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Port Cooperation in the  
Upper Adriatic case

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# La Cooperazione Portuale nel caso Alto Adriatico

## SINTESI INTRODUTTIVA

Per affrontare il tema della cooperazione portuale in area alto adriatica è necessario considerare innanzi tutto le peculiarità di questo spazio e le iniziative di cooperazione, di carattere generale, che vi si sono sviluppate nel corso degli ultimi decenni.

Si consideri allora l'eterogeneità e la frammentazione del contesto in analisi: mosaico di popoli ed eredità culturali diverse, che allo stesso tempo vivono una condivisione di memorie e valori, di un passato comune testimoniato dalla storia classica e romana e da quella di Venezia, grande protagonista nella regione, per secoli vero e proprio ponte verso l'Oriente<sup>1</sup>. Analizzando poi le vicende storiche che hanno visto quest'area come principale teatro di eventi bellici, dal primo conflitto mondiale, con il ruolo chiave dell'impero austriaco e del porto di Trieste, fino alla distruzione della seconda Grande Guerra e all'evento della *guerra fredda*, ci rendiamo conto di quanto l'Adriatico abbia unito e diviso, a seconda degli eventi cardine della storia. Proprio con la fine della *cortina di ferro* e a partire dal crollo del muro di Berlino nel 1989, si avrà, nei Paesi ex socialisti, una vera e propria trasformazione sociale ed economica, talvolta drammatica, che contribuì per alcuni versi alla rinascita di meccanismi di regionalismo, nonché al dilagare del *Washington Consensus*<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> La storia stessa dell'Adriatico non può prescindere da quello che fu il ruolo di Venezia nel corso della storia moderna, almeno fino alla capitolazione del 1798: vera regina del mare, o del Golfo, come esso veniva definito, quasi a ribadire il carattere "privato" del contesto Adriatico. Una concezione che si ritrova ben espressa nelle parole di Paolo Sarpi nel suo *Scritture sopra il dominio del Mare Adriatico*, che nel sec. XVI aveva definito quello Adriatico «un mare serrato et limitato [...] posseduto et custodito con fatica, sangue et spesa da tempo immemorabile da Venetia». Da FERRANTE E., *Prigionieri del mare stretto*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Il trionfo delle politiche neo-liberiste portate avanti in particolare dai governi del Regno Unito e USA quindi, come peraltro teorizzato da Francis Fukuyama nel suo *The end of History* (1989).

In effetti, la fine della *guerra fredda*, con il conseguente rinnovato dinamismo geo-economico e geopolitico di aree prima “ingessate” dalla logica bipolare, e l’accelerazione dei processi di globalizzazione, riportarono certamente a galla processi di regionalismo già esistenti in Europa da tempo<sup>3</sup>. Tuttavia, ciò che rende tali meccanismi di regionalismo peculiari e diversi dai precedenti, è il loro carattere *bottom-up*: non più iniziative decise dagli Stati e dall’alta politica, in un secondo momento imposte sugli attori locali, ma azioni volute proprio da questo secondo livello della politica globale e favorite dalle istituzioni. Risulta oramai chiaro come la fine della *guerra fredda* abbia portato ad un vuoto politico, finalmente riempito e poi plasmato dall’emergere di nuovi attori e soggetti dell’attuale contesto europeo, a partire dalle compagnie transnazionali fino alle ONG, in netto contrasto con la concezione tradizionale *westfaliana* dello stato come esclusiva unità coerente della comunità internazionale. In questo senso si nota oggi, nell’area alto adriatica, l’emergere di tali attori non statali e la contemporanea e conseguente attuazione di iniziative regionaliste, i.e. l’istituzione di *Euroregioni*, con le quali la cooperazione può davvero rappresentare uno strumento utile al fine di creare coesione e sviluppo tra aree depresse e marginali dell’attuale contesto comunitario.

Ma in quale accezione si considera qui la cooperazione? Si prenda ad esempio la definizione espressa dalla UNCTAD (*United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*), che vede la parola “cooperazione” come espressione generica per descrivere attività comuni portate avanti da almeno due parti, impegnate reciprocamente. Si noti inoltre come la relazione cooperativa consista in un *win-win deal*, ovvero in un rapporto nel quale debbano essere presenti vantaggi reciproci per tutte le parti coinvolte, il che ci porta alla mente gli assunti realisti (i.e. Kenneth Waltz) secondo i quali, in ogni accordo, il rischio è che l’interesse del singolo prevalga sul bene comune<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Già a partire dalla fine degli anni '40, con la costituzione dell’Alpe Adria, per esempio. Da <http://www.alpeadria.org/>

<sup>4</sup> Ci si riferisce qui alla celebre “parabola del cervo” di Rousseau, presa in prestito da K. Waltz.

Tornando ora al discorso sulla cooperazione nella realtà adriatica, si osserva l'esistenza di iniziative basate su strategie di integrazione logistica e di mercato (creazione di reti tra attori privati e non) così come azioni volte a rispondere a rischi percepiti come comuni dalle comunità coinvolte negli accordi. Si opera quindi una distinzione tra le politiche di integrazione volute da Bruxelles, da un lato, e quelle più spontanee da parte degli attori a livello locale: categorie che al giorno d'oggi non dovrebbero essere considerate come opposte, considerato il loro rapporto reciproco. Le iniziative locali, infatti, necessitano spesso del coordinamento comunitario, all'interno dei numerosi progetti "disegnati" a Bruxelles, così come le iniziative volute dall'UE abbisognano della collaborazione degli strati più vicini alle realtà locali.

Si citano così tre esempi di politiche istituzionali: i progetti INTERREG IIIA Italia Slovenia 2000-06 e l'IPA *Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation Programme* di marchio UE, e l'*Iniziativa Adriatico-Ionica*, proposta dallo Stato italiano. Sono iniziative progettate da organismi dell'alta politica per migliorare le condizioni di sviluppo delle aree considerate, attraverso specifiche azioni<sup>5</sup>. Infatti, è attraverso i progetti comunitari che si sono previsti strumenti per finanziare azioni di assistenza alla coesione socio-economica e al riequilibrio delle diseguaglianze di sviluppo in ambito regionale, per sostenere la cooperazione transnazionale ed interregionale, l'aggiustamento strutturale delle economie regionali e confinarie, la conversione di aree industriali in declino. Oggi si può affermare che tali finalità siano state perseguite in area adriatica, talvolta con successo, dai progetti INTERREG<sup>6</sup>, mentre allo stesso modo, l'IPA *Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation Programme* ha agevolato l'ingresso nell'UE dei Paesi candidati e potenzialmente candidabili, mentre l'*Iniziativa Adriatico-Ionica*, presentata nel 1999 dal Governo Italiano, ha discusso la creazione di una

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<sup>5</sup> Dal punto di vista legislativo, tali iniziative sono oggi disciplinate dal Regolamento del Consiglio Europeo n° 1083/2006, che regola il Fondo Europeo di Sviluppo Regionale (ERDF, *European Regional Development Fund*), il *Fondo Sociale* e il *Fondo di Coesione*, così come il regolamento 1080/2006 del Parlamento Europeo e del Consiglio concernenti tali materie.

<sup>6</sup> a partire dal PIC INTERREG II 1994-2000, passando dall'INTERREG IIIA 2000-06, fino all'INTERREG IIIA 2007-13.

macroregione adriatica, vedendo le regioni, in particolare quelle italiane, sempre più protagoniste dei processi di cooperazione in atto.

D'altro canto si citano alcuni esempi di iniziative cosiddette *bottom-up*, nate dalla volontà degli attori regionali e poi sostenute più o meno attivamente da Bruxelles: la *Carta di Ancona*, l'*Euroregione Adriatica* e il *Forum delle Camere di Commercio Adriatiche*. Tali casi concretizzano la necessità, espressa da istituzioni locali come comuni, sindaci, città, province, camere di commercio ed università, di creare reti per veicolare sviluppo, conoscenza e mobilità, non solo dal punto di vista commerciale, quanto da quello culturale e sociale. Finalità di sviluppo perlopiù assimilabili a quelle più specificamente comunitarie, il cui caposaldo sembra essere l'azione di squadra degli attori coinvolti.

Spostandoci finalmente al settore portuale, si nota come l'attuazione di iniziative di cooperazione possa risultare particolarmente utile al fine di migliorare la situazione del mare Adriatico, il quale vive ancora, specialmente nel segmento del trasporto containerizzato, una situazione di marginalità nei confronti dei grandi flussi di traffico. Se il recente successo del Mediterraneo come rotta *pendulum* Suez-Gibilterra per le grandi direttrici (con lo sviluppo del metodo *hub and spoke* negli anni '90) ha rilanciato l'importanza strategica e logistica del corridoio Mediterraneo nei traffici containerizzati intercontinentali, il corridoio adriatico è ancora per molti versi un *silent sea*. Una situazione dovuta alla concorrenza dei porti nord europei (i.e. *Northern Range*), così come ad altri elementi di debolezza propri dell'area, sebbene i porti si stiano riorganizzando per accogliere la domanda di navi sempre più grandi (fenomeno del *gigantismo*), far fronte ai mutamenti dell'era intermodale e alla scala spaziale di tipo continentale. La competizione mondiale porta così ad una sorta di selezione naturale dei porti in grado di competere proprio perché capaci di soddisfare tale richieste di mercato, anche disponendo di nuove infrastrutture, come i *distripark*.

Tuttavia, i porti adriatici hanno buone carte da giocare per attrarre traffici, a partire dal risparmio rappresentato dagli scali europei dal punto di vista degli operatori intercontinentali, specialmente asiatici. In questo ambito, quindi, la cooperazione può dare preziosi frutti nel medio e lungo periodo, nonostante la situazione attuale non ottimale del sistema portuale nord adriatico (o meglio, del *sistema dei porti* adriatici) ancora molto frammentato, come si notava fin dagli anni '60 in Italia. La necessità attuale sembra quindi quella di supportare un approccio sistemico al mondo portuale e di attuare strategie di *co-opetition*, ovvero favorendo un contesto nel quale un sistema di porti più o meno formalizzato vede i porti stessi competere seguendo le proprie strategie di mercato, pur in un'ottica di cooperazione con gli altri attori.

Una cooperazione portuale efficace, quindi, dovrebbe distinguersi dalle politiche attuate in precedenza in Italia, rivelatesi spesso fallimentari a causa della loro attitudine *top-down*, e del fatto di ignorare le esigenze dei vari operatori del campo portuale. Questa politica, invece, può consistere in una serie di azioni *bottom-up*, che vanno dalle semplici relazioni di vicinato con scambi di informazioni (fondamentali oggi più che mai), fino a processi di integrazione più formale, come lo scambio o acquisizione di quote di capitale sociale. Tuttavia, le iniziative cooperative oggi maggiormente diffuse sembrano quelle consistenti nella stesura di documenti di programmazione su temi di interesse collettivo, nonché nella creazione di associazioni per gestire tali questioni. Quest'ultima categoria vede due casi celebri: la *Baltic Ports Organization* e la *North Adriatic Ports Association*. Si tratta di associazioni di porti, la prima nata all'indomani del crollo del muro di Berlino in area baltica, la seconda di recente costituzione in area alto adriatica, le cui azioni sembrano promettenti. In particolare, per quanto riguarda il NAPA, l'obiettivo principale sembra essere l'attività promozionale comune per attrarre più navi possibili all'interno del *range* adriatico: una volta soddisfatta questa prima condizione, i porti singoli facenti parte dell'associazione (Ravenna, Venezia, Trieste, Koper e Rijeka) sono liberi di competere per aggiudicarsi le quote di mercato più appetibili. Una vera e propria dimostrazione di *co-opetition*, dove lo slogan *united we stand, divided*

*we fall* sembra incarnare il destino comune dei soggetti portuali dell'alto Adriatico. Dal punto di vista più concreto, comunque, lo sviluppo di servizi di *common feeder* e la conseguente presentazione dei porti NAPA come singolo *gateway* sul mercato mondiale e nella promozione a livello planetario sono alcune delle maggiori possibilità offerte dalla cooperazione in ambito NAPA, in un contesto geopolitico futuro che alcuni studi autorevoli considerano particolarmente attraente, nonostante negli ultimi tempi la crisi abbia investito anche il settore portuale.

Allo stesso tempo, però, è necessario non sovrastimare la recente enfasi sulla cooperazione come soluzione ad ogni problema: si ricordi che la realtà portuale attuale è spesso teatro di lotte tra città e porti per aggiudicarsi le rotte del trasporto comunitario (le reti TEN-T), e i finanziamenti UE, così come gli investimenti da parte di gruppi bancari ed industriali. Una competizione violenta per accaparrarsi nuove e più favorevoli quote di mercato, il tutto a dispetto dei buoni propositi cooperativi espressi a Bruxelles o in altre sedi associative. Ci sembra quindi equilibrato considerare la cooperazione in ambito portuale alto adriatico attraverso una prospettiva disincantata: se è possibile ed auspicabile cooperare per migliorare l'attuale marginalità dell'arco adriatico, è anche vero che molte azioni da parte di vari attori del mondo portuale hanno ben poco di cooperativo, e che la cooperazione adriatica vive ancora ad uno stadio embrionale.

Saranno i prossimi anni a dirci se e come tali strategie cooperative avranno offerto i loro frutti: per il momento è opportuno considerare tali processi in modo cauto, tenendo sempre a mente il principio secondo il quale nessun tipo di cooperazione volontaria può rivelarsi utile se non supportata da un coordinamento a livello più ampio. Un coordinamento che può essere dato oggi dal rinnovato ruolo degli stati, che non agiscono più all'interno di un'ottica di esclusiva ed unilaterale direzione, quanto invece entro un contesto di progettazione dei processi di regolazione ed imprenditorialità, finalmente in grado di favorire strategie provenienti dal basso, allocandole poi nel più adeguato quadro generale.

## 1.1 - The Adriatic Space between unity and fragmentation

In order to offer a general perspective concerning the issue of cooperation in the Upper Adriatic area it is necessary to describe the particular context analyzed and its different features.

First of all, we should observe the recent growth of cooperative processes in the Adriatic space, where different actors and components act in a completely new environment. As noted by Soriani and Antonellini (2008) «this is the result of the geo-economic and geopolitical changes that have affected the area since the early 1990s»<sup>7</sup>. We are here referring to the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and to the political and economic implications caused by this historical episode. In fact, such event embodied symbolic elements, and especially the end of a balance that the international system had created after the second world war, breaking up a long instability phase that had been opened after the end of the first World War<sup>8</sup>.

The end of an international balance existing between opposite blocks then, but also, in some scholars' point of view, the triumph of the neoliberal policies, the so-called *Washington Consensus*, supported by the US power. With reference to the end of a political era and to such 80s and 90s policies, the theory proposed by Francis Fukuyama in 1989, during Reagan's mandate, has been pretty successful and popular.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand, in Eric Hobsbawm's point of view, the fall of the Berlin wall represented the end of an era and the beginning of a new historical period of deep political crisis, instability, chaos and civil wars.<sup>10</sup> Alternatively, Francis Fukuyama saw in the end of the communist regime the triumph of capitalism and liberalism, affirming that «the liberal

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<sup>7</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11th International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> BIAGINI A., *I Balcani mediterranei dopo la caduta del muro di Berlino*, in *Letterature di Frontiera = Littératures Frontalières*, X (2000) 1, (pp. 69-81), p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> ARRIGHI G., BEVERLY SILVER J., *Caos e governo del mondo, come cambiano le egemonie e gli equilibri planetari*, Bruno Mondadori Economica, 2003, pp. 2-3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 1.

democracy [...] remains the unique coherent political aspiration in different regions and cultures of the world», thus hoping for the necessary and visionary creation of a new world order<sup>11</sup>.

Actually, the end of the Cold War soon led the regions of the Balkan peninsula and other former communist territories to the opening of their markets to the global trade, with the consequent introduction of new rules dictated by the international community in the economic, political and financial fields. The so-called *iron gate* had its final end in the Italian and Yugoslavian boundary, in the Upper Adriatic area, where the ideological struggle between the democratic Western European system and the soviet countries assumed particularly interesting features<sup>12</sup>.

It is in this peculiar context that today, as argued by Soriani and Antonellini (2008), do exist «new processes of mutual understanding currently underway that encompass the economic, financial, political, cultural and environmental spheres»<sup>13</sup>. As a matter of fact, the years following the end of the Cold War have witnessed, apart the particular case of the EU, a real growth of Regionalism, intended as a *cultural process*, linked to identities of the single regions<sup>14</sup>.

Regionalism cannot be surely regarded as a recent phenomenon, especially in the Adriatic area: as witnessed by the existence of cross-border partnerships during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (such as the *Alpe Adria* in the 40s, for instance)<sup>15</sup>, such processes have often been present in the history of European territories. Moreover, it has often been noted in literature that the same concept of *region* dates back to the roots of European identity, and it may represent many

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<sup>11</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> VANOLO A., *Geografia economica del sistema-mondo, Territori e reti nello scenario globale*, UTET, 2006, p. 247.

<sup>13</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11th International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p.7.

<sup>14</sup> CACIAGLI M., *Integrazione europea e identità regionali*, CIRE Italian Research Centre for European Studies, Working Paper Series, University of Florence, 2003, p. 8.

<sup>15</sup> *Alpe Adria* official website, <http://www.alpeadria.org>.

different meanings, one of them could be defined as «an imagined or depicted smaller territorial unit of a bigger whole, either within administratively defined borders [...] or in connection with emotional and nostalgic spatial categories»<sup>16</sup>. Indeed, we are dealing here with a concept that has been recurring in the last centuries, especially after the 1789, also set in relation with the ideas of Nation and Europe<sup>17</sup>.

