE, Club of Rome...

Current contents in the field of circular economy:

1. In the light of the Green Deal and 11 March adopted [the Action plan for a circular economy](#) at EU level, we have a "base scenario", which allows the functioning of the economy at a much more rational use of resources. In the context of the European Platform EC ENP, which is in Brussels chaired by Godina Košir, we have posted comments on the Action Plan - considered would connect with what reception Slovenia (and which will be accepted other countries of the Adriatic region) .

Link: <https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/sites/default/files/coordinatio%20group-ceap-joint-statement.pdf>

2. When the Signpost for the Transition to the Circular Economy of Slovenia was being prepared, consultations were held in all regions and they got a good insight into what is happening on the ground, where the potentials are. Relying on one's own strengths and existing healthy cores is more important than ever. _

Link:

<https://www.circularchange.com/news/slovenija-se-s-kazipotom-prehoda-v-krozno-gospodarstvo-pridruzuje-drzavam-ki-krozno-gospodarstvo-uvrstajo-med-nacionalne-strateske-prioritete?rq=ka%C5%BEipot>



3. For the Bled Strategic Forum which was organized on 31 August and 1 September, a concept was prepared in partnership – the 5th Circular Change Conference. Almost “prophetically”, the visual image was foretold by the Corona, and the concept is what actually awaits us now - a change of mindset and the implementation of this in everyday decision-making and practice. The event would be - in physical or virtual form - an opportunity to present Slovenia and the path of transformation "after Corona" and the international strengthening of alliances. The MESP is a key content partner.

Link: <https://circularchange-conference.com/ink>:

4. In Circular Change in Slovenia are strong in cooperation within the Western Balkans – there is a conclusion the signpost for Serbia, they started with Montenegro, waiting for them in Western Macedonia . The region wants to strengthen its ties with Slovenia, and at the same time Circular Change is a link with the teams . In ultiple on GAD part of the connection: _

Link: <https://www.circularchange.com/news-2>

5. Interdepartmental cooperation and integration of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up principles invoked it in various international contexts over the past five years. L. Godina Košir 's believes that the competence "orchestration" can help such as access to all the international partners, government representatives and EU institutions.



Ad III) Integration and creating conditions for integration in the field of Free Society, Social Responsibility, Equal Opportunities, Science, Culture and the Arts

Integration in the area of a free society, media and other freedoms and strengthening social responsibility and equal opportunities by linking art and cultural exchange by bringing together partners in these areas is complementary to the integration in the economic sphere as a foundation of a society. But there is also a reverse link that only in a free society with the free media the society can provide the same economic and other societal rules, which is a fundamental problem in the (current) time of populism, which AC cannot avoid.

It is important to strengthen the social responsibility of entrepreneurs and other social stakeholders and to maintain equal opportunities. The first strengthens the internal cohesiveness of society, the second is relevant mainly due to the violation of the rights of women and young people and, consequently, the need to empower women and girls. In this area, Adriatic Council could find connection and cooperation with related institutions, such as Femmes Sans Frontiers (see more at www.fsfglobe.com) and with other such non-governmental and governmental institutions, for example relevant ministries, equal opportunities directorates, etc.

The common cultural traditions of nations in the Adriatic region and the achieved level of art are important integrative factors, similar to other regions of nations and states. Therefore, it makes sense to connect in the field of art and cultural exchange, and to connect the best creators and performers. All with the aim to strengthen internal cohesion and to ensure cultural and artistic intermingling in the Adriatic region and the consequent integration with other global artistic - cultural centers.

In this regard, individual interviews were conducted with potential stakeholders in this field, who see the possibility of connecting e.g. with W Swiss museum (Basel, Canton of Zug...) who are looking for links to the regions of AC. Some interviews with American museums was undertaken by the co-founder of the AC – D. Novakovic. In the following period, it is good to define the institutions and the program in this area.

As with the program areas under Ad II), the preparation of more detailed concepts by future , potential collaborators was undertaken as explained below.

