

Improving the Academic and Investment Research Through Innovation Development Based on the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-region: The Case of Albania and Italy

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Abstract

The aim of the present paper is to explore the impact of the academic research and investment collaboration in the progress of sustainable development and innovation in Italy, as an industrial country, and Albania, as an aspiring European Member state, from the viewpoint of the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region' agreement. We conducted a meta-analytic research based on research, innovation and economic policies between different countries of the European Union and the Western Balkans, the methods of micro and macro social-economic growth applied, the criteria used and the qualitative increase of research and economic growth. As for its core aim of the Strategy of European Union, the significant benefit of the project enhance the construction of a unique template of growth between each country which will later reflect on the trends of a broader growth in the field of tourism, security, science and innovation. We observed a qualitative change of trends in Albanian and Italian socio-economic growth towards the scientific and innovation development. Finally, our data revealed that the higher the inter-economic exchange collaboration, might gain more strength to our countries regarding social, educational and researching development policies.

Keywords: scientific research, collaboration, innovation development, educational policy.

1. Introduction

Speaking about the macro-regional Adriatic and Ionian project certainly assumes a variety of primary sections that focus on the educational exchange and achievement. The Adriatic-Ionian macro-region consists of the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro and the Italian regions of Abruzzo, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Marche, Molise, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily. The process for the recognition of Adriatic-Ionian macro-region is generally understood as a functional

area with autonomous and innovative ways of promoting and implementation of territorial cooperation, at the interregional, transnational and institutional levels. The model is based on the previous partnerships inside the macro-region of Baltics and Danube countries. On 11 October 2011, with the initiative of the Regional Committees' meeting in Brussels for the "Territorial Cooperation in the Mediterranean line through the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region", were constituted this regional card of collaboration between parties and recognized in every land hall. We could recall here citation from the "Forum of the Adriatic and Ionic Cities" at Ancona: "...the engagement to develop in the appropriate locations, in the local, interregional and international, between social and productive parties, in the reality of associalization, through citizens, through various active networks in the area (Commerce Rooms, Universities, Adriatic Euro-regions and cultural and contextual links), all the suitable initiatives of the recognition of the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region at the European Union" (the 13th plenary session in the constitution of the macro-region articles 14-16, 2011, Ancona, Italy).

Thus, cities and communes established the foresight of the local communities so that the overall contribution would be able to engage the roots of many networks and links, citizens, associations and social forces which make their territories more feasible for the growth opportunities of wide range of people. That is why on the first meetings of the macro-region, there were a union of various professors, students, principals, head-mayors and local administrators from each country which created the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region for the field of education, scientific research and youth! Participants of the mentioned countries discussed of the strength of relation between the Government and one of the strategic-economic sectors for every unique area.

The Region of Emilia-Romagna, as the Managing Authority for the Inter-regulation Directives of Adrion Program 2014-2020, has announced that the second EU tender in support of the Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region (EUSAIR) will be published in February 2018, as the EUSAIR Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region. It will include the areas of inter-exchange, hospitality and social inclusion, juvenile mobility and facilities, continuing education at the fight against racism and xenophobia, cultural and religious pluralism, institutional twinning, etc.

So far, activities have focused mainly on the development of governance structures and rules, through extensive consultation among the main stakeholders, also in light of the participation of non-EU countries with significant socio-economic and administrative disparities. The chosen structure provides full access by third countries to the governance of the strategy, for example through the open rotating presidency to all participating States, while the administrative and technical support was guaranteed with a strategic project approved in May 2016 within the framework of the Program the Eusair Facility Point, Interreg Adrion 2014-2020.

The Interreg Adrion 2014-2020 Program intends to support the European strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region (Eusair), with reference to 4 thematic objectives:

- Innovative and intelligent region;
- Sustainable region;
- Connected region;
- Better governance for Eusair.

The available resources amount to a total of over 117.9 million euros, of which 40 million allocated in May 2017 for 35 projects and 10 million for the strategic Eusair Facility Point project.

The launch of the second Interreg Adrion call is scheduled for February 2018 on a budget of nearly 45 million euros to support initiatives on innovation, culture, tourism, the sustainable environment and transport networks.

2. The implementation of the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region in the field of educational and scientific research

The field of educational and scientific research is certainly one of the most delicate to be treated for every country and project. Thus, each state has its own policies and viewpoints in the implementation of Adriatic-Ionian card. On 2004 and later reviewed on 2012, it was founded the Adriatic-Ionian Network of Universities (UNIADRION), with 36 universities from the nine project countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. The UNIADRION is a network created to establish a permanent bridge between the universities and research centres of the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region and to strengthen inter-university cooperation and collaboration. It is of crucial significance in the project improving academic curricula with the updates and directions of the card from which we could build potentialities for a capable professionalism and skills, in coping with challenges of globalization, economic changes e the decentralization of the academic area and the richness of their autonomy.

