Basic information

2014/2214(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region **Subject** 4.70.05 Regional cooperation, cross-border cooperation	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
REGI Regional Development	JAKOVČIĆ Ivan (ALDE)	22/09/2014
	Shadow rapporteur BOGOVIČ Franc (PPE) GIUFFRIDA Michela (S&D) TOMAŠIĆ Ruža (ECR) PAPADIMOULIS Dimitrios (GUE/NGL) ŠKRLEC Davor (Verts/ALE) D'AMATO Rosa (EFDD)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	ŠUICA Dubravka (PPE)	04/11/2014
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	AFFRONTE Marco (EFDD)	21/11/2014
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
TRAN Transport and Tourism	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PECH Fisheries	NICOLAI Norica (ALDE)	16/12/2014

European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner
	Regional and Urban Policy	CREȚU Corina

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
17/06/2014	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2014)0357	Summary
17/12/2014	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/09/2015	Vote in committee		
01/10/2015	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0279/2015	Summary
27/10/2015	Debate in Parliament		
28/10/2015	Decision by Parliament	T8-0383/2015	Summary
28/10/2015	Results of vote in Parliament		
28/10/2015	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2014/2214(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/8/02161

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE557.188	29/05/2015	
Committee opinion	PECH	PE552.090	23/06/2015	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE560.789	08/07/2015	
Committee opinion	AFET	PE557.114	16/07/2015	
Committee opinion	ENVI	PE557.240	03/08/2015	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0279/2015	01/10/2015	Summary

Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0383/2015	28/10/2015	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission document (COM)	COM(2014)0357	17/06/2014	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2016)67	15/03/2016	

EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region

2014/2214(INI) - 17/06/2014 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to propose a European Strategy for the Adriatic region and Ionian sea.

BACKGROUND: home to more than 70 million people, the Adriatic region plays a key role in strengthening geographical continuity in Europe. It contains a total of 8 countries, these being Italy, Greece, Slovenia, Croatia, Albania, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro, but remains open to other regional partners.

The European Council of December 2012 requested the Commission to present an EU

Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region **(EUSAIR**) by the end of 2014. The general objective of the Strategy is to promote sustainable economic and social prosperity in the Region through growth and jobs creation, and by improving its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity, while preserving the environment and ensuring healthy and balanced marine and coastal ecosystems. This will be achieved through cooperation between countries with much shared history and geography. By reinforcing implementation of existing EU policies in the Region, the Strategy brings a clear EU added value, while offering a golden opportunity for all participating countries to align their policies with the EU-2020 overall strategy. It will also contribute to bringing Western Balkan countries closer to the EU by offering them opportunities for working closely with Member States, to address common challenges and opportunities specific to the Region.

CONTENT: this Communication sets outs the needs and potential for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the Adriatic and Ionian Region. It provides a framework for a coherent macroregional strategy and Action Plan, to address those challenges and opportunities, through cooperation between the participating countries.

Challenges: the Adriatic-Ionian Region is facing a set of common challenges. Historically, a substantial part has been affected by difficult political and economic circumstances as well as conflict. However, Slovenia's and Croatia's accession, and the EU perspective of other countries, provide an opportunity to reinforce links and to overcome the legacy of the past. Major challenges are:

- **socio-economic disparities**: both in terms of GDP per head and unemployment rates, there are stark contrasts between countries. While some regions enjoy a GDP per head of 20% above the EU average and 4% unemployment rate, others have a GDP per head which is 70% below this average, and unemployment rate of 30%;
- **transport:** the Region has significant infrastructure deficits, notably between long-established EU Member States and the other countries, resulting in poor accessibility;
- **energy**: interconnection of electricity grids remains inadequate, preventing the development of an integrated energy market, limiting capacity and hindering profitable exploitation of renewable energy sources;
- **environment:** increased human use of the marine and coastal space threatens ecosystems. Unsustainable tourism activities put pressure on water, land and biodiversity. Shallowness and its semi-enclosed nature make the Adriatic Sea vulnerable to pollution ;
- **natural and man-made hazards and risks entailed by climate change**: in addition to major seismic activity, the Region is exposed and vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change ;
- **administrative and institutional issues**: capacities at national, regional or local level must be reinforced to ensure that structures are fit for working with cross-border counterparts, as well as for cross-policy coordination.