Consequently, in this segment we define the following program areas:

- 1. Free Society and freedom of media - xxx with colleagues from the regions**
- 2. Social responsibility and equal opportunities - Jerca Legan Cvikl with colleagues from FSF and staff from countries in the region**
- 3. Synergies in the field of culture and art - Stojan Pelko & Tevž Logar with colleagues from the countries of the region**
- 4. Science and research - xxx with colleagues from the countries of the region**

Ad 1. Free Society and Freedom of media

In the field of free society and freedom of the media, talks on potential stakeholders from Slovenia with colleagues from the countries of the region are still ongoing.



Ad 2. Social responsibility and equal opportunities

J. Legan Cvikel, founder and president of the international network of members of the Femmes Sans Frontières Foundation based in Slovenia, presented their proposal for complementary cooperation between the FSF and JS. Women who operate under the auspices of the FSF, with the fact within the Adriatic region with the participation of the Adriatic Council prepared to cover the scope of corporate social responsibility and equal opportunities.

At the first meeting, many concrete and encouraging topics were raised about the relevance of the Adriatic Council (hereinafter AC) and its renewed potential. They also have to know to take individual considerations of objective constraints, threats or potential obstacles and brakes for smooth functioning of AC, starting from previous years. The FSF believes that the rich network of experts who will be with their experience, expertise and track record to contribute and to each program, the first and best guarantor for performance of the AC. In the future, it is necessary to set up a consistent and exact strategy, hone the methodologies of its implementation and set up a drive team that will persistently and carefully maintain the "campfire".

In doing so, the key elements collected from concrete content contributions should be taken into account: region, social pillars, diversity and variety, horizontal and vertical, cultural and generational, resources, legal aspects, implementation and objectives, stability, integration, mentoring, inclusion, investment, competitiveness, education, social responsibility and equal opportunities and so on.

The complementary ways in which FSF - Women Without Borders members would be involved in the work of JS are as follows:

- a base with more than 300 members and over 10 other NGOs

The FSF Foundation already has over 300 members (a new one joins every day), experts in various fields who can together cover or support all spheres of society: law, economy, science, culture and art, media, sports, religion, politics... They are involved in individual projects according to specific needs and the vision of cooperation. It is important to emphasize that the Foundation includes women without borders and across borders, so they also include representatives of other nations, including from the region covered by the Adriatic Council. At the same time, there is potential for integrating new colleagues in this area as needed depending on the content of the project. The FSF is a signatory to numerous initiatives to promote equal opportunities and forges partnerships with other NGOs, locally and globally (FAM, ZM Women's Section, ALL, WEF, IWCL FORCE, Diversity Charter, Kutsaca, Masozera...).

- set of resources, programs and activities to empower women and girls in the wider region

The Femmes Sans Frontières Foundation was established with the aim of empowering and fully involving women, promoting more intensive education, achieving their economic independence and general social independence, and the ultimate goal of greater equality for women in all areas of social and private life at home and abroad. Within the Foundation with development and strategic programs and methodologies tailored to the social environment, working closely with national, regional and international women's organizations and associations that promote equal opportunities.

Within the region and complementary to the Adriatic Council could thus cover the whole area of social responsibility and equal opportunities, and helped create projects in the region, who need



new knowledge, models and experience for the empowerment of women and girls (WEF Balkans, STOP! violence, etc.). This region is a significantly more patriarchal society, where Slovenia can be an important mentor in creating wider social changes. The FSF covers the following areas of activity: education and public campaigns, event organization and publishing, scientific research and legal frameworks.

When this is J. Legan Cvikel emphasizes that in the identification of specific projects and for the dissemination of Slovenia in the wider region of AC it is necessarily to involve all stakeholders in individual countries, both individual experts to participate in projects such as the creation of bi-directional and continuous rotation 'down-top' and 'top-down', from civil society, past the profession to the authorities and vice versa.

Ad 3. Synergies in the field of culture and art

There were two conversations about this. The first in a special meeting with T. Logar, connoisseur of culture and art from the regions, second at a joint meeting on 7.7.2020 with S. Pelko.

