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REPORT D

Proposal for a cluster governance model in the Adriatic Ionian macroregion. (Activity 3.4)

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SUMMARY

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D.1 Rationale

The analysis carried out in the previous parts of the recognition, has allowed to identify references in terms of strategic frame for the fields of research and innovation in maritime technologies sector, wide dimension of technologies converging on vessel's reduction of environmental impact objectives, and evolution of organized coordination processes (clusterization) among public-private actors in the knowledge sector. The analysis makes clear the existence of an aggregating action developing on progressing levels - regional, national, European -, with converging purposes, specialized for each level.

This process should be considered as an evolution - but not in direct connection - with the experience of the industrial districts. They are related to the progressive introduction of non-linear business models - necessary to compete at global level - that forced the syncretization of research and innovation productive processes (still evolving towards the open innovation archetype) and aligned the production chain (concurrent manufacturing) that led to the development of cooperating productive systems (from supply chain to co-makership). This scenario is generating complex entities - non necessarily identifiable in territorial and/or technological terms - with increasing frequency classified with the term of 'industrial ecosystems', 'production ecosystems' or 'innovation ecosystems', in these cases the terms adopted are focusing on the meaning of ecosystem intended as main driver.

It is important to underline that the market's globalization process - and the related need of being present on foreign markets - is strictly connected to the necessity of creating a wide critical mass for setting the basis for a positive research result's flow. The latter is directed towards a synergic and smart growth of the ecosystem in itself, hindering the competition among actors characterized by a dimension that is not comparable to other European players (capable to implement also 'unfair' action).

In this framework, if we consider maritime technologies as reference product and we limit the field of the action just to vessels, the final result is the integration of a huge number of technologies concentrating intellectual outputs of an enormous competence system. The latter is almost impossible to be reached in a single region or country, and is difficult even to manage it at European level. This process is directly related to the need of implementing - through a multi-level representative democracy exercise - a progressive cluster system (regional, national, sea basin related and European) that could grow in a homogenous manner while enhancing and interconnecting the territorial fragmentation (for some aspects positive) based and characterized by competitive and similar competence centers that could be not replied in other parts of the world (Korea, China). This approach is synthetized by the so called 'cluster policy' promoted by the European Commission.

Finally, the main motivation arising is linked to the need of re-connecting the research excellences and the high technology industrial field present in the area (knowledge chain) to wider convergence processes of maritime sector (production chain covering overall product's lifecycle). This target starts with the reinforcement of both chains on macro-regional level in order to benefit from a territorial animation processes finalized to the competitive growth.

D.2 Towards an Adriatic-Ionian maritime technologies cluster

The realization of a cluster is a slow process characterized by converging aims among actors of an ecosystem, that is achieving consciousness regarding benefits related to aggregation actions (bottom up), and, policy makers identifying, in an aggregate system, a reference actor that could play as an intermediate to simplify relations in terms of industrial and research policies.

In this sense, the Adriatic Ionian macro regional area already recognize some positive bottom up signals: the collaboration among Croatian cluster MarC and Maritime Technology Cluster FVG, the action of the last mentioned to support the establishment of a maritime cluster in Montenegro, and the measures to support the inter-cluster animation realized by the European Project Blue NET, a project relying on a wide partnership positively reviewed by the DG Mare in the evaluation phase. Blue NET project involves the above mentioned MarC and Maritime Technology Cluster FVG, Marine Cluster Bulgaria, Cypriot cluster Mar.in.E.M. and a wide partnership including the Union of Romanian Inland Ports UPIR and the Albanese Region of Shkodra.

In a strategy perspective, the opportunity to develop maritime technologies clusters is identified as a priority in the EUSAIR strategy and underlines the primary importance of this instrument for the diffusion of rising technology and SMEs internationalization. This process represents a good basis to start up a convergence process including policy makers of the territory, even if until now no progresses could be recognized in this sense. Furthermore, it is important this development to be run together with joint synergies with BLUEMED initiative on the Mediterranean basin. The latter is supported by DG Research through a coordinated support action, finalized to create a bottom up connection, and a high-level forums of Member States representative's at the Commission. Finally, some signals leading to a possible revision of the European strategy for the Mediterranean should be considered, it could bring from one side to a Western Mediterranean macro region and, on the other side, would find a more rational approach in a unitary management of eastern basins and the Black Sea in relation to the importance of the research-enterprise's system involved.