Response to challenges through the Strategy: in the face of these common problems, the Commission sets out a rolling Action Plan, accompanying the Strategy and expanding the maritime dimension to include the hinterland, structured around four interdependent pillars of strategic relevance :

- **Blue Growth** ;
- **connecting the Region** (transport and energy networks) ;
- **environmental quality** ;

- **sustainable tourism**.

The Plan also has two cross-cutting aspects:

- **capacity-building**, including communication, for efficient implementation and for raising public awareness and support;
- **research and innovation** to boost high-skilled employment, growth and competitiveness. Cooperation within transnational networks can bring ideas to markets, and help develop new products and services.

Furthermore, **climate change mitigation and adaptation** as well as **disaster risk management** are horizontal principles for all four pillars.

-Blue Growth: the objective of this pillar, coordinated by Greece and Montenegro, is to drive innovative maritime and marine growth in the Region by promoting sustainable economic development and jobs and business opportunities in the Blue economy, including fisheries and aquaculture.

-Connecting the region: coordinated by Italy and Serbia, the objective of this pillar is to improve transport and energy connectivity in the Region and with the rest of Europe and develop infrastructure networks and regulatory frameworks. Coordinated monitoring of maritime traffic and multi-modal transport will increase competitiveness.

-Environmental quality: coordinated by Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, this pillar entails addressing environmental quality, contributing to good environmental status for marine and coastal ecosystems, reducing pollution of the sea, limiting, mitigating and compensating soil sealing, reducing air pollution and halting loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems.

-Sustainable tourism: the objective of this pillar, coordinated by Croatia and Albania, is to develop the full potential of the Region in terms of innovative, sustainable, responsible quality tourism. Diversification of tourism products and services, along with tackling seasonality, will boost business and create jobs. World-wide marketing of an Adriatic-Ionian "brand" of tourism products and services will increase demand.

A series of initiatives are set out in the Communication for each of these areas in the Strategy.

Governance: in order to ensure the success of the Strategy, it is proposed to strengthen coordination between participating countries, as well as between different ministries and decision-making levels within each country, and ensuring as high-level political dialogue.

Funding: the Strategy is implemented by mobilising and aligning existing EU and national funding of relevance to the four pillars and topics. In particular, the European Structural and Investment Fund and the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for 2014-2020 provide significant resources and a wide range of tools and technical options.

Other funds and instruments relevant to the pillars are available, notably Horizon 2020 for all pillars, the Connecting Europe Facility for Pillar 2, the LIFE programme for Pillar 3, as well as for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and, for Pillar 4, the COSME programme for SMEs. Other means are available, notably from the Western Balkan Investment Framework, the European Investment Bank and other International Financial Institutions.

EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region

2014/2214(INI) - 28/10/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 560 votes to 60 with 39 abstentions, a resolution on an EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region (EUSAIR).

Members welcomed the Commission communication concerning the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region and the accompanying action plan. This strategy had been created to add value to interventions, whether by the EU, national or regional authorities or private sectors, in a way that significantly strengthened the functioning of the macro-region.

Parliament highlighted the strategy's prospects for candidate and potential candidate countries in the region and underlined the importance of the strategy being based on the **principles of integration, coordination, cooperation and partnership,** whilst reiterating the importance of the "three NOs" principle of no new legislation, no new institutions, no new funding. It welcomed the European Parliament's representation in the governing bodies of the EUSAIR.

The resolution encouraged all national, regional and local stakeholders to take full ownership of the implementation of the projects covered by this macro-regional strategy. It stressed the need for:

- a **place-based approach** as regards the cooperation activities;
- the inclusion of the local and regional authorities in the political managing bodies and in the operational, technical and implementing bodies of the strategy;
- a **transparent** process for adoption, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy, as well as of openness and inclusiveness towards civil society and all relevant stakeholders.