However, it is since the beginning of the post-Cold War era, in the 90s, that Europe deeply changed its own spatial configuration, thus expanding towards East. And it is precisely through Regionalism and thanks to the renovated central role played by urban areas and centers, that the New Europe has been shaped. In other words, the European cities, that have always been regarded as important elements in our continental space, act today as protagonists, supported by the regionalist processes still currently underway<sup>18</sup>. In fact, it is possible to affirm that a new season for Regionalism started with the new geopolitical configuration, along the political changes occurred in the Eastern regions of the European continent. Indeed, as observed by Petri (2012), our continent really witnessed a sort of resurgence of the region, linked to the structural intervention of the European Union<sup>19</sup>. Structural changes, such as the establishment of the *Committee of the Regions* and an increased assignment of resources to regions within the framework of the *Structural and Cohesion Funds* have contributed to improve the role of regions in Europe, and to start considering them as a *third level of governance*, even though a real transfer of competences never took place effectively<sup>20</sup>. It's in today's post-Cold War context, featured by globalization and weakened states, that Regionalism can

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<sup>16</sup> PETRI R., *The Resurgence of the Region*, in BAUERKAMPER A., KAEUBLE H., *Gesellschaft in der europäischen Integration seit den 1950er Jahren*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2012, p. 160.

<sup>17</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 161. Petri investigates the relation between those concepts, especially taking into account the triumph of national discourses between 1789 and 1989.

<sup>18</sup> DELL'AGNESE E., SQUARCINA E., *Europa. Vecchi confini e nuove frontiere*, UTET, Torino, 2005.

<sup>19</sup> PETRI R., *The Resurgence of the Region*, in BAUERKAMPER A., KAEUBLE H., *Gesellschaft in der europäischen Integration seit den 1950er Jahren*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2012, p. 162.

<sup>20</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 162-163.

play a different and updated role, leading to a renovated geo-economic and geo-political dynamism.

Nevertheless, beyond the deep specificity of Regionalism, that will not be further analyzed here, what matters most in the context of cooperative policies discussed in this work, is the dichotomy between different models of Regionalism, based on the divergence in decision-making structures, i.e. *top-down* vs. *bottom-up* structures.

Taking into account such meaning of Regionalism, according to some scholars<sup>21</sup>, it may be possible to define the existence of an old and a new type of Regionalism, whose fundamental divide would be represented by the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. In fact, in this perspective, the New Regionalism, originated after the end of the soviet regime, would represent an “improved” Regionalism, in which cooperation processes are more spontaneous, with *bottom-up* approach and attitudes, not only relying on the power of governments, but strongly supported and created by the lower layers, such as regions and smaller territorial units or non-state actors<sup>22</sup>.

Compared to traditional (or *old*) Regionalism, such post-Cold War version involves alternative actors that interpret the will *from below*, contributing to the regional integration and to the future of the political and economic international system<sup>23</sup>. In this context, updated Regionalization processes have emerged leading to the creation and progressive reinforcement of sub-state institutions within today’s national states<sup>24</sup>. A phenomenon that, at the same time, could be defined as «the growth of societal integration within a region and [...] the often undirected processes of social and economic interaction», that produce interdependence and «may also constitute deepening perceptions of common

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<sup>21</sup> TSARDANIDIS C., *New Regionalism in South Eastern Europe: the case of South-Eastern European Cooperation Process (SEECF)*, Seed Center, South and East European Development Center, p.1.

<sup>22</sup> *Ivi*, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>24</sup> CACIAGLI M., *Integrazione europea e identità regionali*, CIRES Italian Research Centre for European Studies, Working Paper Series, University of Florence, 2003, p. 7.

interest and identity, including self-awareness as a region»<sup>25</sup>. In addition, we should remark that this version of Regionalism is strongly bound to competition mechanisms between territories, favored by the end of the Cold War and the beginning of globalization in the 80s-90s: to sum up, if Old Regionalism, which existed decades before the fall of the Berlin wall, has been weakened by the action of national states, it's in the post-Cold War context that Regionalism has been re-discovered, thanks to weakened states and more dynamic geo-economic and geo-political frameworks. An updated definition of Regionalism, then, that in the current phase of globalization may be legitimately regarded as New Regionalism.

Taken these concepts into account, it has been observed by Bufon and Minghi (2001) that the Upper Adriatic region has become «a real laboratory of studying contemporary geo-political transformations»<sup>26</sup>. In fact, we are dealing here with an area where «many institutions, mayors of important cities, governors of regions, and political leaders are acting as 'ambassadors' of new relationships between the northern Adriatic coastal regions»<sup>27</sup>.

The topic about different actors cooperating together in order to achieve goals, like the signature of regional agreements, will be further developed: nevertheless, we can note here that a similar idea is found at the basis of the *archipelago - globalization* theory proposed by Marco Deaglio in 2004<sup>28</sup>.

As noted by Vanolo (2006), according to the economist Deaglio, it is clear how trade and commercial integration processes take place in a faster way between geographically near countries or regions bound with particular historical and

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<sup>25</sup> BEST C., in BAYLIS J., SMITH S., OWENS P., *The globalization of world politics, an introduction to international relations*, 4e, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 436.

<sup>26</sup> BUFON M., MINGHI J., *The upper Adriatic borderland: from conflict to harmony*, in *GeoJournal* 52: 119-127, 2000, p. 119.

<sup>27</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11th International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p.7.

<sup>28</sup> VANOLO A., *Geografia economica del sistema-mondo, Territori e reti nello scenario globale*, UTET, 2006, p. 141.

cultural ties<sup>29</sup>. That implies the creation of *islands*, or regional aggregates, that tend in that way to develop their own rules and supranational institutions; the island itself constitutes, adjoining the other islands, an higher level, i.e. an archipelago, in which a set of institutions, rules and global trade flows gives unity and cohesion to the world economy<sup>30</sup>. Vanolo (2006) also notes that Deaglio takes into account the existence of an intermediate zone between the *island* (the local level, where the industrial districts and other local systems act) and the *archipelago*, that is to say, the global level: that intermediate level is often influenced by the national governments, although state power is going to be eroded by the trends in action<sup>31</sup>. Precisely, it is widely acknowledged that regionalism processes linked to globalization have, during the last decades, «challenged the traditional centrality of states in international relations»<sup>32</sup>: we will be talking about that afterwards.

However, in the Upper Adriatic case, the historical and cultural ties, beyond the proximity of the different territorial components of the region, are clearly the outcome of political events, wars, conquests and cultural contaminations during the centuries. We are dealing here with a territory in which many different cultures and development models coexisted from ancient time: from the liberal trade towns, melting pot for cultures and technologies like Venice, to the Balkans, incredibly varied mosaic of ethnic groups, where a really intense cultural exchange has been taking place between Slavs, Latins, Illiries, Magyars, Turks and Greeks<sup>33</sup>. Even the Southern heritage must not be forgotten, with its Greek and Mediterranean cities<sup>34</sup>: very different regions indeed, but all linked and touched by the same sea, and for this reason a field of possible connections between such diverse archetypes. For instance, if we

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>30</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 142.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>32</sup> BEST C., in BAYLIS J., SMITH S., OWENS P., *The globalization of world politics, an introduction to international relations*, 4e, Oxford University Press, 2008, p.436.

<sup>33</sup> ZANETTO G., *Lo spazio adriatico: una difficile sintesi*, in SORIANI S. (a cura di), *L'articolazione territoriale dello spazio costiero, Il caso dell'Alto Adriatico*, Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, 2003, pag. 214.

<sup>34</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 215.

closely look at the ethnic composition of the people living in the Balkan Peninsula, we see that the region envelops multiple ethnic groups and many religious beliefs. Ethnic groups such as: Greek, Albanians, Valakians, Armenians, Romanians, Slavs, Bulgarians, Jewish, Tzigans; confessions such as the Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Muslim, and Jewish<sup>35</sup>.

Indeed, although in a bit paradoxical way, it is possible to affirm that the Adriatic space is able to achieve cohesion and unity, even beyond its typical cultural and political fragmentation: as noted by Predrag Matvejevic, also according to the famous historian Fernand Braudel, the Adriatic is a Mediterranean Sea on a reduced scale, a concentrate of its many contradictions<sup>36</sup>. Such different shores, *where neither the sunsets look the same*<sup>37</sup> and *where there is not a single landscape, but uncountable landscapes*<sup>38</sup>. Nevertheless, they both take part to the same destiny and fate, represented by that water space constrained between the Italian peninsula and the Balkans. As also reported by De Rubertis (2008), according to Braudel and other contemporary scholars, particular features of the Mediterranean (and Adriatic) area are: the fragmentation; the differences and the divisions that can be observed; potential direct contacts between the social communities living near the sea, that is, the effects of proximity generated by the existence of a *sea between the lands*<sup>39</sup>.

If we refer to the particular Upper Adriatic context, we can affirm that it is a peculiar space, where *Nostalgia* has always played an important role in many historical stages, in its centuries-old history. The essays collected by Rolf Petri,

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<sup>35</sup> Regione Marche, PORTUS: Report WP4, *Development and evaluation of integrated scenario of Adriatic ports*, Ancona, 2008, pp. 9-10.

<sup>36</sup> MATVEJEVIC P., *Introduzione*, in FIORI F., *Un mare, orizzonte adriatico*, Edizioni Diabasis, Reggio Emilia, 2005, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*. Translated from Italian.

<sup>38</sup> FERRANTE E., *Prigionieri del mare stretto*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, p. 47. Translated from Italian.

<sup>39</sup> DE RUBERTIS S., *Sviluppo Mediterraneo. Tra ideologia e progetto*, Pàtron Editore, 2008, p. 17.

*Nostalgia, memoria e passaggi tra le sponde dell'Adriatico*<sup>40</sup>, aim at analyzing the components of the nostalgic feeling and its political implications in the Adriatic area. Some of these essays provide an interesting and punctual description of nostalgic feelings in the Venetian political context (e.g. the so-called *Patria Veneziana*) and of the consequent irrational influence on social and political contexts belonging to Dalmatian lands and to the Adriatic *Oltremare* (which literally means *the lands beyond the sea*). Such elements represented, far beyond the fall of the Republic of Venice in 1798<sup>41</sup>, *a politically and culturally cohesive space [...], despite of the social, cultural, economic and religious fractures of the previous centuries and of the first decades of the nineteenth century*<sup>42</sup>.

Since the seventeenth century, in Venice, some theories concerning the Venetian property of the Adriatic Sea in contrast with Hugo Grotius' *mare liberum* vision became popular<sup>43</sup>. According to Paolo Sarpi, a well-known clergyman and *in iure* consultor in Venice, it was a matter of *gulf*: in the penultimate volume of his *Scritture sopra il dominio del Mare Adriatico*, he argued that the Grotian theories were not suitable to the Adriatic Sea, which was, in his own words, «un mare serrato et limitato [...] posseduto et custodito con fatica, sangue et spesa da tempo immemorabile da Venetia»<sup>44</sup>. That simply meant that Venice had the exclusive propriety of the Adriatic Sea or, better, of the *Gulf of Venice*.

Indeed, it is widely acknowledged that during the centuries, the lagoon city had been known as the Queen of the Seas, whose function consisted in being a sort

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<sup>40</sup> PETRI R. (a cura di), *Nostalgia. Memoria e passaggi sulle sponde dell'Adriatico*, («Venetiana» vol. 7), Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma, 2009.

<sup>41</sup> BUFON M., MINGHI J., *The upper Adriatic borderland: from conflict to harmony*, in *GeoJournal* 52: 119-127, 2000, p. 122.

<sup>42</sup> PALADINI F. M., *Patrie ulteriori, nostalgia e rancori. Venezia e l'Adriatico orientale*, in PETRI R. (a cura di), *Nostalgia. Memoria e passaggi sulle sponde dell'Adriatico*, («Venetiana» vol. 7), Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma, 2009, p. 193. Translated from Italian.

<sup>43</sup> FERRANTE E., *Prigionieri del mare stretto*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, p. 47.

<sup>44</sup> *Ivi*, p. 48.

of “bridge” between Rome and the countries towards East: a concept that led to the idea that the *Serenissima* could be a new Rome (the Latin *translatio imperii*<sup>45</sup>)<sup>46</sup>. The same ideological construct that, under Mussolini’s fascist regime in the twentieth century legitimized the industrial and commercial expansion of many Venetian traders in other Adriatic bourgeois communities<sup>47</sup>.

A sea constantly crossed by nostalgia and various cultural ties: not only the Venetian influence, but the Habsburg memories still vivid in Trieste too, as well as writings about the loss of the Istrian lands by Gabriele D’Annunzio<sup>48</sup>. Moreover, the nostalgia of Tito’s Yugoslav regime (the so-called *jugostalgia*<sup>49</sup>), at the fall of the communist status quo, in the words of many supporters and former Yugoslav citizens that could not acknowledge an identity anymore.

However, beyond D’Annunzio’s thinking, many Slovene pieces of literature, then cited by Rolf Wörsdörfer, also contributed to the definition of an Adriatic space, *a space circumscribed by its many shores*<sup>50</sup>. As observed by Wörsdörfer, the same rugged coasts in the eastern Adriatic sea represent *opposite shores separated by different piccole patrie*, sides that are *suitable to represent different worlds that used to be part of the same universe*<sup>51</sup>. A universe that *could be called asburgico* (from Habsburg times), *or Austrian-Imperial, but also Roman, Venetian, Italian, Slavonic, and so on*<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> STOURAITI A., *Lutto e mimesi. Due aspetti della nostalgia imperiale nella Repubblica di Venezia*, in PETRI R. (a cura di), *Nostalgia. Memoria e passaggi sulle sponde dell’Adriatico*, («Venetiana» vol. 7), Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma, 2009, p. 92.

<sup>46</sup> PALADINI F. M., *Patrie ulteriori, nostalgia e rancori. Venezia e l’Adriatico orientale*, in PETRI R. (a cura di), *Nostalgia. Memoria e passaggi sulle sponde dell’Adriatico*, («Venetiana» vol. 7), Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma, 2009, p. 195.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>48</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>50</sup> WÖRSDÖRFER R., *Falchi, leoni, stelle su fondo blu. Nostalgia e mobilitazione nazionale sulle due sponde dell’Adriatico*, in PETRI R. (a cura di), *Nostalgia. Memoria e passaggi sulle sponde dell’Adriatico*, («Venetiana» vol. 7), Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma, 2009, p. 246. (Here translated from Italian).

<sup>51</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 249.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*

Here we are talking about *symbolologies and shared memories*<sup>53</sup> and the troubled history of disputed boundaries, which constitute the cultural substrate of the different ethnic groups living on the Adriatic shores, sharing those memories although being fragmented. Concerning the fragmentation of the Adriatic space, Zanetto (2003) notes that the concept of a sea being economic and cultural border is due to the creation of self-sufficient states, grounded on the idea of the perfect correspondence of ethnic group and state, which composition and organization are achieved through state control and trade and economic self-sufficiency<sup>54</sup>. In this perspective, the rise of national states has *dramatized* the maritime space as a border, making of it an area of clashes and struggles<sup>55</sup>. A process that reached its peak during the Cold War years, when the Adriatic Sea became part of the *iron gate* built in Europe: a gate which represented, for decades, a divide between worlds unable to communicate with each other<sup>56</sup>.

However, even in such complex context of historical and geopolitical issues, integration and cooperative policies can be fundamental instruments for improving the competitiveness of the region<sup>57</sup>. Indeed, as reported by Soriani and Antonellini (2008), «many argue that the opportunities offered by the geo-economic and geo-political transformations in Eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean can only be capitalized on by taking coordinated action, because the *Adriatic space* is characterized by a significant dispersal/fragmentation of economic, political and financial resources»<sup>58</sup>.

In this system of relations, cooperative processes can lead, also in the port field, to the creation of new opportunities and better competition, with growing

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<sup>53</sup> TOMASUTTI M., *Il leone "straniero" nello Stato da Mar. Zara e Perasto 1797*, in PETRI R. (a cura di), *Nostalgia. Memoria e passaggi sulle sponde dell'Adriatico*, («Venetiana» vol. 7), Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma, 2009, p. 143.

<sup>54</sup> ZANETTO G., *Lo spazio adriatico: una difficile sintesi*, in SORIANI S. (a cura di), *L'articolazione territoriale dello spazio costiero, Il caso dell'Alto Adriatico*, Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, 2003, p. 213.

<sup>55</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 215.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>57</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11th International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem.*

interest and participation of governments and non-state (or transnational) actors.

## 1.2 Networks and integration policies

It is undoubtedly true that we are now living a moment of crisis of the political strength and power of traditional state actors, also witnessing the emersion of non-state (or transnational) actors and the creation of networks between actors that may not especially represent the interest of governments. In fact, it is widely assumed that, from a global point of view, today's global politics includes several actors: states (as *coherent units* and traditional actors), but also transnational and private companies (TNCs), single-country non-governmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs)<sup>59</sup>. All those actors play an important role in the worldwide context, but in the Upper Adriatic area the definition of networks is mainly played by municipalities and local institutions, often within the more general framework provided by the European Union. As widely acknowledged, we are now witnessing a peculiar moment of activism of local institutions, cities and regions: mayors, governors and politicians act like *ambassadors*<sup>60</sup> and promote relationships between regions, sign agreements, establish common policies on several fields, constitute associations.

However, before discussing examples of network initiatives, it would be better to provide a general definition of what we mean by a *network*. A *network* could be defined as a spatial representation not based on the areal concept of space<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> WILLETTS P., *Transnational actors and International organizations in global politics*, in BAYLIS J., SMITH S., OWENS P., *The globalization of world politics. An introduction to international relations*, 4e, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 332.

<sup>60</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11th International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 7.

<sup>61</sup> VANOLO A., *Geografia economica del sistema-mondo. Territori e reti nello scenario globale*, UTET, 2006, Novara, p. 193.

In fact, a traditional areal approach would consider a geographical region as the complex of its adjoining places linked with proximity<sup>62</sup>. On the other hand, a network logic really takes into account interactions between actors placed in different spaces, thus providing a topological representation, and describing existing relations (e.g. trade flows) as ropes, connecting different places (or nodes)<sup>63</sup>. Thus, we are dealing here with a space organized and managed on the base of a network logic, which is a different approach to the organization between places. Moreover, even if there is still a sort of geographic determinism, which tends to consider two nodes as part of the same system only because they're physically adjoining, the current trend is in favor of network connections, given the observation that two nodes, even if adjoining, may respond to different, and even conflicting, spatial and functional logics<sup>64</sup>.

In addition, the *network* logic confirms the growing difficulty of defining borders of relation spaces. A geographic representation of this kind is clearly a clashing issue with traditional state maps, based on enclosed territories and political boundaries<sup>65</sup>. Such trend seems to embody the existing problems of progressive erosion of our governments' power, highlighting the growing importance of transnational actors: trade and political relations that go across and far beyond the boundaries of our nations. What we would like to stress here is the point of the theoretical *building of a space in which relations and transactions (of money, information, ideas)*<sup>66</sup> play a fundamental role, in a wider dimension that embraces traditional state - owned relations.

