



Brussels, 14/03/2024

To the kind attention of the Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms,  
Mrs. Elisa FERREIRA

For due reference of the Director of the DG REGIO,  
Mr. Slawomir TOKARSKI

**OBJECT: ENDORSEMENT LETTER TO THE INITIATIVE “YOUNG PEOPLE FOR EUSAIR” (YOUSAIR).**

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament representing the Countries participating in the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), acknowledge the crucial role and contribution of the civil society of the Adriatic and Ionian Region, which represents a fundamental pillar of cooperation, expertise, and innovation, harnessing the collective strengths of diverse stakeholders to address emerging challenges and seize opportunities for just and sustainable growth and development and facilitating the EU enlargement to Western Balkan countries.

In this regard, we consider that the Pilot Project “Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce, and Cities Initiative”, even known as “AI-NURECC” (2016-2019) and the Preparatory Action “AI-NURECC Plus” (2020-2023), endorsed during the previous parliamentary mandates by the informal group of MEPs "Friends of EUSAIR" and implemented through DG REGIO, have been remarkably successful initiatives able to enhance regional integration and socio-economic cohesion, by the active participation of more than 150 stakeholders of the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

We are aware that AI-NURECC and AI-NURECC Plus partners, namely the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce (Forum AIC), the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities (FAIC), the Association of Universities of the Adriatic-Ionian area (UniAdrion), the Adriatic and Ionian Euroregion (AIE) and the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), submitted a new initiative of experimental nature to DG REGIO focused on youth, titled “Young People for EUSAIR” (YOUSAIR), designed to test the feasibility of a structural action bringing a new generation of EUSAIR supporters on the journey to implementing the forthcoming, revised EUSAIR Action Plan..

The current revision of the EUSAIR has confirmed the absolute necessity to give an active role to young people in its governance and functioning and more widely to look to engage them, especially the generation Z, in an innovative manner, to exist in their everyday digital landscape. Further to these, YOUSAIR initiative responds to specific and concrete needs of young people of Adriatic and Ionian Region, through actions concerning

alignment of altruism and self-interest, international mobility, sport, integration, social inclusion, green agenda, and digitalisation, in order to encourage community sustainable development, cohesion and solidarity, fostering multi-actor networking and collaboration among representatives of the private and public sectors and civil society, strengthening coordination among EU, national, regional, and local policies and enhancing EUSAIR to work with a range of influencers, both peer-led and well established.

Considering also the need to accompany the set-up of the EUSAIR's youth council, we particularly appreciate the YOUSAIR initiative's other goal to build up a structured dialogue among young people, the Adriatic Ionian Youth Network (AIYN), the EUSAIR governance and the European Commission, involving youngsters in the decision-making process, bringing their vision of the future and trusting their capability to inspire stakeholders, policymakers and public authorities, reinforcing cohesion policy and convergence in the Adriatic-Ionian region.

We nonetheless understand that the agreement on the mid-term review of the EU Budget that was agreed some days ago by the European Council will most likely result in substantial cuts to Commission technical assistance between 2024 and 2027, and might leave your services little room for manoeuvre. We want therefore to propose the YOUSAIR initiative as a flagship pilot project for the Adriatic-Ionian region, to inject energy and vitality into EUSAIR delivery and overall EUSAIR recognition. The objective would be not only to give young people an opportunity to better know each other at a significant scale but to explore EUSAIR's cultural diversity, and also better connect them with European identity and raise awareness of the Union's core values. The pilot project would also support the EUSAIR governance to adopt a playful style, tone and attitude, to inject a sense of youthfulness into EUSAIR's overall communications. .

For the above mentioned reasons, Commissioner Ferreira, we support the YOUSAIR initiative and we are confident that you and your services could approve and accompany this proposal in the framework of a more effective implementation of the EUSAIR Strategy, in the belief that just enhancing our best experiences, based on an open governance of the political processes with a bottom-up approach, we can develop the full potential of our regions and create lasting positive change for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Best Regards,

Daniela RONDINELLI, IT - S&D

Franc BOGOVIČ, SI - EPP

Biljana BORZAN, HR - S&D

Milan BRGLEZ, SI - S&D

Rosa D'AMATO, IT - GREENS  
Paolo DE CASTRO, IT - S&D  
Salvatore DE MEO, IT - EPP  
Herbert DORFMANN, IT - EPP  
Valter FLEGO, EL - RENEW  
Elisabetta GUALMINI, IT - S&D  
Romana JERKOVIĆ, HR - S&D  
Irena JOVEVA, SI - RENEW  
Petros KOKKALIS, EL - GREENS  
Stelios KOULOGLOU, EL - GUE  
Predrag Fred MATIĆ, HR - S&D  
Matjaž NEMEC, SI - S&D  
Aldo PATRICIELLO, IT - ID  
Tonino PICULA, HR - S&D  
Nicola PROCACCINI, IT - ECR  
Maria SPYRAKI, EL - EPP  
Željana ZOVKO, HR - EPP