Pointing out that there were no specific funds assigned just for the implementation of macro-regional strategies, Members called on the countries in the region to bundle funds (ESI Funds, IPA, EFSI) as well as contributions from national sources under the EIB as a **financial and investment platform** for supporting the financing of projects contributing to the fulfilment of the goals of the strategy.

Parliament made a series of recommendations which focused on the following:

(1) Blue growth: the region's unique geographical position and specific coastline structure, together with its rich marine biodiversity, hold **immense potential for the creation of 'blue' jobs**, **blue technologies, fisheries and aquaculture**, and better maritime and marine governance and services.

Members advocated, *inter alia*:

- the creation of new jobs and economic development, and especially jobs for women and **young people** in coastal and island countries;
- a policy to coordinate and harmonise the strategy's goals, as well as common projects, in line with the **values, principles and objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy**;
- promoting the various sectors of blue growth in their **training programmes**;
- clustering and **cooperation between public and private enterprises, universities, research institutes** and other relevant stakeholders in the marine and maritime sectors;
- stronger cooperation in **marine and maritime research** among researchers, and among Member States and regions involved in the EUSAIR strategy,
- the creation of **a joint quality label** for high-quality seafood products from the region in order to increase their competitiveness;
- the protection and **preservation of fish stocks** and marine ecosystems, to be a paramount objective of the strategy;
- support for **shipbuilding,** including the leisure boat sector, focusing on its modernisation and specialisation in order to create jobs
- strong **support for manufacturing areas, twinning and cooperation** between areas in different parts of the macro-region;
- the involvement of fisheries and fishery workers in projects such as those relating to cultural and heritage tourism.

(2) Connecting the region: better transport and energy connections among the participating countries as well as between them and their other neighbours are compelling needs. Parliament also stressed the importance of:

- establishing **sustainable transport** links which reduce journey times, transport and logistic costs and externalities as well as major strategic works related to the interchange between sea and land;
- underlining the importance of connecting maritime transport routes and ports with other parts of Europe; Parliament called on the participating countries to focus their efforts on implementing projects that are covered by the current TEN-T network and other interventions for its proposed extension to South-Eastern Europe/the Eastern Adriatic coast;
- optimizing the capacity of the existing infrastructure network, improving their maritime, rail and air transport infrastructure, to develop motorways of the sea in the macro-region,
- developing a **high-speed railway infrastructure** that will interconnect the macro-region;
- implementing major projects to develop intermodal links on the islands;
- developing capable of reducing the carbon footprint, increasing energy efficiency and guaranteeing the energy security of the macro-region and **energy infrastructure** beyond.
- ensure joint planning and investment in energy infrastructure for both the production and transport of electricity and gas in the macro-region.

(3) Environmental quality: recalling that the Adriatic Sea is home to nearly half (49%) of all recorded Mediterranean marine species, Members called for joint efforts in taking all possible measures, such as the use of clean fuels for maritime transport and logistics, in order to preserve the biodiversity of the marine environment.

Parliament pointed out the need to **tackle responsibly historical and trans-border pollution** and to clean up the sites affected by the industrial contamination of soil, water and air, and, where applicable, by pollution resulting from military conflicts. It called for the establishment of a **regional centre for disaster preparedness** together with a joint contingency plan for oil spills and large-scale pollution events, in order to create an early warning system to prevent natural disasters and those caused by industrial, transport and other activities.

(4) Sustainable and competitive tourism: Parliament underlined the crucial importance of tourism for the European economy and the need to develop new approaches to help offset seasonality. It urged more support for the financing of tourism projects from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). It recommended:

- the urgent improvement of **cross-border road connections** in order to enhance the competitiveness of tourism;
- the promotion of **sustainable and more balanced tourist flows** in various locations;
- encouraging Member States to promote **sustainable mobility** solutions in the tourism sector, thus improving the quality of tourist services and enhancing its range;

the development of a **diversified tourism offer** including thematic tourist parks and routes, and cultural, rural, health, medical, nautical, eno-gastronomic, conference and sport tourism, including cycling, golf, diving, hiking, skiing, mountaineering and outdoor sports, in order to promote tourism throughout the year.

EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region

2014/2214(INI) - 01/10/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Regional Development adopted the report by Ivan JAKOVČIĆ (ADLE, HR) on an EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region.

The report welcomed the Commission communication concerning the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region and the accompanying action plan. It underlined the importance of the strategy being based on the **principles of integration, coordination, cooperation and partnership**, whilst reiterating the importance of the "three NOs" principle of no new legislation, no new institutions, no new funding.

The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) is part of the EU regional policy. It is a tool for promoting economic and social cohesion, with the principal objectives of reducing disparities between regions, promoting real convergence and encouraging growth and employment.

Members encouraged all national, regional and local stakeholders to take full ownership of the implementation of the projects covered by this macro-regional strategy. They stressed the need for: (i) a **place-based approach** as regards the cooperation activities; (ii) the inclusion of the local and regional authorities in the political managing bodies and in the operational, technical and implementing bodies of the strategy; (iii) a **transparent** process for adoption, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy, as well as of openness and inclusiveness towards civil society and all relevant stakeholders.

The report made a series of recommendations which focused on the following:

(1) Blue growth: the report stressed that the region's unique geographical position and specific coastline structure, together with its rich marine biodiversity, hold **immense potential for the creation of 'blue' jobs** and for innovative and sustainable economic development and growth, including **blue technologies, fisheries and aquaculture**, and better maritime and marine governance and services.

Members advocated, *inter alia*:

- the creation of new jobs and economic development, and especially jobs for women and **young people** in coastal and island countries;
- a policy to coordinate and harmonise the strategy's goals, as well as common projects, in line with the **values, principles and objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy**;
- promoting the various sectors of blue growth in their **training programmes;**
- clustering and **cooperation between public and private enterprises, universities, research institutes** and other relevant stakeholders in the marine and maritime sectors;
- the creation of a **joint quality label** for high-quality seafood products from the region in order to increase their competitiveness;
- the protection and **preservation of fish stocks and marine ecosystems**, to be a paramount objective of the strategy;
- support for **shipbuilding**, including the leisure boat sector;
- the involvement of fisheries and fishery workers in projects such as those relating to cultural and heritage tourism.

(2) Connecting the region: the report noted that better transport and energy connections among the participating countries as well as between them and their other neighbours. It also stressed the importance of:

- establishing **sustainable transport links** which reduce journey times, transport and logistic costs and externalities as well as major strategic works related to the interchange between sea and land;
- underlining the importance of connecting maritime transport routes and ports with other parts of Europe;
- identifying priority infrastructure projects of regional and European added value;
- developing a **high-speed railway infrastructure** that will interconnect the macro-region;
- implementating major projects to develop intermodal links on the islands;
- developing **energy infrastructure** capable of reducing the carbon footprint, increasing energy efficiency and guaranteeing the energy security of the macro-region and beyond.

(3) Environmental quality: recalling that the Adriatic Sea is home to nearly half (49%) of all recorded Mediterranean marine species, Members called for joint efforts in taking all possible measures, such as the use of clean fuels for maritime transport and logistics, in order to preserve the biodiversity of the marine environment.

The report pointed out the need to **tackle responsibly historical and trans-border pollution** and to clean up the sites affected by the industrial contamination of soil, water and air, and, where applicable, by pollution resulting from military conflicts. It called for the establishment of a **regional centre for disaster preparedness** together with a joint contingency plan for oil spills and large-scale pollution events, in order to create an early warning system to prevent natural disasters and those caused by industrial, transport and other activities.

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- the development of a **diversified tourism offer** including thematic tourist parks and routes, and cultural, rural, health, medical, nautical, eno-gastronomic, conference and sport tourism, including cycling, golf, diving, hiking, skiing, mountaineering and outdoor sports, in order to promote tourism throughout the year.