Initially there was an idea that under the EU presidency by Slovenia in the second half of 2021, it would be proposed to form "traveling exhibitions of art from the Adriatic region". After the exhibition on the outskirts of the base of informal ministerial meetings at the Brdo Conference Center, this selection of works of art representing the culture of the wider Adriatic region (organized by T. Logar and colleagues from the countries of the regions) could then travel to places of other EU presidencies.

S. Pelko in his thoughts before the elaboration of concrete opportunities to participate in areas of culture and art introductory represents some personal views of how the world of the Adriatic see (yet) from the outside. It first highlights some threats and dangers, namely:

- Problems of former leaders: because this is a specific region in which changes of power do not always take place classically democratically, many "exes" do not have the option of returning, but land in court or even in prison. Therefore, the Adriatic world should not be too dependent on "has been".
- Instrumentalization by local authorities: as some of the region's political leaders have virtually no opposition, while others rule in a highly authoritarian manner, the Adriatic Council must be careful not to close its doors to the most engaged segments of civil society in concluding local alliances. In the field of culture, for example, this would mean the loss of the most propulsive part of society.
- Duplication of existing initiatives: not only the European Commission (the DG NEAR) with the enlargement process and the macro-regional strategies (specifically: the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian region, EUSAIR), but at least the Berlin process and the Brdo-Brijuni operate on identical field with substantial tangible levers of power and influence. Therefore, it is important to be distinctly niche and realistic in ambition.
- Real power of starting position at home: it is not the same how we would be accepted in the region, if we have the status of domestic opposition circle or the status of official support as one of the levers of (Slovenian) foreign policy. This debate is necessary and cannot be resolved by simply swearing on the "bipartisanship" attitude.
- Geostrategic interests in the Adriatic: the question shall be asked how Italy and Croatia will view the efforts of an objectively smaller part of the Adriatic basin. S. Pelko cheers for the active participation of representatives of both countries.

Consequently, as a AS, we have several options, namely to be:



- Pool of experts. If we are to pool our expertise for third markets, we need a strong secretariat that will detect opportunities, pack projects - and pick up *overhead* .
- Think tank. As a rule, they are not neutral, but they are always in the function of something and in someone's interest. If we have the leverage to make the Adriatic Council a pro-European think-tank with strategic sources of funding to expand specific knowledge and topics in the region (rule of law, youth employment, free society ...), it is worth considering. But then the profile and especially the Adriatic output of the world is different: studies, research *papers*, in particular a coordinated media appearances under one brand (editorial reviews, appearances on television, blogs, also promo public events). In this case, we should first form our own *agenda* as our strategy.
- Shadow government. This stance is a deliberate provocation on this dimension of (internal) politics, as it is in visible contradiction with the *bipartisan* attitude. The structure of "departmental" divisions of areas and the history of many of us at this table force us to (internally) talk about it as well.
- Seed-capital-rating-scouting agency. S. Pelko with this derivate wants to tell, what he saw in his work in the region (Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, Albania, Northern Macedonia), how would you - especially in the cultural field - given the relatively small inputs to achieve big results. At the same time he was often asked by colleagues from the West for an "insider's" assessment of the relevance and credibility of individual actors (in the cultural, but also in the wider economic and political field). Therefore, he believes that the Adriatic Council, with a combination of knowledge of the field and access to systemic sources of funding, could play the role of such an expert, scout and at the same time "angel investor" who would recognize and positively promote initiatives in selected areas: culture, media, policy making, entrepreneurial initiatives ...

The latter is related to the necessary reduction of the "vision" of the Adriatic Council from ensuring "peace and security" to the *core business of* "economic integration and participation of young people". If the former is to be taken care of by (military) missions , then the latter means that we need to think about investments, scholarships and project authorizations.

S.Pelko points out that nowhere, even in this region, does he see art and culture as an ornament or a peacemaker, but as a field of top artistic achievements and as a field of creative industries. Therefore it assesses the (greatest) opportunities of the Adriatic region in the field of fine arts, film and television co-productions and the music industry.