Let us just think about the importance of worldwide trade flows, investments and companies that operate like new actors of the international system: at this point the dissociation between the state-owned space and the trade companies

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>64</sup> SORIANI S., *L'articolazione territoriale dello spazio costiero. Il caso dell'Alto Adriatico*, Venezia, Editrice Cafoscarina, 2003, p. 138.

<sup>65</sup> LEVY J., *Europa. Una geografia*, Edizioni di Comunità, Torino, 1999, p. 132.

<sup>66</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 133. Translated from Italian.

space is irreversible<sup>67</sup>. In the International Relations field of IPE (International Political Economy), many scholars define as *Internationalization* «the increase in economic transactions across borders which has been taking place since the turn of the century but which some argue has undergone a quantitative leap in recent decades»<sup>68</sup>. According to some scholars (the so-called *globalists*) state units and governments are losing their capability to control economic relations and interactions, because of the rapidity of flows that makes more difficult for state authorities to manage and regulate trade, investment, or capital<sup>69</sup>.

The victory of open networks then? Probably. Although, Lévy (1999)<sup>70</sup> warns against depicting the end of state powers. Indeed, even in this new and open universe organized around flows and relations of exchange, states do still exist, remaining very important actors, although being challenged by the new processes<sup>71</sup>. In fact, «lo stato è sempre presente, in un modo o nell'altro, in quest'universo organizzato intorno agli scambi»<sup>72</sup>. However, we are facing here a topic that constitutes a huge debate within the academic societies, especially those concerning IPE, and no unilateral and ultimate scientific opinion can be found in favor or against the fact that state power is going to be eroded and diminished by globalization<sup>73</sup>.

Indeed, scientific literature concerning networks and geographical representations, especially in the European area, is almost infinite and providing here a more complete summary would bring our analysis to limitless considerations, forgetting the real aim and topic of this work<sup>74</sup>. Nevertheless, it

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<sup>67</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 160.

<sup>68</sup> WOODS N., *International political economy in an age of globalization*, in BAYLIS J., SMITH S., OWENS P., *The globalization of world politics. An introduction to international relations*, 4e, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 252.

<sup>69</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 253.

<sup>70</sup> LEVY J., *Europa. Una geografia*, Edizioni di Comunità, Torino, 1999.

<sup>71</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 132.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>73</sup> WOODS N., *International political economy in an age of globalization*, in BAYLIS J., SMITH S., OWENS P., *The globalization of world politics. An introduction to international relations*, 4e, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 252.

<sup>74</sup> See Lévy (1999) in order to have a more precise knowledge of geographical spaces theories and Paul Valéry and Alain Reynaud's works and opinions on the matter.

is suitable to mention this spatial approach, because it can help to introduce the concept of relations and networks existing in the Upper Adriatic area, the cooperative processes that can undergo in this particular area and the environment where the actors operate and collaborate.

First of all, a general definition of cooperation is needed: in this range, the cooperation concept should reflect the creation of networks, more or less formal, between actors, whose function is the mobility of resources of different kind, in order to obtain trade and economic goals<sup>75</sup>. At the same time, when a cooperation process works, the network exists between two nodes that, once being totally independent or competitors, start creating an activity on the base of existing relations more or less formalized, in an organized and common way, obtaining *win-win* outcomes<sup>76</sup>.

A clearer definition of cooperation is provided by the UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) in a report about regional port cooperation (1996):

*The word “cooperation” is a generic expression to describe joint activities carried out by at least two parties who are reciprocally committed. Each party commits resources such as financial resources, know-how or time, etc, and draws advantages from the cooperation such as financial savings, improvement in quality of services, increased market share, etc. Cooperation is a win-win deal for all parties involved<sup>77</sup>.*

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<sup>75</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 490.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>77</sup> UNCTAD, *Potentialities for regional port cooperation*, report by the UNCTAD secretariat, UNCTAD/SDD/PORT/5, GE.96-50043, 15 January 1996, p. 3.

Indeed, the *win-win* deal seems to be one of the most important features within cooperation processes, and one of the most desired outcomes: as easily expected, the parties involved really hope to achieve the best possible gains from the relation they're acting in.

In addition, as reported by the same UNCTAD document, the cooperation issue implies the existence of different forms and praxis, including partnerships and strategic or simple alliances<sup>78</sup>. Here it is enough to say that the partnership form implies the existence of a contract and the involvement of commercial stakes, whereas the category defined as *alliance* is something less binding, based on a *gentlemen's agreement*<sup>79</sup>.

Once having provided a broad definition of cooperation, we should focus now on the Adriatic context, which is the framework in which the actions analyzed in this work do take place. As noted by Soriani (2011), the cooperation topic in the Upper Adriatic area seems to witness the existence of two different points: on the one hand, its creation is often due to strategies of logistic integration because of the market logic, thanks to the creation of networks between private actors and public - private actors<sup>80</sup>. On the other hand, cooperation is created in order to promote organized actions and answers to common risks, or risks perceived as such<sup>81</sup>. As considered previously, the actors can be very different with different qualities and features: individual or collective, public or private<sup>82</sup>. It must also be noted that cooperation actions due to trade and market reasons seem to be the most effective<sup>83</sup>. In general terms, as already mentioned, we can affirm that cooperative actions and approaches currently acting in the Upper Adriatic context, are the result of the crisis of old *top-down* approaches,

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>80</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 515.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem..*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem.*

representing new possibilities of creating networks and political or private initiatives in many different fields.

But in which context do these actors operate? As observed in the UNCTAD report (1996), «parties undertaking cooperation often come from the same region», traditionally defined as «a group of countries in the same geographic area»<sup>84</sup>. However, when defining the *region* concept, the document also notes that today the geographic feature may not be the most relevant element in order to provide a correct and updated definition of *region*<sup>85</sup>. Truly, as already noted at the beginning of this paragraph, trade globalization really challenged state centrality and boundaries, thus leading to the weakening of the traditional geographic approach based on political territories and proximity, also making of it an old-fashioned concept.

Thus, «a more appropriate definition could refer to a number of countries or parts of countries which share common economic and perhaps cultural interests»: cultural trends that, we could infer, have led to the emergence of *regional trade blocks* all around the world<sup>86</sup>. In addition, a further way to define a *region* could be based on the level of development, according to several criteria and statistical classification and data of the United Nations or other international organizations<sup>87</sup>.

As we previously observed, cooperation takes place in a regional context, involving different actors: however, in order to draw a more precise vision of the undergoing of such cooperative processes in the Upper Adriatic zone, we should also add here the important term of *Euroregion*, i.e. a wider regional clustering, within the legal framework of the European Union. According to Dell'Agnese and Squarcina (2005), *Euroregions* are one of the most meaningful

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<sup>84</sup> UNCTAD, *Potentialities for regional port cooperation*, report by the UNCTAD secretariat, UNCTAD/SDD/PORT/5, GE.96-50043, 15 January 1996, p. 3.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>87</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 4.

and important results of the European process of integration<sup>88</sup>. We could regard them as entities or groups of regions that aim at creating an integrated transnational space with the implementation of urban and rural planning actions on several fields: economy, culture, school, transports and environment<sup>89</sup>. It shall be maintained that European regions in the same geographic area choose in a voluntary way to join together in order to obtain the common good. However, according to some scholars (Proto, 2007), many are the definitions of *Euroregion*: since we're dealing with cooperation, in this work it is suitable to regard them as configurations of cross-border cooperation<sup>90</sup>.

*Euroregions* in the European Union territory are more than seventy at the moment<sup>91</sup>, they have different structures but common goals: it has been noted, however, that transnational cooperation is particularly frequent in the marginal areas of the newly-nominated members<sup>92</sup>. In fact, Dell'Agnese and Squarcina (2005) point out that *Euroregions* could be considered as the expression of new development strategies for those territories that suffered from their position adjoining the boundary, for several reasons<sup>93</sup>. From an historical point of view, it has also been noted, that such integration and co-operative processes between regions have prevented many states from creating struggles and wars, while filling the void created by the fall of the former supranational institutions, such as Comecon or the Warsaw Pact<sup>94</sup>.

If we look at the European history of the last century, a first example of *Euroregion* is the Euroregio: established in 1958 in the cross-border areas of Germany and Holland, it still involves 130 territorial units (municipalities, administrative districts etc.) for a complex amount of 3,2 million European

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<sup>88</sup> DELL'AGNESE E., SQUARCINA E., *Europa. Vecchi confini e nuove frontiere*, UTET, Torino, 2005, p. 263.

<sup>89</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 264.

<sup>90</sup> PROTO P. P., *Indagine sulle euro regioni, Quali prospettive per l'area adriatica?*, CESPI (Centro Studi Politica Internazionale), Working Papers, 31/2007, p. 4.

<sup>91</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> DELL'AGNESE E., SQUARCINA E., *Europa. Vecchi confini e nuove frontiere*, UTET, Torino, 2005, p. 263.

<sup>93</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 265.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem.*

citizens<sup>95</sup>. It has been observed (Proto, 2007) that the concept of *Euroregion* itself has been exported to Europe from Germany, where it developed and reached a complex administrative structure, with the consequent foundation of organisms and representative bodies<sup>96</sup>. In addition, *Euroregions* developed in various different contexts, as in the case of the Carpathians and the Balkans in the early 90s, and the *Baltic Euroregion* in 1998<sup>97</sup>.

Today the regional transnational cooperation is considered as a cohesion factor in a cultural, economic and social way<sup>98</sup>, making of the regional European Community policies the best instrument in order to promote cohesion and unity in the European regions, especially concerning candidate states<sup>99</sup>.

Moreover, the European Union has provided a juridical basis to *Euroregions* with a series of fundamental legal acts aiming at enacting cross-border cooperation, whose first example was the Convention of Madrid, held in 1980 on initiative of the Council of Europe<sup>100</sup>. After that, a clearer definition and regulation of the organisms constituted in such cooperative processes, that may have juridical personality, was provided by the Protocol of Strasburg (1995), while a resolution of the European Parliament (December, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005) indicated functions and definition of *Euroregions*<sup>101</sup>. However, as noted by Proto (2007), it is true that, even if a juridical basis was provided by these legal acts, the fundamental tool provided in order to make *Euroregions* operative was the INTERREG programme, launched by the European Commission in 1990 and reconfirmed in 1994 and 1999<sup>102</sup>. Such operational tool, which allows regions to ask for Community funds, really made *Euroregions* stronger and able to work,

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<sup>95</sup> PROTO P. P., *Indagine sulle euro regioni, Quali prospettive per l'area adriatica?*, CESPI (Centro Studi Politica Internazionale), Working Papers, 31/2007, pp. 13-14.

<sup>96</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 12-14.

<sup>97</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>98</sup> DELL'AGNESE E., SQUARCINA E., *Europa. Vecchi confini e nuove frontiere*, UTET, Torino, 2005, p. 271.

<sup>99</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 265.

<sup>100</sup> PROTO P. P., *Indagine sulle euro regioni, Quali prospettive per l'area adriatica?*, CESPI (Centro Studi Politica Internazionale), Working Papers, 31/2007, p. 4.

<sup>101</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 5.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibidem*.

also leading to a progressive growth of their number (26 in 1988 and more than 70 in 2007)<sup>103</sup>. We will be talking about INTERREG programmes involving the Adriatic Sea in the following chapter.

To sum up, it must be noted that the regional policy, expressed by cross-border cooperation policies as *Euroregions*, is generally promoted through international cooperative actions enacted *from below* (and from the lowest level) and with relations fostered among partners within small areas<sup>104</sup>. At the end of this chapter (see 1.4) an interesting example of associative *bottom-up* initiative, the statute of the *Adriatic Euroregion*, will be discussed; but first, we should ask ourselves if a real willingness to cooperate and enact regional integration from many actors does really exist in the Adriatic context. In order to answer that question, we can use an alternative pathway, beginning with the draft of an ideal development strategy and policy for the Adriatic zone, as the one proposed by Gabriele Zanetto (2003). The further step will be the description of some important policies promoted by the European Union and the local actors, i.e. the concrete actions that can demonstrate the real will of cooperation in the area.

In his essay *Lo spazio Adriatico: una difficile sintesi* (2003)<sup>105</sup>, Gabriele Zanetto provides a general view about development possibilities offered by the creation of networks in the Adriatic context. The author notes that the common socio-economic model supported by the European Union has reinforced relationships between different countries (such as Italy and Greece), opening wider spaces of integration in the western European context and in the Middle Eastern area<sup>106</sup>. The following consideration is about the renovated role of the Adriatic sea as a fundamental opportunity of connection and specialization, becoming a link for trade and tourism flows, even though presenting elements of weakness, being

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>104</sup> DELL'AGNESE E., SQUARCINA E., *Europa. Vecchi confini e nuove frontiere*, UTET, Torino, 2005, p. 265.

<sup>105</sup> ZANETTO G., *Lo spazio adriatico: una difficile sintesi*, in SORIANI S. (a cura di), *L'articolazione territoriale dello spazio costiero, Il caso dell'Alto Adriatico*, Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, 2003.

<sup>106</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 216.

unable to transfer development to the emerging regions of the area<sup>107</sup>. It may be observed, that the Adriatic sea suffers a situation of marginality when compared to other regional maritime contexts, that is an even more tragic consideration when referred to the port field, a topic that will be discussed in the second section.

As a matter of fact, in order to overcome those obstacles and to achieve a better integration within the region, it is fundamental to establish a stable, safe and homogeneous environment; an environment that will have to be particularly homogeneous concerning the legal framework of the less developed regions, for which a strong development assistance policy will be fundamental<sup>108</sup>. However, it must be noted that the solution does not simply consist in development policies, and an excessive homogenization would be surely negative: in the words of Zanetto (2003), it is necessary to create a common language, that can make the variety comprehensible and the communication easier within the region<sup>109</sup>.

We are dealing here with integration policies (an economic, social and cultural one) that should achieve their primary goals thanks to a series of actions. First of all, isolationism should be banned, creating networks, partnerships and technical/scientific transfers and co-operative relations, such as promoting a real process of internationalization of companies and different systems<sup>110</sup>. Again, a *bottom-up* policy would be needed in this context, reflecting the different actions customized on the local resources and on the particular features of the analyzed context<sup>111</sup>. At the same time, given the peculiar Adriatic context featured by geopolitical changes witnessed by the area in the last centuries (several immigration phenomena, ethnic conflicts and political changes), it will be necessary to undertake development projects and

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<sup>107</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 216-217.

<sup>108</sup> ZANETTO G., *Lo spazio adriatico: una difficile sintesi*, in SORIANI S. (a cura di), *L'articolazione territoriale dello spazio costiero, Il caso dell'Alto Adriatico*, Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, 2003, p. 217.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 218.

<sup>111</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 219.

initiatives<sup>112</sup>. Such actions will be aimed at *re-building* economic and social structures in a common path of sustainable development policies, granting the respect of common market and trade rules and fostering the local development, involving old and newly-born companies<sup>113</sup>.

Such an integration policy should aim at achieving a good level of overall quality and efficiency, made possible thanks to the good organization of the administrative apparatus, the integration of scientific, technologic and cultural communication flows, the development of communication infrastructures, promotion of local cultures and local communities and companies as active actors in the development process<sup>114</sup>. A policy grounded on the possibility of creating competition and development thanks to the solidity of the same local, either ethnic or not, communities and groups<sup>115</sup>.

That's the reason why the creation of networks between local or state actors is simply essential in today's context: having briefly sketched a possible path of development and integration for the Adriatic area, the same supported by European Union policies, now we can try to answer the question *does really exist a concrete will of cooperation in the area?* The answer is positive, as far as the analysis of several examples of Adriatic cooperation is concerned. Initiatives that we can split here in two different sections: European and/or government policies, such as the INTERREG IIIA, the IPA and the AII on the one hand, and the ones spontaneously grown in the Adriatic area thanks to local institutions and actors, such as the *Ancona charter* (the *Permanent Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian cities*), the *Adriatic Euroregion* and the *Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce* on the other.

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 217.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibidem.*

### 1.3 - European Community integration and cooperation policies

As pointed out in the previous paragraph, many cooperation processes take place within the framework of the European Union, thanks to its commitment to the definition and operation of community integration policies. It is valuable to remind that the main provisions in the cross-border cooperation and European Territorial cooperation matters are established in the Council Regulation (EC) N. 1083/2006 dated July 11<sup>th</sup> 2006 which regulates the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund, and in the Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the European Regional Development Fund<sup>116</sup>.

According to the art. 2 in the Regulation (EC) 1080/2006, the ERDF «shall contribute to the financing of assistance which aims to reinforce economic and social cohesion by redressing the main regional imbalances through support for the development and structural adjustment of regional economies, including the conversion of declining industrial regions and regions lagging behind, and support for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation»<sup>117</sup>.

The art. 6 of the same Regulation focuses on the aims of the European Territorial Cooperation:

*1. the development of cross-border economic, social and environmental activities through joint strategies for sustainable territorial development, and primarily:*

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<sup>116</sup> *Cooperazione territoriale Europea 2007-2013*, Programma per la Cooperazione Transfrontaliera ITALIA – SLOVENIA 2007-2013, Programma Operativo numero CCI: 2007 CB 163 PO 036, p. 26.

<sup>117</sup> REGULATION (EC) No 1080/2006 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1783/1999. Art 2. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:210:0001:0001:EN:PDF>

*(a) by encouraging entrepreneurship, in particular the development of SMEs, tourism, culture, and cross-border trade;*

*(b) by encouraging and improving the joint protection and management of natural and cultural resources, as well as the prevention of natural and technological risks;*

*(c) by supporting links between urban and rural areas;*

*(d) by reducing isolation through improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services, and cross-border water, waste and energy systems and facilities;*

*(e) by developing collaboration, capacity and joint use of infrastructures, in particular in sectors such as health, culture, tourism and education.*

*In addition, the ERDF may contribute to promoting legal and administrative cooperation, the integration of cross-border labour markets, local employment initiatives, gender equality and equal opportunities, training and social inclusion, and sharing of human resources and facilities for R&TD<sup>118</sup>.*

Another fundamental document is the European Council decision dated October 6<sup>th</sup> 2006, which draws the Community strategic guidelines on economic, social

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<sup>118</sup> *Ivi.*, art. 6.

and territorial cohesion (2007-2013)<sup>119</sup>. The document expresses in three main points the need for «improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities»; «encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by research and innovation capacities, including new information and communication technologies» and «creating more and better jobs by attracting more people into employment or entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital»<sup>120</sup>.