In the actual prospect, the objectives which could process for a further prospect might be:

1. Contribution to the improvement of the quality and efficiency of the education system and training of citizens as shown in the European LLP – Lifelong Learning Program for the academic education;
2. Promotion of the equity, social cohesion and active participation of citizens and intercultural exchanges;
3. Providing equal opportunities to the youth;
4. Foster creativity, scientific research, innovation, including entrepreneurship at all levels of process of continuing education and training, in the same line with the local and international development strategies;
5. Realization of a unique, opened, integrative and dynamical system of education between every state of the macro-region.

The beginning of the project at the educational level was stipulated when the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Zagreb and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki made the first exchange of researchers in the field of medicine and informatics, on September 2012. In the mid-2012, the European Commission for Education and Training adapted many of the proposals of the macro-region for the increment of financial funds, constitution of internships exchange, the development of institutions in every Adriatic-Ionian country responsible for the implementation of the card.

Another important aim of the Educational Card is the harmonization of the learning inter-system through:

- dynamic confront of viewpoints between the various organizational patterns and structures of the educational system;
- an identification of the a unique definition of disciplines in the transversal mode including cultural and environmental education;
- arguments for the specific territorial evaluation within Adriatic-Ionian and the suitable economic development;
- implementation of the professional education for a renew pattern between school and entrepreneurship; supporting the creation and realization of innovative strategies and policies in the permanent learning cycle;
- monitoring and coordination qualification diplomas to a recognised educational

system as a EU;

- identification of new professional skills and competencies in the synchronization of the economical sustainable strategies;
- formalization of degrees and an European portfolio for every single strategy;
- supporting European programs of trainings, such as Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, etc.;
- Comenius towards students and juvenile orientation programmes; recognition and free access to academic mobility of extra communities countries;
- creation of the Engagement and Educational Card for the macro-region system of education within adherent countries.

3. The macro-region as an opportunity of juvenile education between EU member states and Albania: The case of Italy

Both our countries are opened to new prospective collaborations and opportunities for the academic growth and scientific research innovation. Different universities of Italy have allocated funds and projects for the sustainable development of various specters in Albania. As the University of Urbino in the Region of Marche, a 5 centuries university have provided unlimited generations of wisdom, science and professionals, 5 centuries of engagement and involvement for the prosperity of Education. Albanian universities are surely younger than the 500 years experienced but, with the foresight and eagerness of betterment and progress, for taking and giving, for learning and lecturing within.

We could gently recall that the milestone of our educational policies and similarity is a postulate Mandela gave to the overall humanity: “Education is the most powerful weapon which WE can use to change the world” (N. Mandela, 1993).

Working as a unique team brings things easier to everyone of us for the fulfillment of our educational prospective. Our mutual collaboration will consist in the improvement of the bilateral relationships our two countries have and on the distribution of education as a science for citizens. Since 2011, Italy recognized the Educational Card which included either European adherences as Albania. The educational reform and engagement in Albania has been attached as a significant academic source which will give voice to the new educational amendments that entered into force in the beginning of 2017, with a mid-term longevity.

The countries’ aims from this collaboration are the following:

1. to work together in the spirit of equality, transparency and scientific engagement regarding professional, academic and research increase;
2. to promote the mutual scientific activities and cultural exchange for the raise of human competencies such as didactical activities, lectures, seminars and workshops, academic symposiums and conferences and other common interests;
3. to encourage the applicability of higher standard researches, ethical issues and integrity in the field of scientific research;
4. academic exchange between lectures, professionals and/or students within academic profiles and periods;
5. to promote policies in behalf of the mutual collaboration and macro-region applicability;
6. to support and supervision of the PhD researchers, post-doctoral and fellows on the mutual institutions;

7. to cooperate in the academic writing field, publication in the research journal centres and enhancement of masters/doctoral level researchers;
8. to allocate financial funding projects in the fulfillment of research field;
9. to enhance of social and integrity organization towards global issues for research and prospects interests.

These objectives relates the institutional cooperation and collaboration in the line of the macro-region recommendations and our governmental policies and institutional strategies. Promoting innovative research and scientific progress let us build bridges and paint prospects. Realization of the Engagement Card and our academic agreement and cooperation, will contribute to the strengthen approaches of a unique system for the economic, political, cultural and institutional growth ring science to improve itself for the betterment of the citizens' lives.

4. Conclusions

At the end of this reflections we would like to emphasis some concluding remarks:

First, the development of mutual collaboration between Italy and Albania will certainly help in the substantial change and improvement in the field of scientific research, human relationships and citizens' education. It is of significant remark to remember that each of our institutions will contribute and engage in the fulfillment and realization of the Education Card and economic investment strategies.

Second, participating in the macro-region assesses the potentialities of our countries and institutions to the improvement of the educational policies as UNIADRION and other engagements of youth in the scientific process.

Third, the primary relationship of the academic science is to bring in innovation and qualitative research for the human contextual progress. Being within the macro-region will therefore help in the empowerment and increase of potentialities for the academic and citizenship raise.

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