

Final Declaration

By the political representatives of the partners of the INTERREG III B-Project

„MATRIOSCA-AAP“

Graz, 14th November 2007

1. In 2005, the Austrian Bundesländer Steiermark, Kärnten, Burgenland, the Italian Regions Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, the Slovenian Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy (GOSP), the Croatian Counties Istria and Koprivnica-Križevci, the Hungarian Counties Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas, Zala, Baranya, Somogy, Tolna as partners as well as the Serbian Autonomous Province Vojvodina and the Croatian County Varaždin as additional partners have decided to elaborate the foundations to establish a future trans-national cooperation area for an efficient co-operation on administrative, political and technical level within the common INTERREG III B-Project “MATRIOSCA-AAP” in order to:
 - achieve stable relations between political representatives of Adria-Alps-Pannonia territory as the basis for a peaceful neighbourhood in an European area which is marked by strong regional and cultural diversity;
 - strengthen prosperity and development through definition of common transnational spatial planning strategies.
 - intensify collaboration with the new EU-Member States Slovenia and Hungary and the Candidate Country Croatia and the Autonomous Province Vojvodina in order to enhance competitiveness in an enlarged Europe;
 - avoid duplication and overlaps in the planning;
 - ensure integrated and co-ordinated development in Adria-Alps-Pannonia territory through a transnational organisational structure;
 - address future EU means for territorial cooperation in a targeted and effective way for common proper projects and plans to the sustainable advantage of the participating regions.
2. The Adria-Alps-Pannonia territory has a long-standing common history and tradition in the co-operation of neighbouring peoples. The establishment of the Alps-Adriatic Working Community in 1978 was a Europe-wide unique and historically significant political step towards European integration in the light of the fact that regions and states from different political and social systems decided on co-operation. Meanwhile – 29 years after the establishment of the Alps-Adriatic Working Community – almost all member regions and member states are EU members or on their way to EU accession. As a visible indication, the border controls will end in a few weeks when the „Schengen area“ will enlarge including boundaries where this seemed to be unreachable two decades ago.

3. The European Union orientates its policies towards stronger territorial co-operation aiming at fostering the development of a common space in close territorial partnership of regions from different countries to the advantage of each region and its inhabitants. This applies for EU-cofinanced programmes or projects for territorial co-operation, especially within the scope of the structural funds according to Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006 and Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and respectively for projects and plans initiated by regional and local authorities with or without contribution by the EU.
4. In the light of this European development, the following emphases were placed within the MATRIOSCA-AAP project:
 - Political agreement on a joint strategy in key-areas of regional and socio-economic development in the Adria- Alps-Pannonia territory.
 - Elaboration of project proposals to be submitted in the period 2007-2013 within the scope of the objective European Territorial co-operation“.
 - Proposals for efficient and effective institutional solutions for a coordinated co-operation in this territory (e.g. the instrument EGTC – European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation according to the Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006).
5. The results of the MATRIOSCA-AAP project are the following:
 - a. The joint strategy, elaborated by means of a SWOT-Analysis, according to which common benefit for all regions can be achieved in particular by means of intensive planning and project co-operation in the four macro-themes
 - territorial development and polycentric systems
 - tangible and intangible infrastructures with prominent large-scale impact
 - excellence of knowledge networking
 - innovative small-business clustering
 - b. Project prearrangements for six strategic projects in the four macro-themes:
 - NATREG (Model for a sustainable regional development)
 - UrbanNet (Adria-Alpe-Pannonia Urban Network)
 - SUSEN (Sustainable energy development for regions)
 - INNOCLUSTER (Establishment of thematic centred innovation networks)
 - CNCB (Cluster- an network co-operation of innovative SMEs)
 - Bio.pan.alp.adria (Joint brand and marketing of regional organic products and ecotourism based on EU-quality standards)
 - c. A model statute for a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) according to the Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006 as institution for project development and supervision.

Based on these presented project outcome and for the benefit of a common European progression and the peoples living in this area as neighbours, the political representatives of the project partners of MATRIOSCA-AAP agree

1. The regional co-operation will be intensified in the whole area, including partners of MATRIOSCA and members of Alps-Adriatic Working Community. Thereby as objectives
 - added EU-projects shall be developed and implemented in the framework of a commonly developed strategy;
 - the whole area shall be positioned as prime example for cross-border and trans-national co-operation in order to attract Europe-wide interest with its cultural, geographic and socio-economic diversity;
 - common concerns of the participating regions towards institutions of the European Union in the interest and for the benefit of the public shall be commonly addressed.
2. In addition to the political agreement on joint development aims, a common efficient organisational structure is considered necessary in order to ensure project development, supervision and implementation. The model statute of an European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), elaborated within MATRIOSCA-AAP, shall provide the basis for such future possible common structure, to be agreed and then put into operations as soon as the legal framework in the involved states exist.
3. Furthermore, cross border, trans-national and interregional forms of cooperation shall proceed alongside in the MATRIOSCA AAP Space and implement projects at the respective levels, without any hierarchy amongst them. All regions are proposed to follow common strategies in their projects, as they result from such a multilevel approach.
4. The political representatives of the MATRIOSCA-AAP project partners express their decidedness to continue the process of regional cooperation in the Alps-Adriatic-Pannonia territory within an enlarged working group facilitated by the permanent secretarial support offered by the Slovene partner – Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional policy, in order to develop legal entities by the means of the new EU instrument EGTC .