Given this general legal framework, many are the projects implemented by the European Union in order to pursue an effective cross-border cooperation: the INTERREG IIIA Italy-Slovenia project 2000-2006 is a milestone concerning the region of our interest.

#### **A – The INTERREG projects**

To be precise, we are dealing here with a Community Initiative Programme (CIP) involving two European Countries, Italy and Slovenia and concerning an area of 11,400 Km<sup>2</sup> and an overall population of 1.943 million inhabitants<sup>121</sup>. On the Italian side, the area includes the Provinces of Udine, Gorizia and Trieste (Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia), the Province of Venice (Region of Veneto) and other areas exceptionally qualified and involved in some of the interventions considered within the Programme, such as the Province of Pordenone and Rovigo (respectively Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto)<sup>122</sup>. On the Slovenian side, the eligible areas are the two regions Obalno-kraska and Goriska and the

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<sup>119</sup> *Cooperazione territoriale Europea 2007-2013*, Programma per la Cooperazione Transfrontaliera ITALIA – SLOVENIA 2007-2013, Programma Operativo numero CCI: 2007 CB 163 PO 036, p. 26.

<sup>120</sup> COUNCIL DECISION of 6 October 2006 on Community strategic guidelines on cohesion (2006/702/EC).  
<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:291:0011:0032:EN:P>  
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<sup>121</sup> *Community Initiative Programme INTERREG IIIA Italy-Slovenia 2000-2006*, Programming Complement, p.1.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibidem*.

municipality of Kranjska Gora<sup>123</sup>. The overall project involves 24 Italian municipalities and 13 Slovenian municipalities, beyond the basins of Venice, Trieste and Koper<sup>124</sup>.

The area is characterized by problems often present in the border areas, depending on the diversity of regions: isolation, marginality, development delays, de-industrialization phenomena<sup>125</sup>. Indeed, overcoming these weakness elements and problems, promoting the sustainable development of these cross-border areas and the integration of the territory are the main overall goals pursued by the INTERREG IIIA CIP<sup>126</sup>.

About the strategy implemented by the 2000-2006 Programme, it focuses on the achievement of four intervention priorities, which are the following: «sustainable development of the cross-border area; economic cooperation; human resources, cooperation and systems' harmonization; special support for regions bordering candidate countries»<sup>127</sup>. In addition, a fifth point concerning technical assistance and support to cooperation was added to the four main priorities<sup>128</sup>.

The targets displayed in the first Priority, especially focused on *Sustainable development of the cross-border area*, involve actions aimed at protecting, preserving and developing the environment<sup>129</sup>. Beyond that, the actions should help developing and strengthening cross-border networks within the area and in the cross-border framework, concerning internal and external flows<sup>130</sup>. In order to obtain such goals, the first Priority adopts measures concerning the protection, preservation and development of the environment, such as the development of infrastructures and networks: those structures that, we just

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 2.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>129</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 4.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibidem.*

observed in the previous chapter, are fundamental in today's globalized economy.

The second Priority focuses on economic cooperation: a goal that must be achieved through the improvement in competitiveness and cooperation, especially concerning local entrepreneurship, thus creating an economically favorable environment to SMEs<sup>131</sup>. Such field of analysis will also have to deal with cross-border cooperation in tourism, and actions should aim at the *diversification of tourists resources*<sup>132</sup>: as widely acknowledged, tourism is a fundamental tool in the Adriatic area in order to create growth and economic development. A further measure concerns cross-border cooperation in the primary sector and actions intended to strengthen the existing market situation, also looking for specific marketing opportunities for a valuable production, in line with the protection of the ecosystem<sup>133</sup>.

The third Priority concerns *Human resources, cooperation and systems' harmonization*, which implies measures aimed at developing «joint vocational training, exchanges and collaboration between organizations» in order to develop human resources, which are essentials in cross-border relations<sup>134</sup>. Measures included in this point should be directed to the reduction of the unemployment risks due to the system transformation and other joint initiatives between institutions in the culture, cooperation and research fields<sup>135</sup>.

The fourth point concerns *Special support for regions bordering candidate countries*: in this respect, the Commission has foreseen a special support, with Decision C(2002) 1703 of July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2002, for regions bordering candidate countries<sup>136</sup>. Such measures shall finance the strengthening of transport systems, support to SMEs and to training and intercultural cooperation actions,

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<sup>131</sup> *Ivi*, p. 5.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>134</sup> *Ivi*, p. 6.

<sup>135</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 6.

<sup>136</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 7.

particularly aimed at fostering the integration between different linguistic and cultural groups<sup>137</sup>.

In this respect, the two Italian regions Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto decided to put their efforts in transport and culture fields improvement, given the priority of a special support to SMEs and transports, directly related to environmental development<sup>138</sup>. It is also important to remember that these strengthened measures are performed by public actors in the fields yet described, and that such process is aimed at fostering «an easier transition of the region to the new economic, political, social and institutional system following the accession of Slovenia to the European Union»<sup>139</sup>. In fact, the accession of the Republic of Slovenia, an independent Republic since 1991, happened the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2004, after the adhesion to NATO<sup>140</sup>: a symbolic and political change, considered as a definitive end to historical and national divisions, which highlighted the approaching between two different worlds which used to fight and struggle, a defeat of the socialist model of the Eastern European Countries and of the former Yugoslavia<sup>141</sup>.

However, as widely acknowledged, the symbolic event didn't seem to manage a complete rebuilding of the cultural ties and bonds, split during the last centuries, given the completely different contexts of the Italian and Slovenian regions. Such European measures should help this rebuilding process, and the fifth Priority of the INTERREG IIIA programme seems to stress, more actively, the need for a deeper cooperation between the regions.

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>140</sup> DELL'AGNESE E., SQUARCINA E., *Europa. Vecchi confini e nuove frontiere*, UTET, Torino, 2005, p.245.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibidem.*

Cooperation must also be pursued through technical assistance,

*aimed at ensuring the traditional Programme planning, implementation, monitoring and independent evaluation activities on the one hand, and to distribute information about the opportunities offered by the Programme in order to promote the envisaged interventions also by means of animation activities in favor of the final beneficiaries, on the other hand*<sup>142</sup>.

Such actions include «training of the staff responsible for the project development assistance, selection and monitoring» for many aspects of the actions carried out by the INTERREG IIIA project, such as publicity and other information activities<sup>143</sup>.

About the outcomes of the 2000-2006 programming period, the intermediate evaluation highlighted the appropriate strategy implemented by the program, especially concerning sustainable development and environmental issues with the important creation of networks in order to manage common territorial policies and environmental monitoring processes, promoting tourism and cultural heritage, supporting primary sector enterprises, although supporting actions for SMEs were limited<sup>144</sup>. Concerning transports, many actions were undertaken in order to improve the cross-border road systems and auto-ports and maritime ports in the cross-border area, but no actions were carried out in order to improve public transports and airports<sup>145</sup>.

Sustainable development and environment issues seem to be a common feature and a *fil rouge* through all measures implemented by the program, and

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<sup>142</sup> *Community Initiative Programme INTERREG IIIA Italy-Slovenia 2000-2006, Programming Complement*, p.8.

<sup>143</sup> *Ivi.*, p.8.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibidem.*

maybe that's why the outcomes of projects concerning this field were the most successful: protection of the environment, water cleaning of the rivers and development of alternative sources of energy in the area<sup>146</sup>. On the other hand, no project has been carried out for the improvement of female gender life conditions, and only a few projects about fair gender conditions had direct effect on the matter<sup>147</sup>.

To sum up, given such five-priorities structure, the INTERREG IIIA 2000-2006 had all the elements to be hopeful about cooperation in the interested regions, however, this project has not been the first of its kind, nor the last. Let's have a look at the Community Programs before and after the programming period 2000-2006.

In fact, a previous European project had been promoted in the Adriatic area before the INTERREG IIIA 2000-2006: we are dealing here with the CIP INTERREG II in the programming years 1994-1999, which included the same Italian regions of Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia along with the Slovenian cross-borders territories<sup>148</sup>. Priorities in this program were the promotion of the territory and of local resources, the protection of the environment, the institutional cooperation and the improvement of communication and cooperation between economic partners<sup>149</sup>.

The program evaluation of the PIC INTERREG II Italy-Slovenia 1994-1999 highlighted pros and cons of the initiative: first of all, many projects, especially in the communication and institutional cooperation fields were carried on, with a

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<sup>146</sup> *Cooperazione territoriale Europea 2007-2013, Programma per la Cooperazione Transfrontaliera ITALIA – SLOVENIA 2007-2013, Programma Operativo numero CCI: 2007 CB 163 PO 036, p. 30.*

<sup>147</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>148</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 29.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibidem.*

small amount of financing<sup>150</sup>. As a matter of fact, more than half of the projects that were completed received a financing of less than € 150,000<sup>151</sup>.

On the other hand, the whole initiative witnessed a low level of cross-border cooperation, due to many different reasons: difficulty in reaching partners, different administrative and bureaucratic procedures and mechanisms between Italy and Slovenia, different governmental levels in the state structure (four levels in Italy, with Municipality, Provinces, Regions and Central Government, and two levels in Slovenia, with Municipality and Central Government only)<sup>152</sup>.

However, although the presence of such negative issues and elements of weakness, it must be noted that the INTERREG II managed to obtain its main cooperation goals, starting a process which continued with the following programming period already described, the PIC INTERREG IIIA 2000-2006<sup>153</sup>.

However, the INTERREG initiative didn't end up in 2006, because a further project was implemented: the INTERREG IIIA 2007-2013, still in course and in direct continuity with the previous projects. In this new updated program, changes and improvements on the following matters are expected: development of new products *designed* on the specific local sources within the SMEs framework; promotion of sustainable development and environmental protection initiatives with concrete effects on the territory; common management of sea and water issues; financing of networks and common strategies supporting the integrate development of the territory and improving the physical links between the included areas, local and regional institutions<sup>154</sup>.

Having provided here a general view about the INTERREG it's time now to describe two other important initiatives of cooperation in the Adriatic area: the

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<sup>150</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>152</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>154</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 31-32.

*IPA Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation Programme and the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative.*

## **B – The IPA Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation Programme**

As stated on the official website of the initiative, the *IPA Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation Programme* «is a cross-border programme co-financed by the European Commission, through the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)»<sup>155</sup>, which is a financial instrument established by the European Union, in order to assist candidate countries to adopt and implement full *acquis communautaire* and to assist potential candidate countries «to promote a degree of alignment» with the community and «approximation with the Accession criteria»<sup>156</sup>.

In this respect, candidate countries are Croatia and Montenegro, while the potential candidate countries are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia: these states are all included in the programme, along with three Member States, i.e. Italy, Greece and Slovenia<sup>157</sup>. All mentioned states face the Adriatic Sea, with the exception of Serbia, extraordinary admitted<sup>158</sup>. About the Italian area, the regions concerned are Abruzzo, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Marche, Puglia and Molise<sup>159</sup>.

Without entering here in deeper technical details, it is important to note the importance that regions gain within the IPA framework, with particular reference to the Italian region Abruzzo. As a matter of fact, Abruzzo has been appointed by the countries involved in the *IPA Adriatic Cross-border Programme* as Managing Authority, who is responsible for managing and implementing the

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<sup>155</sup> Instrument adopted with the EC Decision C (2008) No. 1073 as amended with Decision C (2010) No. 3780, Decision C (2011) No. 3396 and Decision C (2011) No. 3740. From the IPA official website, <http://www.adriaticpacbc.org/>.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>157</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>158</sup> *Ibidem.* Note that “Serbia participates in the Programme with the whole territory under a phasing out condition until 31st December 2015”.

<sup>159</sup> *Cooperazione: Chiodi, IPA Adriatico rafforza l'integrazione UE*, in Osservatorio Interregionale Cooperazione e Sviluppo, official website, <http://www.oics.it>.

Programme in line with the Community Regulations and the relative provisions<sup>160</sup>.

In this respect, the President of the Regional Committee (Giunta Regionale) of the Abruzzo region, Gianni Chiodi, highlighted the impressive potentialities of the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation (2007-2013), with a system action and the implementation of initiatives financed through both structural and national funds in strategic fields in the Adriatic area, such as transports, SMEs, tourism and environment<sup>161</sup>. Abruzzo plays an important role of leadership in this Programme (at least until 2013), which involves the financing of about € 290.000.000, aimed at promoting policies of strategic and political integration of the states involved within the Adriatic area<sup>162</sup>.

The expected following step will be the creation of an Adriatic Macro-region<sup>163</sup>: in the following paragraph (1.4) we will discuss about the creation of an Adriatic *Euroregion* as Association of regional governments and its different implications and characteristics.

But the existence of an Adriatic Macro-region has been discussed in the European framework also thanks to the *Adriatic and Ionian Initiative* (AII), presented by the Italian government (with active support by Greece) in the occasion of the Finnish EU Summit of October 1999, held in Tampere, within the EU treaty *Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe*<sup>164</sup>.

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<sup>160</sup> IPA official website, <http://www.adriaticipacbc.org/>.

<sup>161</sup> *Cooperazione: Chiodi, IPA Adriatico rafforza l'integrazione UE*, in Osservatorio Interregionale Cooperazione e Sviluppo, official website, <http://www.oics.it>. "La potenzialità maggiore di IPA è l'azione di sistema e la messa in rete degli interventi finanziati, sia con Fondi Strutturali che Nazionali, nei territori dell'Area Adriatica in alcuni settori strategici come trasporti, PMI, turismo e soprattutto ambiente". Così il presidente della giunta regionale, Gianni Chiodi, ha commentato le potenzialità del Programma comunitario di cooperazione transfrontaliera CBC IPA Adriatico (2007-2013)".

<sup>162</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>164</sup> *Adriatic and Ionian Initiative*, official website, [www.aii-ps.org](http://www.aii-ps.org).

## C – The Adriatic and Ionian Initiative

The All was established on May 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> 2000, at the *Summit on Development and Security on the Adriatic and Ionian Seas*, held in Ancona (Italy) and attended by the representatives of the governments of Italy, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece and Slovenia<sup>165</sup>. The political initiative was officially declared at the end of the conference, when the Foreign Ministers of the participating countries signed the *Ancona Declaration*, in the presence of delegates of the European Commission<sup>166</sup>.

The aim of the All is the strengthening of regional cooperation and promotion of political and economic stability, «creating a solid base for the process of European integration» and «providing common and concerted solutions to shared problems, from fighting against organized criminality to the need to protect the natural environment of the Adriatic-Ionian Sea»<sup>167</sup>. Nowadays, the All involves eight Member States: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia<sup>168</sup>.

May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010 in Ancona the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the involved countries signed a Declaration on Support of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Basin, establishing the need and necessity of working on the creation of a Macro-region for the Adriatic Ionian basin<sup>169</sup>.

As already mentioned (1.2) concerning *Euroregions*, a Macro-region – a sort of synonym for the same concept – «is not a geographical region with predefined boundaries; it is a functional area, composed of national, regional and local bodies»; «not a further institutional level within the European Union [...] but

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<sup>165</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>166</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>167</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>168</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>169</sup> *Ibidem.*

rather network [...], a joint initiative involving several European, national, regional and stakeholders, policies and funding programmes»<sup>170</sup>.

The idea of a Macro-region, as well as the *Euroregion* concept, is based on the fact that it is not always possible to achieve important goals merely through individual initiatives: in order to reach them successfully it is necessary to act in a framework in which collective actions are promoted, where the EU, Member States, regions and municipalities share duties and functions<sup>171</sup>.

In this context, the Adriatic Sea would constitute a fundamental link between different cultures and people that, nevertheless, do share common cultural heritage and unifying values: in close collaboration with two other European Macro-regions, the Baltic Sea and Danube, the *Adriatic and Ionian Macro-region* would be the perfect connection between Northern and Southern Europe<sup>172</sup>.

Among the Italian regions, the Marche Region seems to be one of the most involved and active in fostering such initiative: on March, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011, in Brussels, the COTER Commission (Territorial Cohesion Policy, Committee of the Regions) asked the Marche Region to draft an opinion on *Territorial Cooperation in the Mediterranean basin through the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-region*<sup>173</sup>.

After the final validation given by the Committee of the Regions (October 2011), the following step will be the conclusion of the procedure for the final approval of the *Adriatic Ionian Macro-region*, which is supposed to happen in 2013, in order to benefit from the financial interventions considered in the 2014-2020 European programming<sup>174</sup>.

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<sup>170</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>171</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>172</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>173</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>174</sup> *Ibidem.*

#### 1.4 Networks between local institutions and actors

In the previous point we just provided a general perspective about integration and cooperative policies more or less directly promoted by the European Union (INTERREG IIIA and IPA) and by the Italian government (All). Those are all initiatives and instruments inspired by a precise political will, by political high-level organisms that promote such strategies in the Adriatic region, in direct coordination with regional and local actors, such as Municipalities, Provinces, Regions etc.

Indeed, we talked about cooperative processes inspired by higher institutional levels, and concretely acted by lowest levels, in order to achieve goals of integration and cohesion, a kind of typical *top-down* approach that, although, witnesses the will to involve lower levels: as already seen, those actions and policies can be more or less successful, depending on the context of the area and on many other *specifically local* features.

In this paragraph we are going to deal with a couple of initiatives aimed at reaching the same objectives and achieve the same targets of European and government policies, and that often act in the same institutional framework: however, we intended to divide this group of initiatives from the other, given their most distinctive feature. As a matter of fact, the initiatives described in this second group have their roots in low-level initiatives, in the concrete need for cooperation shown by local institutions, majors and other regional bodies. Concerning such cooperative experiences, higher institutional levels offered their patronage and support, because the predicted goals to achieve are the same: however it is important to note that different origin, not given by the highest political bodies and organisms, yet by people and low level organisms, carrying out *bottom-up* actions. The first initiative described here is the Ancona Charter, signed in 1999.