At the word Adriatic Council, S.Pelko thinks of:

- world-renowned Albanian contemporary artists who conquered the world through Italy
- filming TV series that build on locations, experienced local teams, and good stories
- re-actualization of traditional musical genres in contemporary authorial performances.

However, we must always keep in mind that serious creative world does not function (anymore) in such a way of interstate agreements or commemorative ceremonies, but the modern cultural diplomacy try for agents, curators, producers and institutions, especially artists and artists to ease their cooperation - because only in this way can really high-quality surpluses be created. Therefore, in this area as well, the Adriatic Council can be a promoter of new standards of cultural policy and cultural diplomacy.

Ad 4. Science and research

In the field of science and research, talks on potential carriers from Slovenia with colleagues from the countries of the region are still ongoing.



Ad IV) Joining forces of researchers and technical advisors via Adriatic Council bids for twinning and technical assistance projects in fundamental areas II. and III.

In order to obtain long term financing for the above proposed projects and financing general costs of the AC it is proposed that we jointly compete for projects, technical assistance and twinning programs. AC has not yet taken advantage of such opportunities, though there are quite a few of them and opportunities shall increase with politically accelerated process of mutual cooperation of the countries in the Adriatic region (see Ad I) and even more with the accelerated enlargement accession process of other Adriatic countries into the European Union. Even if for the latter mainly large countries, such as France, want to deepen the content of the EU through a strengthened fiscal union, banking and capital union, health union etc. the enlargement process can be expected to continue. It is a response to the economic crisis caused by Covid-19 through strengthening respect for the rule of law and also through strengthened security and defense links - see the far-reaching offer of France, who is after Great Britain leaving the only nuclear power among EU countries. We hope that enlargement will include the convoy with all countries from the Adriatic region.

Unfortunately, the difficult negotiations concluded in July 2020 at the European Council on MFF 2021-27 and the EU's Next Generation program (including grants and loans of up to € 750 billion) do not provide a realistic basis for actual enlargement in the forthcoming MFF. Therefore, with new energy, at the bilateral level, it is necessary to continue working on internal integration and resolving open issues, and in this way to achieve readiness and maintain the affiliation of the Adriatic region to join Euro-Atlantic alliances.

There is a major and unique opportunity for the economy of the transfer of certain industries from the Far East closer or into to the Adriatic region. Nevertheless, further tenders are expected from the rest of the old and in the new MFF. Mainly this would be DG NEAR programs, namely IPA I, II, and III and activities of EU missions of European External Action Service in individual countries, as well as bids in agreement with DG NEAR, SIGMA programs and Nordic Council and the Union as well as Benelux and bilateral donor organizations for calls of twinning programs for transfer of their best practices to the Adriatic region.

In terms of content means that the team of individuals by particular area under II and III shall join forces and jointly bid with other consultants from the region on programs of DG NEAR (including former DG Enlargement and is now called the DG NEAR - European neighborhood policy and enlargement negotiations), program of DG SRSS – Structural Reform Support Services and programs of individual EU agencies and bodies and their calls for technical assistance and twinning programs.

Among the first would be the Twinning program with BeNeLux Union or its General Secretariat, in which in the March of 2020 came Mr. Frans Weekers from the Netherlands, as one member of the three-member College. Mr. Weekers supports the idea of promoting effective internally driven integration of the AC region modeled on the Benelux region. Program could be financed either from the IPA (European PreAccession Assistance), of the EC SES (Structural Reform Support Services) program under bilateral programs of individual countries, or from Foundations, such as Friedrich Ebert Stiftung or Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, GIZ etc. or by means of political groups in the European Parliament. The program would cover all three of the above levels (see more on IPA II for 2014-20 at www.ec.europa.eu/neighborhood-enlargement/instruments/multi-beneficiary-programme_en).