An evaluation of the overall situation briefly described above, suggest to focus the attention on operational actions of territory's local coordination, animation of research and enterprise encounters, building up relational bridges among local excellences, facilitate human resources circulation. This means implementing main cluster functions with the aim of achieving a non-formalized entity - the Adriatic Ionian Maritime Technology Cluster - able to develop strong relations with Aegean and Black Sea actors and later, face a formalization process, that in this terms becomes expected and not anticipated.

From this perspective, the priority action is to create, where not established, and/or strengthen, where already existing, the reference territory aggregations (clusters). The latter are capable to be the reference elements (short run networks) efficient and effective, essential to develop long rung aggregation networks on a basin level, furthermore capable to reach and be part of wider networks like on a Mediterranean (CSA BLUEMED) and European (Waterborne^{TP}) level.

D.3 Governance model proposals for a Adriatic-Ionian maritime technologies cluster

A detailed cluster analysis have been developed in the previous sections A, B, C, of this study focusing on different category levels - regional, national, European - connected to coordination process in the maritime sector, highlighting the peculiarity in terms of dimension, governance and structure.

In relation to the perspective of realizing a cluster in the Adriatic-Ionian basin, two concrete experience are the main references in this sense, the Waterborne European Technology Platform and the National Technology Cluster *Trasporti Italia 2020*. Despite, other regional/national clusters mapped are intended as players capable to develop a wider range of actions and services if compared to a mission feasible for a sea basin cluster.

Above-mentioned clusters, are two entities with similar functions in terms of representation for the policy makers, sharing of territory strategies, research and enterprises gathering communities, cross fertilization animation and promotion of projects development. It's important to underline, that contrarily to the usual regional innovation cluster's procedures, the activities are carried out externally without being directly involved in them.

From the organizational side, the European platform is a formalized entity without legal dimension, operating through the secretariat, related to the European Ships and Maritime Equipment Association - Sea Europe, and through targeted coordinated and supported actions financed by the European Commission sustaining specific networking actions. Instead, the Italian National Technology Cluster is a recognized association with legal dimension that is able to operate through free charge in kind contribution of regional clusters and on small annual subsidies from associates. In a long term perspective it is expected to cover regional cluster's commitment with regional funds. The different approach applied to these clusters is reconnected to the international dimension of the European platform, even if this aspect could be overcome, tailored solutions are present in Belgium regulations and applied in other European bodies operating even with associated actors (European employer's organizations and research entities). On the other side, the Italian National Cluster's associates are legal entities (industries, research entities, universities, territorial clusters operating as consortiums).

In terms of governance, both entities rely on a steering committee with a primary representation of industrial side alongside with administration (national in the European platform and regional in the Italian CTN) and scientific representatives.

In both cases, the core action for the involvement of the associates are the thematic working groups. In this field, all the associates interested in developing a specific topic participate to define common positions, debate on technologies and develop potential projects. If considering the convergence of all transport systems together with the Intelligent Transport Systems in the national Italian cluster, we can find a tailored Scientific Committee balancing request from different sectors.

Considered these reference points together with the current lack of territorial entities with adequate legal dimension in the Adriatic-Ionian macro region, it could be assumed that the most preferred solution is the Waterborne^{TP} organizational structure solution, which is based on voluntary involvement and simple to set-up. In relation to that, the choice of the organisation capable to assume the operational secretariat role remains open among the more

structured regional clusters of the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region, a choice that will be done in the final phase of the constitutive path.

On this matter, considered the need to develop, on the knowledge and production chains sides, the cultural basis for accessing the benefits of being part of the net, it is foreseen that first three years will be dedicated to the aggregate solicitation actions at the local level. The latter will be the necessary basis to create informal connections between the actors (as promoted, for example by Blue NET Project), in order to achieve an adequate demand level for the transition to the formalization of the cluster.