## A – The Ancona charter

April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> 1999<sup>175</sup> in Ancona (Italy), an interesting cooperation fact occurred, witnessing the gathering of several and different communities and cities facing the Adriatic Sea.

The first Members involved in the signature of the document, for the Italian side (the majority) were the following: Ancona, Trieste, Venice, Ravenna, Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, Barletta, Brindisi, Bari, San Benedetto del Tronto, Molfetta, Montesicuro, Pescara. Concerning other states: Koper (Slovenia); Durazzo, Valona, Lezhe (Albania); Patrasso (Greece) and Neum (Bosnia – Herzegovina)<sup>176</sup>.

What we would like to highlight here is the fact that the gathering of the territorial entities responsible for the administration of these territories was called by the *Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani*, ANCI (National Association of the Italian Municipalities) and by the Municipality of Ancona, in order to establish the foundation of the *Forum delle Città dell'Adriatico e dello Ionio* (Permanent Forum of the Adriatic and Ionic Cities) and the fundamental tools and criteria in order to develop a coordinated policy of the Local Autonomies and Associations for the growth of the Adriatic community<sup>177</sup>.

The Ancona Charter<sup>178</sup> witnesses the *spontaneous* creation of this association between local and regional actors, based on some fundamental values, here shortly resumed and freely translated<sup>179</sup>:

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<sup>175</sup> *Carta di Ancona*, available at the following link:  
[http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/NR/rdonlyres/D0B90FD0-7783-41CD-BC10-797B0F46A922/34103/CARTA\\_di\\_ANCONA.PDF](http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/NR/rdonlyres/D0B90FD0-7783-41CD-BC10-797B0F46A922/34103/CARTA_di_ANCONA.PDF)

<sup>176</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>178</sup> Available at the following link:  
[http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/NR/rdonlyres/D0B90FD0-7783-41CD-BC10-797B0F46A922/34103/CARTA\\_di\\_ANCONA.PDF](http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/NR/rdonlyres/D0B90FD0-7783-41CD-BC10-797B0F46A922/34103/CARTA_di_ANCONA.PDF)

<sup>179</sup> Summarized and translated from Italian.

- 1) *Peace is the fundamental condition for any economic and social development program in the Adriatic and Ionian area;*
- 2) *The Adriatic culture, whose deep roots constitute since centuries the link, dialogue and growth opportunity between the two shores, still remains the fundamental tool for the enrichment of the Adriatic cities;*
- 3) *Democracy and freedom guarantee the dignity and fair chance for everyone, fighting every form of ethnic and xenophobic or nationalistic prejudice;*
- 4) *Europe and its economic and political integration are the goals to achieve, always taking into account the values established in the European Union Statute, in the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Statute of the Local Autonomies and Council of Europe, because European citizenship is the primary goal;*
- 5) *The Forum of the Majors of the Adriatic cities, under supervision of the Associations of the Municipalities, is the permanent instrument to devise and arrange in concert the unitary policy of the local entities for the economic, social, cultural and touristic development, protection of human life in sea and safe navigation.*

In order to obtain such goals, we read in the same Ancona Statute, the Forum will collaborate with European Institutions, also because the Mediterranean Sea should be a space of primary development within the European Union, a concrete situation of peace and a real link between North, South, East and West, and not a borderline. The Association will also act in order to consolidate the importance of the role played by cities and local actors: a role already

recognized and fostered by the European Union, also promoting the knowledge of the people living among the Adriatic Sea and sharing projects that focus not exclusively on economic matters, as well as cultural and artistic. In addition, the Statute indicates the importance of preserving the common cultural heritage and the environment of the Sea, *ecologic lung* for the whole humanity, also promoting the foundation of research centers for the development of the Adriatic area. The Forum also decides to held at least one meeting a year, with an alternate coordination management based in Ancona, verifying the scheduling of the projects and continuity of the programs.

Concerning members involved in the initiative, in 2009, ten years after the signature of the *Carta di Ancona*, the full Member list was the following<sup>180</sup>:

Italy: Adria, Alessano, Ancona, Bari, Brindisi, Casarano, Chioggia, Civitanova Marche, Cupra Marittima, Falconara Marittima, Francavilla a Mare, Manfredonia, Molfetta, Monfalcone, Ortona, Pesaro, Pescara, Porto San Giorgio, Ravenna, Riccione, Rimini, San Benedetto del Tronto, San Pietro Vernotico, Senigallia, Taranto, Torchiariolo, Trani, Tricase, Venezia;

Slovenia: Izola, Koper;

Croatia: Biogradna Moru, Dubrovnik, Ploce, Rijeka, Split, Sibenik, Zadar;

Bosnia-Herzegovina: Neum, Mostar;

Montenegro: Bar;

Albania: Durazzo, Lezhe, Valona, Scutari, Saranda;

Greece: Patrasso, Igoumenitsa, Corfù, Prevenza, Parga.

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<sup>180</sup> *La carta di Ancona*, available at the following link:  
[http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/NR/rdonlyres/D0B90FD0-7783-41CD-BC10797B0F46A922/34103/CARTA\\_di\\_ANCONA.PDF](http://www.sistemapaese.esteri.it/NR/rdonlyres/D0B90FD0-7783-41CD-BC10797B0F46A922/34103/CARTA_di_ANCONA.PDF)

The conferences, held since 1999, focused on sustainable development issues, aiming at the creation of an Adriatic and Ionic governance in order to manage those issues, as well as infrastructures, ports strategic roles, the use of the IPA instruments (already described in paragraph 1.3), cooperation chances in the Balkans area for universities, NGOs, associations and companies<sup>181</sup>.

To sum up, it is also useful to deal with the final part of the Statute, which stresses the importance of an interregional and cross-border cooperation started by cities: a regain of autonomy which reminds us historical times, when *Liberi Comuni* and *Repubbliche Marinare* were able to develop policies of interdependence<sup>182</sup>. Cultural roots, more than the economic or financial elements, are particularly highlighted by the document: a common culture heritage can help the communities facing the Adriatic Sea to promote integration policies and system initiatives, acted in a concrete way thanks to the European programs.

We can see in that way, that European Integration policies and development programmes (described in 1.3) can be the concrete actions created by values and cultural links between local actors. In this respect, European policies are not imposed with a *top-down* approach, but represent the concrete actions thought and designed by lower (but not less important!) regional levels.

## **B – The Adriatic Euroregion**

Another important model of cooperation is represented by the *Adriatic Euroregion*, founded on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2006 in Pula, within the Istria region, Croatia<sup>183</sup>. This model of collaboration between regional and local governments from Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and

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<sup>181</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>183</sup> *Adriatic Euroregion* official website, <http://adriaticeuroregion.info/>.

Albania, includes trans-national and inter-regional cooperation<sup>184</sup>, leading to a further and complete network in the Adriatic area.

The foundation of the *Adriatic Euroregion* has been possible after a long diplomatic and bureaucratic activity and several stages, starting with the Declaration of Opatija, «adopted on the initiative of the Littoral-Mountain Region, Istria Region, Dubrovnik and Neretva Region and the Autonomous Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, in the course of the *Adriatic Summer School of the Assembly of European Regions* held in the year 2002 in Opatija with the subject *Contribution of the regions to the process of viability – innovative practice for innovative policies of regional development*»<sup>185</sup>.

In 2003, in Moscenicka Draga (Littoral-Mountain Region) the foundations of the Association were laid by the presidents of the Croatian Adriatic Regions with representatives of the Italian Region of Molise, while several conferences and seminars held in Pula (2004), Dubrovnik (2004), Chioggia (2004) and Termoli (2004) were held in order to define collaborations and protocols, till the Conference of Pula in 2005, when the Provisional Council of the *Adriatic Euroregion* adopted the first draft of the Statute<sup>186</sup>.

Then the initiative was presented to the European Union, in order to get its support, with a seminar held in Brussels in November 2005, entitled *Adriatic Euroregion: Means for European Integration*.

Indeed, the link of the Association with the European Union seems to be very solid and must be noted that the *Adriatic Euroregion* (or AE) did receive an important impulse from Brussels with the report (CLRAE – AER) on common activities for the interregional collaboration, results from the Summer School of

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<sup>184</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>185</sup> *Preamble* of the Statute of the AE.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibidem*.

the Assembly of European Regions and of the Program Centurio – Congress of the local and regional authorities of the Council of Europe<sup>187</sup>.

We report here the first article of the AE Statute<sup>188</sup> that can easily provide a general view on aims and activities of the Association:

*The Adriatic Euroregion (hereafter referred to as: the AE) is the association of units of territorial self-governments, as a rule of the first level below state level in the area of the Republic of Italy, the Republic of Slovenia, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Monte Negro and the Republic of Albania situated on the Adriatic Sea and of national and international institutions.*

*The AE members shall, in joint activities, work towards stimulating, improving and realizing the development in the area of the AE aimed at creating a perspective of improving the quality of life and standard of its inhabitants.*

*The AE members work aiming at the following goals:*

- *Establishment and development of relations of inhabitants and institutions of the area as premises for a more knowledge, better understanding and collaboration;*
- *Creation of premises for the development of economy in harmony with the environment, definition of common development interests, preparation,*

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<sup>187</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>188</sup> Updated Version, Ferrara (IT), September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

*definition and coordination of a joint development strategy;*

- *Creation of the programme of cultural exchange;*

- *Securing premises for a successful flow of experience and its application on the EU programmes<sup>189</sup>.*

The first lines of the Article are particularly interesting, referring to *association of units of territorial self-governments, as a rule of the first level below state level*: it seems to highlight the fundamental concept of the power given by central governments to local units, which recalls the basic ideas already mentioned about the spaces of territorial governments within the national framework, as a lower but definitely fundamental level.

The association is led by some fundamental representative bodies (art.14) holding regular sessions: they also must «guarantee all its members equal geographic representation within its bodies», equally representing every Adriatic part involved in the Association<sup>190</sup>.

A further crucial element generally indicated in the Statute is the aim at realizing sustainable development in the Adriatic area, as well as the establishment of networks and relations (economic, political, trade and cultural) between people and institutions.

Activities of the *Adriatic Euroregion* are described in the Article 8, Chapter II, in which it is reported, the AE:

- *Organizes joint activities aimed at promoting the richness and diversities making up the unique value of togetherness;*

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<sup>189</sup> *Art. 1, Chapter 1, Statute of the AE.*

<sup>190</sup> *Ivi., Art. 5.*

- *Organizes and encourages the development of collaboration in the area of preserving the Adriatic as a valuable natural resource, traffic and communication, agriculture, fisheries, tourism and cultural values;*
- *Undertakes activities geared at promoting and participating in joint projects<sup>191</sup>.*

As can be seen, the values and activities undertaken by the AE are the same generally recognized and acknowledged in the wide institutional framework of integration and cooperation policies already described. The importance of a sustainable development, of cultural diversity as a richness, joint initiatives and preservation of the Adriatic environment and sea are fundamental values and goals to obtain in the previously described European programmes and initiatives (such as within the INTERREG framework, or IPA policies, and the All), as well as the Ancona Charter and other political and institutional cooperative initiatives of past, present and future creation, not described in this work.

### **C – The Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce**

The latest example of local cooperation that we report here, is the *Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce*, an association with legal personality founded in 2001, with the specific aim at joining the Chambers of Commerce from the coastal areas of the Adriatic and Ionian basin<sup>192</sup>.

*The Associations' purpose is to promote the economic development of the Adriatic and Ionian area, to strengthen the relationships among the Chambers of Commerce of trans-border Countries, to encourage the juridical and administrative*

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<sup>191</sup> *Art. 8, Chapter II, Statute of the AE.*

<sup>192</sup> AIC official website, <http://www.forumaic.org>.

*cooperation harmonizing the procedures among the countries, to spread business and entrepreneurial culture through the involvement of all the actors within the territory*<sup>193</sup>.

Article 3 of the Statute of the Association points out its tasks:

*The Forum shall perform the following tasks to achieve its institutional goals, facilitate and develop the activities of its Members:*

- *Support economic, social, cultural and scientific integration in the Adriatic – Ionian area;*
- *Create a common and global image within and without the Adriatic – Ionian area;*
- *Support trans-boundary cooperation in its capacity as transnational institution;*
- *Establish networks among institutions, bodies and associations*<sup>194</sup>.

In addition, beyond these goals – generally shared with other cooperative initiatives here described – the Forum organizes an yearly meeting with all representative Members and other important Institutions involved in the issues discussed at the conference.

The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers and Commerce*, the latest, was held in Brindisi (Italy) on June, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012: the topic of the seminar was *Towards the Adriatic – Ionian Macro-region: a strategic*

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<sup>193</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>194</sup> *Ibidem.*

*project for territorial and business competitiveness*. Here we find again the Macro-region theme, after having previously described the concept (see 1.3): the emphasis about this geographic concept existing in many Associations and projects like this witnesses its importance and implications for politics, economics and culture in the Adriatic area.

The international event of Brindisi saw the participation of more than 250 representatives, working together to define the establishment of a «future Adriatic Ionian Macro-Region and the role that the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area may play in such a delicate political and social context»<sup>195</sup>. The programme implemented by the Forum should also «be consistent with territorial policies and with the EU growth priorities for the creation of a new governance model capable to encourage integrated development, promoting innovative, sustainable interventions in support of the businesses of the area»<sup>196</sup>.

In fact, one of the main goals of the Association is the development of the Adriatic and Ionic Macro-region by year 2014: a decision that could also be particularly important for trade and commerce, because it would be possible in that way to grant a standardization of market rules, including juridical matters such as arbitration<sup>197</sup>. Such development could be possible with a *bottom-up* policy created by the territorial governments and chambers of commerce, with the integrated action of the European Union and other important actors in the Adriatic area.

Among the statements read by politicians at the meeting held in Brindisi, the one read by Alfredo Malcarne, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Brindisi, is particularly meaningful:

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<sup>195</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>196</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>197</sup> *Ibidem.*

*We must all work together on this journey, on the one hand each striving to do his best, with his own competences and specific skills, and on the other putting all the knowledge and potential on the network to achieve an expanded concept of territoriality and productivity*<sup>198</sup>.

The need to work together, creating networks in order to create development, using own skills and knowledge: this is the fundamental core of the cooperation issue, and initiatives and experiences like the ones described in this chapter show that cooperation is still positive and possible, leading to *win-win* deals and fair rules.

## **1.5 Conclusion**

Before analyzing cooperation issues in the port field and its main implications, I would like to synthesize some basic points in order to provide some conclusions about the matter so far described.

First of all, let us stress the importance of *win-win* deals within cooperation processes: when states or other actors cooperate together and start a collaboration process, they do that in order to obtain specific goals. They really want to achieve the best possible gains for themselves, though some important scholars wrote about mutual gains negotiations, fundamental in order to make a cooperation process work.

Many scholars in the International Relations field discussed about the chance of having cooperation between actors (mainly states) and an almost infinite literature has been produced about those issues, defining different methodological and political approaches, like neo-realists and neo-liberals, for

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<sup>198</sup> *Ibidem*.

instance<sup>199</sup>. Such cooperation issues have been interlaced with regionalism and integration issues, as described in point 1.1., given the historical framework of the post-Cold War era. As already stated, the political and social context originated by the fall of the Berlin wall and the *iron curtain*, with the subsequent end of the Communist regime in the Eastern European Countries, witnessed growing regionalism and globalization process, using different political and social approaches, also stimulating original intellectual paradigms. For instance, as noted by Lamy (2008), a particular form of Liberalism (Sociological Liberalism) considers the notions of community and interdependence as important elements, given the fact that «as transnational activities increase, people in distant lands are linked and their governments become more interdependent [...]; as a result, it becomes more difficult and more costly for states to act unilaterally and to avoid cooperation with neighbors»<sup>200</sup>.

Thus, in the post-Cold War context, cooperation seems to be fundamental: fostered by institutions and regionalism processes, as predicted and blessed by Liberal or Neo-liberal Institutional theories. As a matter of fact, those theories, that find their roots in the functional integration scholarship of the 1940s and the 1950s and regional integration studies of the 1960s<sup>201</sup>, suggest that peace and prosperity can be reached through cooperation. Such ideas indicate that the key to success, for states, is the pooling of resources and the surrender of some of their sovereignty in order to create integrated communities, also promoting economic development and growth or responding to regional and local problems<sup>202</sup>. In this view, Institutions can be mediators and means helping to achieve cooperation among actors within the system<sup>203</sup>.

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<sup>199</sup> See STEVEN L. LAMY, *Contemporary mainstream approaches: neo-realism and neo-liberalism*, in BEST C., in BAYLIS J., SMITH S., OWENS P., *The globalization of world politics, an introduction to international relations*, 4e, Oxford University Press, 2008.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>201</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 132.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibidem*.

Therefore, the emphasis put on cooperation issues since the 80s must not hide the more realist truth about cooperation processes, i.e. the fact that states or other actors do cooperate to achieve individual goals and/or power, depending on the actors. Without fostering unilaterally the realist approach, we would like to mention Kenneth Waltz's parable of the stag (originally ideated by Rousseau), where lack of trust among states (or men?), and the issue of coordinating the individual interests in comparison to common interests, leads to a situation where the immediate interests of each single actor prevail over the common good<sup>204</sup>.

Beyond more or less optimistic views about cooperation, as already mentioned, the emphasis on cooperation has grown since the late 1980s, with the growth of new regionalism forms, in which, in a more multipolar world, «non-state actors are active and manifest themselves at several levels of the global system»<sup>205</sup>. In this respect, for state actors, regionalism can be an important tool in order to try managing the effects of globalization<sup>206</sup>, which, as already noted, causes risks of marginalization and erosion of governmental power.

In the previous parts we tried to provide a general view about some cooperation initiatives in the Adriatic area: some of them created and managed by the European Union, its bodies or governmental institutions, and others funded by associated territorial and regional governments, along with non-state actors.

Concerning the Adriatic area, we are dealing here with a context which comprises Balkans territories and states: those involved in different cooperative initiatives, that represent today a huge market and a great chance for many countries. Italy, for example, through cooperation projects and initiatives can reach those *new* markets and be the favorite partner for import – export

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<sup>204</sup> DUNNE T., SCHMIDT B.C., *Realism*, in BEST C., in BAYLIS J., SMITH S., OWENS P., *The globalization of world politics, an introduction to international relations*, 4e, Oxford University Press, 2008, p.103.