We are planning the integration of the SIGMA program of the OECD (now led by Director, former Slovene minister Mr. Gregor Virant) into EU Enlargement, the Representation of the European Commission in Ljubljana and other EU programs, such as the Western Balkans Investments Framework (WBIF), the Norwegian fund, US AID, UNDP, RCC in Sarajevo, CEI in Trieste and Slovenian CMSR, CEP and CEF institutions. The results of the joint work will need to be promoted at the annual BSF in the form of Panel contributors, which can be a complementary activity of the Adriatic Council and the Bled Strategic Forum.

In principle, we would propose candidacy on open projects and calls for the advisory and research work in order to associate, integrate consultants and researchers of program areas. This would better represent the space of the region and transfer knowledge from the region to the region through research. There are many independent consultants in Slovenia who, as individuals (and less as teams, which would be ideal already or still transfer knowledge independently with the help of intermediary companies, while "overhead" go to those intermediary companies). Their alliances and envisaged joint appearances and actions would strengthen the "Project work and research advisory function of the Adriatic world". Holders of activities and collaborators in successful candidacy would be funded in the amount of their daily fee, JS/AC would lead procedures and thus obtain "overhead" costs.

Cooperation with similar institutions - the case of the Atlantic Council

As mentioned above, there are many institutions operating in the region. One of the important is Atlantic Council, see www.atlanticcouncil.org, which is the leading US non-governmental and supra-party organization in the field of international relations. Since its founding in 1961, it has combined the leading names of American and international diplomacy. The Atlantic Council is primarily committed to strengthening transatlantic cooperation in the political, economic and security fields.

Among other things Atlantic Council is very active in Central and Eastern Europe, where it managed to connect 12 countries lying between the Baltic, Black and Adriatic Seas as part of the "Three Seas Initiative". Its aim is to reduce the development gap in the region to Western Europe and the strengthening of cooperation within the region in the political and security fields. The initiative has enjoyed strong US support from the outset, and has been supported by the European Commission and Germany in recent years. Slovenia and Croatia are currently the only members of the Western Balkans Initiative.

The Atlantic Council is also very active in the Western Balkans, where it is working to strengthen democratic institutions, expand NATO and resolve disputes peacefully between countries. In recent years, it has made a decisive contribution to Montenegro's accession to NATO and to resolving the long-running dispute between present-day Northern Macedonia and Greece. It plays an important role in strengthening the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo.

Objectives and values of the Atlantic and Adriatic Councils therefore overlap to a considerable extent when it comes to the Western Balkans. At the same time, the set activities of the Adriatic Council sensibly complement the previous efforts of the Atlantic Council, which have focused mainly on political and security issues. The Adriatic Council wants to connect the region in many other areas, such as the economy, culture and infrastructure.

Cooperation between the Atlantic and Adriatic Councils is therefore sensible and necessary, as only a comprehensive and broad approach to connecting the region can enable long-term development and peace. Possible areas of cooperation include consultations through the exchange of views and



experiences, joint regional events and initiatives in the field of networking and development of young people, digitalization and attracting foreign investment.

Concluding thoughts, funding, draft AC's decision and next steps

The first step towards the creation of the Adriatic Council Program was the meeting on 7 July 2020 of the proposed reinforced team of the Adriatic Council, the Institute for Cooperation in the Region in Ljubljana. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the strategic format and proposed substantive areas that as a team of professionals, experts in the wider Adriatic region to pool their experiences and strengths as well as to enhance the future operation of the Institute, which is the encouraging beginnings slowed down on.

At the meeting after introductory speeches by Co-president and Co-founder M.Voljč and Vice-President of the Council V.Dimovski we gained a great response to the preliminary version of the Work Program of the Adriatic Council and their views on different areas of activities (including the presentation of competences of individuals as the basis of association experience, knowledge and energies), which is included in this document.