<sup>205</sup> BEST E., CHRISTIANSEN T., *Regionalism in International Affairs*, in BEST C., in BAYLIS J., SMITH S., OWENS P., *The globalization of world politics, an introduction to international relations*, 4e, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 438.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibidem*.

operations. Statistical data show that Italy has been capable to reach the first positions in the partners' list of many Eastern European Countries (in 2008, for instance)<sup>207</sup>. However, the competition with other states (such as Germany and France) is getting pretty hard: cooperation means to be first in those markets, achieving fundamental market goals.

As a matter of fact, the process of integration of Western Balkans into the EU is going to be accelerated with the signature of many agreements, also pushing towards the creation of an Adriatic-Balkan Macro-region based on the model of the Baltic area<sup>208</sup>. In this situation of pre-European integration, some organizations and agreements (such as the CEFTA, *Central European Free Trade Association*) aim at promoting the organization of a single market alongside the European market, waiting for the completion of the process of EU enlargement in the area<sup>209</sup>.

We are dealing here with an area (the Adriatic-Balkans area) involving 13 states and 200 million people: according to statistical data, Italy gained a leading position in those markets<sup>210</sup>, but that position is being challenged by other competitors, also because of the current financial crisis.

That's why Italy and the other countries involved in the Adriatic area need cooperation and integration initiatives like the programmes described in this first

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<sup>207</sup> *International Desk South Eastern Europe*, official website <http://www.international-desk.eu>

<sup>208</sup> As reported in the dossier *EU and the Adriatic-Balkan area* (pp.1-2), published on the website <http://www.international-desk.eu>: «Another important step forward into regional cooperation was made with the preparation by the EU Commission (10 June 2009) and presentation to Parliament (19 September 2009) by what was commonly referred to as a model to be replicated in other situations. It deals with the "European Strategy for the Baltic Sea region", a comprehensive plan for cooperation and development that involves an entire macro-region comprising n.8 European States and Russia. The Commission's initiative represents a turning point in the approach to the problems of an integrated growth; and this because it is the first time that EU is proposing an intervention of such a large scale and in a so vast area. The debate in the EU Parliament underlined the possibility of repeating this experience to other macroregions, for example, in the Balkans, the North Sea, the Danube».

<sup>209</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 4.

<sup>210</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 5.

section. European policies based on real and concrete regional needs can be the key factor in order to develop markets and cultural exchange in the whole zone, also promoting fair rules and sustainable development.

Moreover, it must be noted that, even though the whole Adriatic area benefits from the cooperation strategies and initiatives here described, it is particularly the Upper Adriatic area that we are now going to analyze. In fact, such northern tip of the Adriatic Sea is the real heart of the Adriatic space: an observation that will be further confirmed by observing the current situation of the Adriatic port field. That is the reason why we are going to deal with this peculiar and northern “core” of the Adriatic area and with its own ports, where the initiatives that take place can be the engine for the maritime development in the whole Adriatic context, including adjoining shores and regions.

## **2 - Cooperation between Upper Adriatic ports**

This chapter is aimed at providing a general view on the Upper Adriatic ports, on their structural elements, on the general features of the area from a logistic point of view and on the need for cooperative actions between the actors involved. Indeed, this part would like to highlight, beyond the most technical issues that will not be analyzed, the basic need for cooperation in the port sector, in order to try to explain how and why ports do cooperate, in a wide-ranging analysis, that does not claim to be complete or exhaustive from a technical point of view.

In order to talk about these issues, it is necessary to offer a broad perspective on the general situation of the Mediterranean port system, especially concerning container transport, and its weakness elements, topic that will be discussed in the first paragraph.

In the second paragraph the analysis will be focused on a concise description of the main ports of the Upper Adriatic area and their most important features, in order to have a better understanding of the cooperation processes that can undergo in this context. In fact, the third paragraph is a short presentation of the main actions that can be carried on in cooperation processes within the port world, also focusing on the reasons and the need for cooperating as a winning solution to the weakness elements affecting Upper Adriatic ports.

Finally it will be offered a general analysis of the future development perspectives of the Upper Adriatic area, especially concerning logistics, and the goals that cooperation between ports can be concretely achieved in the future.

## 2.1 – The Mediterranean Sea: borderline or competitive pathway?

First of all, it is necessary to make some fundamental considerations about the general Mediterranean situation, because the Adriatic Sea constitutes an important though often underrated part of such wider maritime system.

The Mediterranean ports have recently witnessed (1997-2003) an higher growth of trade (and container) traffic, when compared to the European average<sup>211</sup>. Such success should be judged taking into account the importance of the maritime transport in the current worldwide trade: in fact, as noted by Paolini and Caruso (2009), today's global transport rate is 80% maritime transport<sup>212</sup>. This progressive transformation of the global economy as a globalization process has led to a growing importance of the Mediterranean Sea, especially in relation with the strategies of the liner shipping companies, that intended to exploit it as a fundamental corridor and trade pathway, with the development of transshipment ports of call and new transport models<sup>213</sup>, along with the draft of some fundamental legal acts aimed at improving the efficiency of the port field<sup>214</sup>.

In particular, the development of the *hub and spoke* as a transport operative technique, aimed at the «complementarietà tra modi di trasporto su distanze molto diverse», is being successfully utilized in the Mediterranean context<sup>215</sup>. This method, whose use is due to the development of the maritime traffic on

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<sup>211</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosisistema, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009, p. 5.

<sup>212</sup> PAOLINI M., CARUSO M., *Il Mediterraneo nell'Oceano mondo*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, (pp. 9-20), p. 9.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>214</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosisistema, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009, p. 5. In particular, we refer here to the Italian law, Legge di Riforma Portuale 84/1994, which privatized the port banks management.

<sup>215</sup> PAOLINI M., CARUSO M., *Il Mediterraneo nell'Oceano mondo*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, (pp. 9-20), p. 9.

global scale with the consequent standardization of containers, operates concretely through a *star shaped system*, intended to organize the transport chain, exploiting the specialized use of different vessels in order to optimize performances, reducing costs, time and risks<sup>216</sup>. The *hub and spoke* implies the existence of two kinds of ship and two categories of port: first the *mother ship* sails following the main maritime route, loading and releasing containers in some strategic and organized ports (the so-called *hubs*)<sup>217</sup>. The following process is acted by *feeders*, or smaller vessels, that reach the *hubs* and load the containers released by the *mother ship*: then the *feeders* take the load to the smaller ports, externally located to the major maritime routes<sup>218</sup>. Through this method, maritime transport and container movements are organized in an organic way which guarantees the integration of each port of call, also taking into account the importance of container movements in today's worldwide context. In fact, the Italian container traffic has been growing a 8% a year in the range 1997-2007, while the global shipping capacity of the vectors dedicated to container transports has grown, in the same time, from 3.2 to 10.8 million TEUs<sup>219</sup>.

However, even though in the last years the Mediterranean container market has been regarded as *boosting*, a consideration based on growth forecasts (9-10% expected average yearly growth), mainly given by the increase in the demand for international transport from Asia (China and India), it should be mentioned here that uncertainty factors are surely present<sup>220</sup>. Such uncertainty elements are mainly due to a decrease in shipping company profits, given by the combined action of the progressive increase in unit handling costs (mainly due to *soaring crude oil prices*) and the increasing competition, even in terms of

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<sup>216</sup> *Ivi.*, 10.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>218</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>219</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosisistema, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009, p. 7.

<sup>220</sup> Regione Marche, PORTUS: Report WP4, *Development and evaluation of integrated scenario of Adriatic ports*, Ancona, 2008, pp. 138-139.

price reduction: a trend that in the short term will affect ports and related services<sup>221</sup>.

Going back to the *hub and spoke* method, it must be noted that it is a relatively new method in the Mediterranean Sea<sup>222</sup>: before the 1990s, the Mediterranean port system was mainly focused on regional traffic (short-range traffic) and only with the improvement of worldwide exchange routes (*Far East – Europe – US*) this method has been definitely assumed, making of the Adriatic Sea a fundamental basin for long-range intermodal transport<sup>223</sup>. Such new shipping and transport methods, along with the improvement of the container transports, have led to an impressive growth in competition and efficiency of the Mediterranean Sea, deemed to be, in the first years of 2000s, a crucial and strategic pathway for international trade traffics<sup>224</sup>.

Concerning container movements, the trend of growth of this particular sector in the transport chain and the progressive concentration of shipping lines and terminal operators pursuing the economies of scale (along with the *hub and spoke* method<sup>225</sup>) have led to a growing average size of ships<sup>226</sup>.

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<sup>221</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>222</sup> As widely acknowledged, the *hub and spoke* method is used in the Baltic Sea since 1970s.

<sup>223</sup> PAOLINI M., CARUSO M., *Il Mediterraneo nell'Oceano mondo*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, (pp. 9-20), p. 11. We especially refer here to container movements. "*Fino agli anni Novanta il sistema portuale mediterraneo era centrato sul traffico regionale, di breve raggio, e sui servizi secondari. L'affermarsi del sistema hub and spoke, con l'incremento degli scambi tra Europa ed Estremo Oriente e tra Europa e America, ne ha modificato il ruolo. Per collocazione strategica e proprietà peculiari dei mercati che lo circondano, è divenuto un bacino cruciale per il trasporto intermodale di lungo raggio*".

<sup>224</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>225</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 10.

<sup>226</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosystem, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009, p. 8.

We are referring here to the so-called *gigantism* phenomena, the *giant scale of the vessels*<sup>227</sup> that implies the building and use of *full container ships*<sup>228</sup>: an operation that is obliging many ports in the world to take actions in order to adapt their own infrastructures and facilities to the size of such ships. This trend implies that the largest vessels (7,000 – 12,500 TEUs) are pushing smaller vessels down one level in the hierarchy: «at the lowest level, the smallest vessels will be squeezed out, as they will no longer be economically viable».<sup>229</sup> «Shipping economics today are driven mainly by the need to fill vessels and in achieving a low-unit-cost per slot», a fact that makes possible to have good savings, utilizing bigger vessels<sup>230</sup>.

However, the *gigantism*, i.e. «larger vessels replacing and sidelining smaller vessels» and its consequent *cascade effect*, «where larger ships will displace smaller ships in routes and ports worldwide» is not a recent phenomenon<sup>231</sup>. Larry and Boon Hoe (2008) observe that «the size of container ships has been increasing since the 1960s but what is different now are the quantum leaps in size, the number of slots being added, and how quickly these changes are occurring»<sup>232</sup>.

They also note that:

*Maximum ship sizes have grown steadily from 3,000 TEUs in 1980 and 4,500 TEUs in the late 1980s, to the early 1990s when the Panamax barrier was breached. Since then, ship sizes have ballooned – to*

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<sup>227</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 3.

<sup>228</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosisistema, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009, p. 8.

<sup>229</sup> LAM L., OOI BOON HOE, *Tomorrow's world*, www.portstrategy.com, in *Port Opinion* Portek, May, 2008, pp. 44-45.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibidem*.

7,200 TEUs in 2000 and then in 2006, the first 12,500 TEUs vessel entered service. And the trend continues. At the end of 2007, 188 vessels of 10,000 TEUs and above were on order”, while the expected percentage of usage by 2011 was more than 50% of post-panamax vessels of the total of container slots.<sup>233</sup>

Otherwise, it is useful to remind that «while maximum vessel sizes of the future will ultimately be determined by economic considerations, the fact remains that ever-larger container vessels will profoundly affect our industry»<sup>234</sup>. As a matter of fact, «regional ports and feeder ports must accommodate the larger ships: regional ports presently serving 2,500 TEUs ships may now find it necessary to accommodate ships of 5,000 TEUs»<sup>235</sup>. Such process leads to the result that regional (and *feeder*) ports that «succeed in attracting larger vessels in time emerge as key regional hubs and gain more transshipment traffic»<sup>236</sup>. It is a kind of Darwinian selection, where «those unable to service larger ships will be marginalized, visited only by smaller vessels, or perhaps even dropped as port of call»<sup>237</sup>. This fact implies a deep review of the infrastructures within the port area: physical infrastructure must be suitable, and in many cases the overall layout of the terminal should be reviewed<sup>238</sup>. According to Lam and Boon Hoe (2008), «the *cascade effect* will provide the opportunity for both regional and feeder ports to climb a step higher in the hierarchy by attracting the large ships that have been pushed downward»<sup>239</sup>. The direct consequence is that «ports that modernize and transform themselves will be ideally positioned for success, while those unable to do so may, literally, *miss the boat*»<sup>240</sup>.

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<sup>233</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>234</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>235</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 15.

<sup>236</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>237</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 15.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>239</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>240</sup> *Ibidem.*

An example of these actions undertaken in order to cope with this growing phenomena is the enlargement of the Panama Channel, whose operations began in 2007 and should be concluded in 2014<sup>241</sup>. Some statistical data (2009) seem to demonstrate that today's ships number will have to be reduced but at the same time the loading capacity will have to be improved, in order to stand the international competition, reaching 13/14 thousands TEUs<sup>242</sup>.

The progressive use and importance of container movements and the impossibility for larger ships to enter the Panama Channel (the so-called *Post-Panamax* vessels<sup>243</sup>) have produced its effects at a worldwide scale: in fact, such changes in the container system and in the international trade flows need an integrated logistic system suitable to these new needs, and the *hub and spoke* method of the Mediterranean context seems to provide a good solution.

Due to these recent transformations, the international traffic has been allocated to the so-called *pendulum* routes (see 2.4) that has been emerging: the ones following the Suez - Gibraltar route, which goes from east to west reaching the North Sea and Northern Atlantic Ocean and always counting on a chain of *hubs* where to release part of the load on the *feeder* ships<sup>244</sup>.

In fact, as noted by Paolini (2005), today's Mediterranean context seems to be witnessing the coexistence of different levels of cohesion between the western

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<sup>241</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosistema, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009, p. 8, note 9.

<sup>242</sup> PAOLINI M., CARUSO M., *Il Mediterraneo nell'Oceano mondo*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, (pp. 9-20), p. 10.

<sup>243</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosistema, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009, p. 8.

<sup>244</sup> PAOLINI M., CARUSO M., *Il Mediterraneo nell'Oceano mondo*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, (pp. 9-20), p. 10.

and the eastern area of the maritime system<sup>245</sup>. On the one hand, the western zone presents features of cohesion and development of the maritime traffics, thanks to the action of national and regional units<sup>246</sup>. Such actors have promoted and developed relations between each other and links with the northern African regions, leading to cooperation initiatives and territorial partnerships<sup>247</sup>. On the other hand, the eastern Mediterranean Sea presents an insufficient level of maritime transports: indeed, if the economics forecasts seem to envisage a growth of the traffic rates, the absence of concrete partnership strategies leads to a wider gap between the two areas within the Mediterranean Sea<sup>248</sup>. In particular, the situation of marginality of the eastern area seems to depend on the fact, that the majority of the involved actors as the countries in the Balkans region, Turkey and other eastern countries, are not located within a geopolitical and economical framework completely coherent with both the Community projects about north-eastern Mediterranean and integration strategies implemented in the Euro-Mediterranean context<sup>249</sup>. In fact, the gap between more and less developed and integrated areas, due to the absence or insufficiency of structural funds dedicated, can only be overcome with a strong activism by territorial actors<sup>250</sup>.

Nevertheless, the maritime traffics coming from the Eastern Mediterranean Sea are generally choosing *pendulum* routes via Aegean - Ionian and Tyrrhenian Sea, towards the Atlantic Ocean<sup>251</sup>. In the last years, transport operators seemed to prefer these routes, directed to the North European ports, for their maritime movements, utterly *by-passing* the Adriatic Sea.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> PAOLINI M., *Perché l'Adriatico non diventi un Mar Morto*, in *I Balcani non sono lontani*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2005, (pp. 9-17), p. 11.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>247</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>248</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>249</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>250</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>251</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>252</sup> *Ibidem.*

But why do these routes not rely on Italian and/or Upper Adriatic ports? According to the Bank of Italy, the favorable geographic position of Italy, along with its *transshipment* ports of call would allow Italy to be potentially able to intercept these traffics<sup>253</sup>. However, the reason for such Italian (and Adriatic, in a wider framework) marginality should be explained by the low level of networks and infrastructures of their ports in comparison to *Northern Range* ports.

In fact, the actors that shift the international routes and trade movements, not choosing Adriatic and Italian ports for their business, require an integrated logistic system that many Adriatic ports still do not have, or have not already developed in a satisfying way. Such actors, managing container movements and traffic in today's context are progressively being identified as international logistic companies, that ask for ports endowed with port-land connections, *distripark* or strategically located intermodal centers<sup>254</sup>. Without entering here in a deeper technical analysis, it shall be sufficient to say that a *distripark* is a logistic platform or area that, located near the port terminals and integrated with an intermodal transport system, provides solutions to the treatment of containers commodities with a series of services and even productive or packing activities<sup>255</sup>. The UNCTAD has regarded the creation of *distripark* as an example of regional cooperation, defining it as «a commercial area with warehouses, linked to inland transport networks, used for repacking, storage and distribution of cargo that is often situated close to the port area»<sup>256</sup>.

In addition, among the above mentioned private actors that shift today's worldwide container traffic, we can find global liners, that «through acquisition or

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<sup>253</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosisistema, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009, p. 8.

<sup>254</sup> PAOLINI M., CARUSO M., *Il Mediterraneo nell'Oceano mondo*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, (pp. 9-20), p. 10.

<sup>255</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosisistema, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009, p. 30.

<sup>256</sup> UNCTAD, *Potentialities for regional port cooperation*, report by the UNCTAD secretariat, UNCTAD/SDD/PORT/5, GE.96-50043, 15 January 1996, p. 18.

the establishment of strategic partnerships with port terminals, [...] have controlled more efficiently the main Mediterranean terminals»<sup>257</sup>. Such strategies of vertical integration, with the acquisition of container terminals by the most dynamic global liners, have been welcomed by Mediterranean port authorities, trying to cope with the increased market competition and *gigantism* phenomena<sup>258</sup>. Important examples of strategies of this kind are «the investments of Maersk (A.P. Moller – Maersk Group, based in Denmark) in Algeciras (Spain), Tangier-Med (Morocco) and East Port Said (Egypt), Cma-Cgm (France) in Marsaxlokk (Malta), Evergreen (Taiwan) in Taranto, COSCO (China) in Piraeus and Naples, MSC (Switzerland and Italy) in Naples, China Shipping Container Line (China) in Damietta (Egypt)»<sup>259</sup>.