With both co-founders there was also a discussion in how to ensure long-term funding sources for the work of the AC. Below we provide short synopsis of Funding activities given envisaged Expenditures and related Proceeds to be obtained

We envisaged EXPENDITURES that consist of:

- Fixed costs of AC currently in the range of 5,000 EUR per annum (accounting, premises etc.), assuming that all other work is of voluntary nature
- Variable costs of 10.000-15.000 EUR per International Conference (one to two per Annum)
- Variable costs of 3.000-5.000 per National Conference (three to five per Annum)

Given the above we are aiming to obtain some 30.000-40.000 EUR of PROCEEDS per Annum. For this we are suggesting the following activities:

- First, to establish Annual Membership of some 50 EUR for Members, individual Contributors to the work of AC
- Second, to establish Annual Membership of minimum 1.000 EUR for Corporate Members, corporate Contributors to the work of AC
- Participatory fees to the International Conference of some 300 EUR per Individual Members and some 1.000 EUR per Corporate Members, on their own costs
- Overhead fees from obtained Consultancy and Twinning program fees (see above) and
- Continued bilateral contribution support from Corporate Members as in the past.

We propose the following draft decision for the relevant body of the Adriatic Council:

»The Adriatic Council confirms the orientations given in the document Strengthening the work of the Adriatic Council as the Framework Work Program of the Adriatic Council, the Institute for Cooperation in the Region, for the period 2020-2025 and authorizes its Vice President Milan Martin



Cviki, in cooperation with co-founders, to continue talks with foreign partners on commissioning of AC's activities.

The Adriatic Council authorizes Executive Director to continue with the envisaged activities on Funding in close cooperation with other Members of the Council of AC"

Specifically, in the next few weeks and months we should further expand the circle of activities and area bearers and implementation of the various activities as follows:

1. To set up a contact with the Union of the Benelux, visit envisaged as pandemic provides (introductory conversation with F.Wekers have been undertaken, support was obtained, now a written request on the basis of the above decision is to be prepared).
2. To set up contact with Slovene Parliament Speaker Igor Zorčič regarding the participation of parliamentarians in conjunction with the program under Ad I) above (meeting organized and support was obtained to National Assembly by the deputies 'PARLIAMENT of Adriatic region ") .
3. To set up a contact with the Chamber of Commerce - Sonja Šmuc and SBC – Goran Novkovič (completed and confirmed the willingness of principle) and the Managers' Association regarding the participation in activities under Ad II) above.
4. To set up a contact with the Permanent Representative of EC in Ljubljana Zoran Stančič in order to verify of cooperation and potential funding sources.
5. To make up contacts with the CMSR-CICD from Slovenia, CEP, CEF and further on forming teams from Ministry of Economy and Technological Development and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the State Secretary in the PM Cabinet Bojan Pograjc, responsible on Slovene side for The 3 Seas Initiative.
8. To set up a contact with the SIGMA program and WBIF Candidacy teams and projects.
9. To reestablish contacts with previous partner company that carrier integration in the region, such as United Group, Comtrade, Mercator/Fortenova, NLB, Nektar / Fructal, Kostic Group, Petrol (first interview was made with CEO of 26.5.) on the intended expansion of AC'S activities and simultaneous connecting with the while the EBRD, EIB and national development banks.
10. The work program of the Adriatic Council, the organizational structure and the role of existing employees and new employees in a supplemented organizational form are formally upgraded.
11. Consequently, in cooperation with the AC's Directorate at individual countries we shall establish or verify:
 - Reestablishment of cooperation with Mladen Ivanić and Zlatko Lagumdžijo from BIH in order to develop activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina; with institutions and individuals from Serbia due to the integration of the Republic of Slovenia in activities; from Northern Macedonia on the integration of NM; with individuals and institutions from Montenegro due to the integration of Montenegro; from Croatia due to integration of Republic of Croatia; from Kosovo for the integration of Kosovo; from Albania for the integration of Republic of Albania in the activities of Adriatic Council.



- Invitation to establish cooperation with individuals and institutions from Greece because of the integration of RG activities; with institutions from Hungary due to the integration of RM in the activities ; with institutions from Romania due to the integration of R&D in the activities ; with institutions from the Republic of Bulgaria due to the integration of RB in the activity and with institutions from the Republic of Italy due to the integration of RI in the AC's activity.

About all future meetings is the need for informed and well prepared records.

Written by Milan Martin Cvikl (s)

Ljubljana, September 2020