Having said that, it is clear that the Mediterranean and Adriatic systems need better infrastructures connected to the ports and to a higher level of efficiency and services in the port field<sup>260</sup>. That's the reason why the Mediterranean Sea is facing a high competition with the *Northern Range*, i.e. the ports located between the northern European Atlantic area and the British channel, including the ports of Rotterdam, Hamburg, Antwerp, Bremen, Zeebrugge and Le Havre<sup>261</sup>.

In the last years these ports have regained a centrality they had lost for some years at advantage of the Mediterranean ports<sup>262</sup>. In fact, the Mediterranean Sea port system, thanks to the growth of international trade flows and the

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<sup>257</sup> BUONO F., SORIANI S. M- *Mare/Sea* in GIACCARIA P., PARADISO M., *Mediterranean Lexicon - Lessico Mediterraneo*, Roma, Società Geografica Italiana, pp. 165-180 (ISBN 9788888692845), p. 5.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>260</sup> PAOLINI M., CARUSO M., *Il Mediterraneo nell'Oceano mondo*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, (pp. 9-20), p. 9.

<sup>261</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosisistema, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009, p. 31.

<sup>262</sup> PAOLINI M., CARUSO M., *Il Mediterraneo nell'Oceano mondo*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, (pp. 9-20), p. 11.

improvement of the *hub and spoke* process after the 90s, had gained competition for a while<sup>263</sup>, although, as noted by Paolini and Caruso (2009), in the last years the growth of the South-Mediterranean movement in comparison to the *Northern Range*, has lost its strength again, making of the latter the most chosen one by shipping companies and trade flows destinations<sup>264</sup>.

The direct consequence is that the *Northern Range* is still deemed to be the privileged platform for commodities destination, and it is the one preferred by transport companies because it offers ports connected to the large markets of the respective hinterland, that have a very efficient intermodal transport system<sup>265</sup>. Containers are rapidly moved using river channels, road and railroad networks, also exploiting the physical characteristics and features of the ports, extremely accessible to every kind of ship<sup>266</sup>.

In contrast, as observed by the Bank of Italy (2009), the Italian situation presents a series of critical features that we shortly mention here: even though the geographic position of Italy represents a real advantage, the land transport infrastructure still remain inadequate<sup>267</sup>. In particular, the inefficient or non-existent inland connections with ports seem to be the most relevant disadvantage, representing a gap from the other European Countries, that should be solved with moderate investments and the completion of the European priority axes<sup>268</sup>, such as the *Trans European Network*, intermodal corridors aimed at improving the development of the traffic<sup>269</sup>. In addition, a further negative feature of the general Italian situation within port activities,

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<sup>263</sup> *Ibidem*. Additional reasons to this temporary success were the traffic growth, also thanks to the enlargement of the Suez channel and the growth perspectives about the southern coasts and Black Sea areas.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>266</sup> PAOLINI M., CARUSO M., *Il Mediterraneo nell'Oceano mondo*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, (pp. 9-20), p. 11.

<sup>267</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosisistema, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009, p. 13.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>269</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 14. See 2.4 for a description of TEN-T Networks.

seems to be the excessive use of the road system, while national policies should be aimed at reducing such use in order to exploit the railroad system, still too expensive, according to some operators<sup>270</sup>.

Other disadvantages linked to the Italian ports are their lower efficiency in comparison to the foreign ports, especially about time and custom practice, and delays: a quite negative feature that can also represent a huge cost for operators, that for each single day of delay and parking in the port must pay huge fees (for instance, transport companies may have to pay \$100,000 a day)<sup>271</sup>. In addition, the most elementary respect for international standard in technical transport instruments, doesn't even seem to exist in some Italian ports, often leading to a damage of the transported goods<sup>272</sup>, and to the customer's dissatisfaction, we would like to add.

To sum up, beyond the most technical details in the competition issues of the Italian ports, the broad disadvantage is represented by the generally inadequate infrastructural situation, and the scant depth of sea funds, not always suitable to guest big-sized ships<sup>273</sup>. In this respect, among the Italian ports, only the ports of Gioia Tauro and Trieste seem to be ready for the yet mentioned *gigantism* phenomena and market competition issues, carrying on constant dredging and maintenance operations<sup>274</sup>. Generally speaking, it seems that most Italian ports facing the Adriatic Sea would need a deep process of modernization aimed at improving infrastructures and logistic issues: as observed by the same Bank of Italy report (2009), *the logistic chain and the inland terminals system serving the Adriatic ports are deemed to be not optimal*, also highlighting the insufficient dimension of the stock port areas<sup>275</sup>. The report would recommend the improvement of the infrastructures, especially the ones related to railroads, referring to the potentialities and chances offered by the Eastern European

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<sup>270</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>271</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 16.

<sup>272</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 18.

<sup>273</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 17.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>275</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 20. Translated from Italian.

Countries markets, as well as by Austria and Southern Germany<sup>276</sup>. It must be noted that those are infrastructural actions that have always been fundamental in order to improve port competition: what's new here is that such changes seem to be finally operating in these years, according to the port presentation available on the North Adriatic Ports Association website, that we are going to analyze in the following chapter.

Having said that, it is clear that today's Adriatic situation is still a borderline condition, a context of great potentialities frustrated by the problems already mentioned and by a permanent situation of marginality. But which are the ports involved in the Upper Adriatic area and what are their main features? We try here to offer a broad perspective on these ports and their main characteristics, which are particularly important to know, in order to analyze cooperation in such context.

## 2.2 – Basic structural elements of the main Upper Adriatic ports

«Ravenna, Venice and Trieste in Italy, Koper in Slovenia and Rijeka in Croatia are the major ports of the Northern Adriatic coastline»<sup>277</sup>. They are all *non-specialized* or multipurpose ports<sup>278</sup>, and they operate in different markets and sectors through specialized or multifunctional terminals<sup>279</sup>.

The overall movements and port throughputs were, in 2009 (Port Authority data) as follows: Ravenna 18,7 million tons; Venice 25,9; Trieste 44,3; Koper 13,1

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<sup>276</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>277</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p.1.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>279</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 494.

and Rijeka 11,2<sup>280</sup>. The data must also be judged taking into account the current international economic crisis, which represented for the general situation of the Adriatic ports an important reduction on traffic rates, particularly heavy if compared to the year 2008<sup>281</sup>. In terms of composition, the major part of the throughput given by the Upper Adriatic ports is composed of liquid bulks (oil and oil products), dry bulks (like grain, mineral materials, foodstuffs, scrap iron etc.), *ro-ro* and *ro-pax*<sup>282</sup>.

Concerning container movements, Soriani (2011) notes that, even though the gap between the Adriatic area and the Upper Tyrrhenian Sea has been reduced in the last years, the overall situation of the Adriatic ports is still characterized by marginality: until 2009 Venice was the port that moved the highest number of containers (369.000 TEUs)<sup>283</sup>. About the growth rates of the Adriatic ports, Koper and Rijeka have registered higher growth rates than the Italian ports, in line with the dynamism of their countries' markets<sup>284</sup>. However, Ravenna and Venice still have a significant level of industry (especially in the petrochemical and chemical production fields)<sup>285</sup>, while Venice also plays a fundamental role in the Mediterranean cruise industry<sup>286</sup>.

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<sup>280</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibidem*, see note (12): in comparison with year 2008, the 2009 data show the following reduction rates: Ravenna -27.8%, Venice -16.7%, Trieste -8%, Koper -18.1%, Rijeka -9.3%. In order to offer a wider knowledge on last years' data, we report here the port throughputs, that in 2006 were as follows: Ravenna 26.7 million tons, Venice 30.9, Trieste 48.3, Koper 14.0, Rijeka 10.8 (Soriani, Antonellini, p.1.).

<sup>282</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p.1.

<sup>283</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 494. The other Adriatic ports moved as follows: Koper 343.000, Trieste 276.000, Ravenna 185.000, Rijeka 122.000.

<sup>284</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p.1.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>286</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520, p. 495).

Given these general observations, referring to the specificity of each port, it should be also noted, that the ports in the Upper Adriatic area (from Ravenna to Rijeka), belonging to the same context, have always represented an area crossed by dense relations, also from a cultural point of view, as already observed in paragraph 1.1. Indeed, if some argue that in today's context it is not possible to define the existence of a real *port system*, but rather of a *system of ports*<sup>287</sup>, highlighting the heterogeneity of the ports involved, it seems possible to maintain that a *system of ports* was already present in the Adriatic area, especially developing between the two world wars, when a real system was in force, «sia in termini di complementarità e cooperazione sia in quelli di gerarchia e competizione»<sup>288</sup>.

Without entering here into exhaustive historical considerations (a few historical notes will be mentioned in the following pages, when referring to the nature of each single port), we only would like to stress the importance that policies enacted by the main ports of the Upper Adriatic had, and still have, in the definition of the main commercial routes in the area: processes that are often bound to the progressive shift of hegemonic powers. Just to mention, the superpower of Venice in the Adriatic Sea since medieval times till the fall of the Republic in 1797<sup>289</sup>; the development of the port of Trieste and its transformation, also thanks to the Austrian Empire policies, from emporium to commercial port of transit in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and still the industrial growth and political resurgence of Venice and Marghera after the first World War<sup>290</sup>. Historical events that had always direct consequences on commercial traffic in the Upper Adriatic area, in which a complex cobweb of relations progressively developed during the centuries. Moreover, it would be wrong to underrate the

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<sup>287</sup> BONALDO S., Port Authority of Venice, see Interview 4.1 in Appendix.

<sup>288</sup> PETRI R. *Il sistema portuale del Medio e Alto Adriatico* in L. CERASI; R. PETRI; S. PETRUNGARO, *Porti di frontiera. Industria e commercio a Trieste, Fiume e Pola tra le guerre mondiali*, Viella, Roma, 2008, p. 15.

<sup>289</sup> TRAMPUS F., *Il contributo del porto di Trieste alla mobilità ed allo sviluppo del nord-est italiano: verso la realizzazione del "sistema dell'Alto Adriatico"*, EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2005, p. 28.

<sup>290</sup> GARZELLA G. et al., *I porti della penisola italiana. Due mari a confronto tra storia e sviluppo futuro*, Pacini, Pisa, 2011, p. 16, p.64.

maritime traffic of the Adriatic sea in the past centuries, which, particularly since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was already supported by a cobweb of growing relations, comprising small and medium ports well connected and communicating between each other, resulting in high mobility, of passengers too<sup>291</sup>.

Given these short considerations, aimed at showing how dense political and commercial relations have always been in the Upper Adriatic area, we provide here some basic structural elements of each port, in order to provide a clearer view on the context that we are going to describe from the cooperative point of view.

### **The port of Ravenna (ITA)**

The port of Ravenna, «a major canal port», extending for more than 14 km, is today the leading port in Italy for handling dry bulk products (like cereals, fertilizers and animal feed products), also representing «an important commercial call for the general cargo and container traffic»<sup>292</sup>. Beyond these activities, traffic within the port includes oil and chemical products, raw materials and finished goods containers of various composition and *general cargo* consisting of timber and metallurgical products<sup>293</sup>. The port of Ravenna seems to be a quite active port, involving several product categories: the official data show that to date, the average overall handling of goods has exceeded 26 million tons, and all these activities can count on a number of facilities, like warehouses and silos<sup>294</sup>.

In addition, the port represent an important reality for the tourism, boosting «the largest International Tourism leisure boat and yacht marina in the Adriatic», and disposing of the new cruise passenger terminal at Porto Corsini, also counting

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<sup>291</sup> ANDREOZZI D., *Centro e confine. Porto, spazi e strategie portuali*, in GARZELLA G. et al., *I porti della penisola italiana. Due mari a confronto tra storia e sviluppo futuro*, Pacini, Pisa, 2011, p. 14.

<sup>292</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/>.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibidem*.

on «frequent and long-established maritime coasting services running between Ravenna and Sicily and recently also ferry lines operating with Greece»<sup>295</sup>.

From an historical point of view, it is useful to remember that the port of Ravenna started up its activity in 1738, with the foundation of the Porto Corsini (named after Pope Clemente XII), an 11 km long canal, reaching the town from the sea<sup>296</sup>. Even though the conditions were favorable to the establishment of a profitable traffic, the port of Ravenna had been underrated for many years, in a context often characterized by the difficulty of entering a wider perspective, chained to local conditions<sup>297</sup>. Indeed, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the port could not already be considered as a proper economic source, even though the establishment of industrial production started towards the end of the century<sup>298</sup>. However, it's in the aftermath of the second World War that the development of the port as an important international port took place, «when refineries and petrochemical plants, linked to the discovery of extensive gas fields offshore from Ravenna, were located on the port's banks»<sup>299</sup>. However, to such industrial growth, a diversification of activities took place in the following decades, also in conjunction with the 70s oil crisis, when new dispositions on organization and structure were taken within the port framework<sup>300</sup>. In such context (after the 70s oil crisis), «the commercial characteristics of the port have been accentuated and, thanks to private operators, new specialized terminals handling bulk cargo, general cargo and containers, have been set up next to the terminals already operating»<sup>301</sup>. In the same years, the port of Ravenna developed its first container traffic, starting the treatment of 955 TEUs traffic in 1970, reaching

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<sup>295</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>296</sup> Autorità Portuale Ravenna, website, <http://www.port.ravenna.it/>.

<sup>297</sup> GIUNTINI A., *Il Porto di Ravenna tra '800 e '900*, GARZELLA G. et al., *I porti della penisola italiana. Due mari a confronto tra storia e sviluppo futuro*, Pacini, Pisa, 2011, p. 77.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>299</sup> Autorità Portuale Ravenna, website, <http://www.port.ravenna.it/>.

<sup>300</sup> GIUNTINI A., *Il Porto di Ravenna tra '800 e '900*, GARZELLA G. et al., *I porti della penisola italiana. Due mari a confronto tra storia e sviluppo futuro*, Pisa, Pacini, p. 84.

<sup>301</sup> Autorità Portuale Ravenna, website, <http://www.port.ravenna.it/>.

206.506 TEUs only nine years later: a really impressive growth, leading the port of Ravenna to the first position in container traffic rates of the Adriatic Sea<sup>302</sup>.

Even if some people claim that the time for great projects has come to an end<sup>303</sup>, the port of Ravenna is still a dynamic reality, «a large structure which can offer a wide range of services to all kinds of goods», taking «advantage of important public and private investments aimed at improving its infrastructure, extending and specializing its service offering in order to reach the highest quality standards»<sup>304</sup>.

About the future development of the area, official data report that the Port of Ravenna Authority has invested 220 million euro in the last few years, to put into practice the development master plan of the area, which includes the dredging and deepening of the canal bed to -11.5 meters, new quays, new protection walls, new lightning system and other additional works totaling a further 180 million euro<sup>305</sup>. Further deepening and dredging operations to -14.5 meters are in progress «to accommodate vessels with a draft of up to 44 ft, such as bulk carriers with a load capacity of over 50,000 tons and container carriers with a capacity of over 45,000 TEUs»<sup>306</sup>. In addition, some claim that creating a *distripark*, «functionally integrated with the port structure and well connected to the main infrastructure axes, would allow the local production system to fully participate in the international competitive arena»<sup>307</sup>.

To sum up, the port of Ravenna still seems to be a growing reality, able to develop its facilities and structures, even in these times of crisis when, as already mentioned, traffic rates easily slow down.

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<sup>302</sup> GIUNTINI A., *Il Porto di Ravenna tra '800 e '900*, GARZELLA G. et al., *I porti della penisola italiana. Due mari a confronto tra storia e sviluppo futuro*, Pisa, Pacini, p. 83.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>304</sup> Autorità Portuale Ravenna, website, <http://www.port.ravenna.it/>.

<sup>305</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/>.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>307</sup> Regione Marche, PORTUS: Report WP4, *Development and evaluation of integrated scenario of Adriatic ports*, Ancona, 2008, p. 107.

## The port of Venice (ITA)

The port of Venice has the particular feature of operating among one of the most touristic cities in the world, and the presentation of the port in the NAPA website seems to be witnessing this self-consciousness, with the title *Port of Venice - Where the Earth revolves around the Sea*. Venice is a European crucial node for many commercial flows, such as break bulk and cargo traffic, and «an important container port with liner services to the *Far East*», but the most developed function seems to be its role as leading home port for cruise ships in the Mediterranean Sea<sup>308</sup>. Indeed, we are dealing here with a port which guests two million passengers per year, offering services for cruise ships, as also for ferries, fast ships and maxi yachts<sup>309</sup>.

We are dealing here with a port which witnessed an impressive growth of its industrial production, started in 1917 with the establishment of Porto Marghera<sup>310</sup>, which later became the main engine of development of the port of Venice<sup>311</sup>. It should also be noted, that the growth of the port is strictly related to the historical framework of the aftermath of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, when with the Italian conquest of Trieste and Rijeka, Venice became finally central in the commercial traffic of the Italian Kingdom, whereas Trieste, which in the Austrian Empire had played a key role, ended relegated to the condition of a marginal port<sup>312</sup>. In fact, in the last period of the Austrian domination (towards year 1866), the port of Venice still suffered a crisis, with marked marginality, in deep contrast with the dynamism of Trieste<sup>313</sup>. Thanks to the improvement of railway connections and industrial planning, the port of Venice grew in importance:

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<sup>308</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>310</sup> PETRI R., *Il porto di Venezia dall'Unità alla Seconda guerra mondiale* in GARZELLA G. et al., *I porti della penisola italiana. Due mari a confronto tra storia e sviluppo futuro*, Pacini, Pisa, 2011, p. 61.

<sup>311</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 66.

<sup>312</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 64.

<sup>313</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 59.

when in 1866 Venice was declared part of the Kingdom of Italy, its port was finally considered as a fundamental port of national importance<sup>314</sup>.

In fact, in the aftermath of the first World War, the port of Venice gained industrial importance, also developing a large network of inland waterways connections, linking the port to the most industrially growing realities of its hinterland, as, for instance, the Lombard area<sup>315</sup>. Indeed, the Venetian hinterland could range till the Tyrol, Switzerland, Bayern and Rhine areas, confirming the industrial feature of the port, which in the 1930s moved an important rate of traffic to north European areas, to Mediterranean ones and even to the USA<sup>316</sup>. The good integration of the port with the hinterland can be still observed in today's days: Venice is the only port in Italy with an inland waterways connection, along the valley of the river Po, towards Mantua and Cremona, using a multimodal transport system that will be further enhanced and developed with the expansion of its railways infrastructure<sup>317</sup>.

In addition, such structural features can be of fundamental importance also in the future development of the port system of Venice, which is increasing its capacity in all sectors, developing new terminals and new logistics platform (*ro-ro* and *ro-pax*) that should be operational in these months (year 2012); at the same time a deep reorganization of the port area will follow, operating together with a new container terminal based in Marghera, which will be connected to the railroad network<sup>318</sup>. These plans are supposed to upgrade Venice's capacity to 3 million TEUs<sup>319</sup>.

As noted by Soriani and Antonellini (2008), in the cases of Ravenna and Venice, the port hinterlands are mainly regional and inter-regional, being not only connected to their respective regions (Veneto and Emilia Romagna) but

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<sup>314</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>315</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 66.

<sup>316</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 64.

<sup>317</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/>.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibidem*.

also to other regional units, such as Marche and Lombardy<sup>320</sup>. About the accessibility of these two ports from the sea, it is widely acknowledged that it is conditioned by their morphological features of these two ports, mainly located on low coastal plains: indeed, the maximum depth recorded in the two ports ranges from 9.00 to 15.00 meters, always implying the need for dredging operations, a fundamental function among port activities<sup>321</sup>.

### **The port of Trieste (ITA)**

The third main Italian port of the Upper Adriatic area is Trieste, which presents a mainly regional and inter-regional hinterland (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, its own region, and Veneto), with an important international component, represented by connections to Austria and Slovenia<sup>322</sup>. Its official presentation focuses on the fact of being efficient and competitive, also highlighting the «excellent accessibility» from the sea, «outstanding road and rail connections, proximity to the rapidly growing economies of Central and Eastern Europe»<sup>323</sup>. In fact, «the activities of the port of Trieste are based on traffic to and from Central Eastern Europe and on the land-sea interchange flows produced by that region, as well as on the gradual expansion of the European Union market towards the emerging countries and on the shift to the East of the economic and production balance»<sup>324</sup>. Moreover, the activities of the port also benefit from the consolidation of trade relations with Eastern Mediterranean region and Middle Eastern and *Far East* countries<sup>325</sup>.

The port's promotional strategy stresses the importance of being near to these new growing economies, but it must be reminded, that since the 1970s, «the port has progressively lost its traditional role as the maritime gateway to Austria

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<sup>320</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p.1.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>322</sup> *Ivi.*, p.2.

<sup>323</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/>.

<sup>324</sup> Regione Marche, PORTUS: Report WP4, *Development and evaluation of integrated scenario of Adriatic ports*, Ancona, 2008, p. 97.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibidem*.

and the Eastern European Countries, to the advantage of Northern European ports»<sup>326</sup>. Nevertheless, the promotion strategy implemented by the port would also like to stress its historical background with the title or slogan: *Port of Trieste – Live the past, experience the future*. Indeed, history seems to be particularly relevant in the case of the port of Trieste, which still benefits of the special provisions set by the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947: the treaty established a *Special Legal Regime of the Free Port of Trieste*, allowing operators to opt for the most favorable customs treatment, in relation to the operations to be carried out, between the Community Customs procedures and the local ones<sup>327</sup>. The Free Port of Trieste and its area must be considered as external to the EU Customs territory<sup>328</sup>: however, provisions establishing a favorable condition to trade date back to nearly two centuries before the second World War. In fact, it should be recalled that the port had already been declared *Porto Franco* in 1719, by appointment of the Austrian Emperor Charles VI<sup>329</sup>. A principle that survived, more or less in the same shape, during the centuries, being confirmed again in 1922 by the Italian Kingdom, with the provision of the *punti franchi*<sup>330</sup>.

Apart from custom matters, it would be also interesting to mention the radical transformation of the port activity in Trieste at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the economic framework of the port was deeply affected by new technologies (e.g. steam engines), and political changes, such as the French revolution, the Napoleonic era and the Habsburg power<sup>331</sup>. The port, which in the 18<sup>th</sup> century had served as central port emporium of the Austrian Empire,

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<sup>326</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 2.

<sup>327</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/>.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>329</sup> ROMANO R., *Lavorare in funzione del porto. Principali tappe dello sviluppo del porto triestino fra Ottocento e Novecento*, in CATALAN T., ZILLI S., O.T.I.S. Osservatorio del lavoro transfrontaliero per le aree portuali di Trieste, Monfalcone e Koper/Capodistria, Programma d'iniziativa comunitaria INTERREG III A Italia-Slovenia 2000-2006, La Mongolfiera Libri, Trieste, 2008, p. 67.

<sup>330</sup> ANDREOZZI D., *Centro e confine. Porto, spazi e strategie portuali*, in GARZELLA G. et al., *I porti della penisola italiana. Due mari a confronto tra storia e sviluppo futuro*, Pacini, Pisa, 2011, p. 21.

<sup>331</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 16.

supported by Imperial investments (also aimed to solve, through the improvement of its infrastructures, its structural inadequacies) and by an heterogeneous class of dealers and capitalists, evolved into port of transit in the following century bringing Trieste to a commercial dynamism never experienced before<sup>332</sup>. Nevertheless, such dynamism, which had shadowed the power of Venice, which was living a deep crisis since the fall of the Republic by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, came to an end in the aftermath of the first World War<sup>333</sup>. In fact, with the fall of the Austrian Empire, the cities and ports of Trieste and Rijeka, being annexed to Italy, started suffering a position of marginality in comparison to Venice, once again confirmed as major port of the Upper Adriatic area<sup>334</sup>.

However, what matters most to us here, without entering in the historical development of the port, which also deeply suffered from the destructive structural and territorial consequences of the second World War, is the fact that after the transformation into transit port, its commercial function has been lasting during the years, leading to the current commercial and traffic layout. Today, concerning the types of traffic involved, the port of Trieste offers services designed on the personal preferences of each customer, handling containers, *ro-ro*, ferries and passengers traffics, shipbuilding operations, as well as a multitude of different goods and products imported and exported from the port<sup>335</sup>. It must be also noted, that «about 78% of the total traffic in the port is constituted by unloaded oil, which is then transported by pipeline to Austria and Southern Germany»<sup>336</sup>.

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<sup>332</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>333</sup> PETRI R., *Il porto di Venezia dall'Unità alla Seconda guerra mondiale* in GARZELLA G. et al., *I porti della penisola italiana. Due mari a confronto tra storia e sviluppo futuro*, Pacini, Pisa, 2011, p. 64.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>335</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/>.

<sup>336</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 2.

About the future development of the area, many are the operations indicated to be carried on: it has been defined a plan for the «extensive revision, renewal and extension of the structures», focusing on the creation and / or enlargement of different terminals, such as a modern *general cargo* terminal, a container-, a *ro-ro* and a passenger terminal<sup>337</sup>. The official data of the port of Trieste indicate the existence of more than 20 specialized and well equipped terminals, capable of handling every type of cargo, as well as the presence of a huge free zone within the port area (1.800.000 m<sup>2</sup> within the overall extension of 2.300.000 m<sup>2</sup>), storages and other important facilities<sup>338</sup>.

To sum up, beyond the technical data of the port layout, the geographical location of the Port of Trieste seems to be a fundamental issue, having always influenced its same existence and development. It should be definitely considered as a potential advantage, especially taking into account the possibilities offered by the growth of the Eastern European markets and the traffic that the Upper Adriatic ports, Trieste and Koper above all, shall manage in the near future. Indeed, the port of Trieste could be crucial for trade flows involving Eastern European Countries, given the fact that the port of Koper, so far preferred by the shipping companies for its adequate railways system, seems to be near to saturation<sup>339</sup>. As also recalled by institutional documents, «the position of the port of Trieste leads to suggest that future container activities should be focused on exploiting its proximity to the intersection between the North-South and East-West commercial routes»<sup>340</sup>.

Indeed, the Adriatic area represents one of the new developed options of traffic, and its connections and potentialities with the Eastern Countries and Balkans: in this framework, the European railway integration, till the Port of Pireo, one of the most important ports in Europe, and most important container port in the

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<sup>337</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/>.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>339</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosisistema, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009, p. 21.

<sup>340</sup> Regione Marche, PORTUS: Report WP4, *Development and evaluation of integrated scenario of Adriatic ports*, Ancona, 2008, p. 97.

Eastern Mediterranean Sea, should constitute a fundamental tool of development<sup>341</sup>.

### **The port of Koper (SLO)**

The port of Koper (*Capodistria* in Italian), is presented as a «modern, well organized and well equipped multipurpose hub», located in the Republic of Slovenia, in the southern part of the Gulf of Trieste: the port is the *Border Inspection Port* for the European Union, and it benefits of a free zone status<sup>342</sup>. The port of Koper is located in the Obalno-Kraška (Coastal-Karst) region, «one of the smallest regions in Slovenia in terms of size and among the most developed in terms of economic conditions»<sup>343</sup>. The port, whose maximum sea depth is about 18 meters<sup>344</sup>, includes 10 terminals, performing cargo handling and warehousing activities for a number of various goods and services, such as «containers, general cargo, foodstuffs, light-perishable goods, livestock, *ro-ro*, timber, dry bulk and liquid cargoes»<sup>345</sup>.

As noted by Soriani and Antonellini (2008), the port of Koper has recently demonstrated to be one of the most dynamic ports in the Upper Adriatic area, presenting a national and international port hinterland (Austria, northern Italy, Czech Republic and Slovakia): the international dimension of the port is also demonstrated by statistical data that show that in 2006 the international traffic accounted for about 71% of the total<sup>346</sup>. In addition, it has been noted (Simonella, 2012) that the port of Koper represents the most emblematic case of constant development in the last years: at the beginning of 2000s it moved

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<sup>341</sup> PAOLINI M., CARUSO M., *Il Mediterraneo nell'Oceano mondo*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, (pp. 9-20), p. 18.

<sup>342</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/>.

<sup>343</sup> Luka Koper official website, <http://www.luka-kp.si>.

<sup>344</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 2.

<sup>345</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/>.

<sup>346</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 2.

about 100,000 TEUs a year, while today Koper is the first container port, moving 600,000 TEUs a year<sup>347</sup>. Indeed, the port witnessed a rapid escalation in the last years, reaching the top of the Upper Adriatic ports, exceeding the volume of Trieste in 2007 (305.648 TEUs in Koper, 265.863 TEUs in Trieste) and the traffic of Venice in 2010 (476.731 TEUs in Koper, 393.913 in Venice)<sup>348</sup>.

The port of Koper is also deemed to be «the biggest car terminal in the Adriatic» and several development plans and investments are aimed at improving cars and general cargos handling, also building new terminals and piers, as stated by the key development directions included in the *National Spatial Plan for the development of the Port of Koper*<sup>349</sup>. About the activities of the port involving the automotive field, «the Port of Koper gained a new Car Terminal in 1995, a livestock terminal was added in 1998, and a parking garage with capacity for 3350 cars was constructed in 1999»<sup>350</sup>.

A process of improvement of the infrastructures serving the port is in progress, especially concerning inland connections on motorway and railway systems<sup>351</sup>. Infrastructures and terminals for managing coal and iron ore are quite recent, being founded in the 80s, along with the building of a grain silo in 1988<sup>352</sup>. However, the era of the infrastructural development of the port of Koper had started in the 1950s, with the foundation of the port facilities (1957), being part of Yugoslavia since 1954<sup>353</sup>. In 1957 the port was officially established, also gaining the status of free-trade zone in the 60s, when newly developed railway connections linked the port to the hinterland<sup>354</sup>. Indeed, even in the case of

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<sup>347</sup> SIMONELLA I., *Porti dell'Adriatico e Ionio. Dieci anni di traffici marittimi e politiche europee*, Forum delle Camere di Commercio dell'Adriatico e Ionio, Osservatorio Traffici Marittimi – relazione 2012, Brindisi, 6-8 giugno 2012, p. 4.

<sup>348</sup> DE SANCTIS A., *L'Italia sta perdendo la guerra dei porti*, in Limes, *La guerra in Europa non è mai finita*, n° 1, 2012, Gruppo Editoriale l'Espresso, p. 26.

<sup>349</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/>.

<sup>350</sup> World Port Source, <http://www.worldportsource.com>.

<sup>351</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 2.

<sup>352</sup> <http://www.worldportsource.com>.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibidem*.

Koper, the use of railway lines is fundamental in handling container traffic and managing commercial activities. In fact, as noted by Soriani (2011), Trieste and Koper ports present an elevated share of container traffic on railway: the amount of such traffic rates would range between 35% and 40%<sup>355</sup>.

The two ports are also deemed to be the most growing realities of the last few years, presenting an important dynamism<sup>356</sup>: features in common that may also lead them to struggle for achieving better individual results, as it will be pointed out in 3.3. Moreover, relations between the two ports have always been particularly intense: in 2000 the Trieste International Container Terminal was granted a thirty-year concession for the management of the container terminal of the port<sup>357</sup>. However, since the first decade of 2000s the history of the port is shaped by Luka Koper d.d., a public limited company, which manages the area, providing port and logistics services<sup>358</sup>. The company would aim at leaving «an impact on the development of the Obalno-Kraška region, giving it a positive and dynamic economic pulse»: as Excellence Award Finalist in the path of European business excellence (2006), the company is involved in international trade and international operations<sup>359</sup>. Demonstration of the hectic activity now present in the port of Koper is the opening, a few years ago, of a Malaysian commercial office, directly linked to the international and commercial activity of the company, also counting on a new information system, operating in Koper since 2007<sup>360</sup>.

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<sup>355</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 495.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>357</sup> World Port Source, <http://www.worldportsource.com>.

<sup>358</sup> Luka Koper official website, <http://www.luka-kp.si>.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>360</sup> World Port Source, <http://www.worldportsource.com>.

## The port of Rijeka (CRO)

The fifth main Upper Adriatic port is the one located in Rijeka (*Fiume*, in Italian), which is Croatia's leading port: according to its definition on the NAPA website, the port is «undergoing transformation into key maritime hub»<sup>361</sup>. In fact, the port seems to be ready for a radical process of modernization, emphasizing the «outstanding investment potential», also envisaging the development of new facilities and infrastructures within the port area, as, for instance, those that shall be built «in the western part of the port on the Zagreb pier (Zagrebačka Obala), on the eastern part within the Brajdica container terminal area and in the ports Bršica and Bakar», in an area which is external to the city and port of Rijeka, but «under the responsibility and management of the port of Rijeka Authority»<sup>362</sup>. Such operations and additional extension of coasts and zones surrounding the new developed structures on terminal Brajdica are expected to be completed by the end of the year 2012, reaching the capacity of 450.000 TEUs units in Brajdica and thanks to the completion of the Zagreb pier the «total capacity of container traffic is expected to reach 1.000.000 TEUs which is five times more than today»<sup>363</sup>. In fact, the lack of space within the port area has always been the major obstacle to the development of its logistics potentials: «the logistic relevance of the port is conditioned by the lack of space, the only way to expand the structure in order to increase container capacity is to use areas that are currently outside of the existing port grounds»<sup>364</sup>.

The modernization of the port of Rijeka has been financed by a World Bank loan and by the Croatian National Budget for a total amount of investment of 190 millions of Euros<sup>365</sup>. The help of the World Bank is obviously due to the fact that the local port activity of the port of Rijeka had severe repercussions from the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the related problems in the early 1990s, even

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<sup>361</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/>.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>364</sup> Regione Marche, PORTUS: Report WP4, *Development and evaluation of integrated scenario of Adriatic ports*, Ancona, 2008, pp. 114-115.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibidem*.

though «the port recovered in a relatively short time», doubling the total volume of traffic and increasing sharply the handling of containers in only seven years<sup>366</sup>.

About its hinterland, it is mainly national and international: the regions of northern Italy (Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto) account for about 50% and Hungary for more than 20% (2006 data)<sup>367</sup>. The port of Rijeka would be better linked to its hinterland through the improvement of transport connections to Trieste and the Slovenian area: the completion of the inclusion of the port into the infrastructural network of the Pan-European corridors would be recommended<sup>368</sup>.

The port has an excellent marine accessibility of about 28 meters<sup>369</sup>, but the road network conditions were still poor in 2007 and the railway infrastructure still presented obsolescence at that time<sup>370</sup>. In order to overcome such weakness elements the *Rijeka Gateway Project*, known as *Rijeka Traffic Route Redevelopment Project* has been developed<sup>371</sup>. The project is a complex development program which is aimed at rehabilitating and improving the whole port complex and its traffic connection with the international road and railway corridors<sup>372</sup>. In fact, as observed by Soriani (2011), in the case of Rijeka, there

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<sup>366</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 2. *The total volume of traffic has doubled in seven years (from 6,8 to 13,2 million tons over the period 2000-2007). During the same period the number of containers handled by the port increased sharply (from 9,722 to 145,040 TEUs).*

<sup>367</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>368</sup> Regione Marche, PORTUS: Report WP4, *Development and evaluation of integrated scenario of Adriatic ports*, Ancona, 2008, p. 115.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibidem* and NAPA official website.

<sup>370</sup> Centro IDEAS data, in SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 2.

<sup>371</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/>.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibidem*. *The objectives include rehabilitation and modernization of the entire port complex, harmonization of the development of the entire waterfront of Rijeka, attracting possible port users such as shipping or transporting companies, companies having factories in Central and Eastern Europe region and seeking investors/concessioners*

has been a marked growth thanks to infrastructural actions favored by international programmes of reconstruction, that have progressively solved the war problems<sup>373</sup>.

Indeed, as noted by an updated report of the *Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce* (2012), the Adriatic ports represent a natural doorway for countries neighboring the European Union<sup>374</sup>. If the central and southern Italian and Adriatic ports (Ancona, Bari and Brindisi) seem to be leader in the development of traffic relations with Croatia, Montenegro and Albania, the Upper Adriatic ports (Trieste, most of all) are consolidating networks with Turkey<sup>375</sup>.

The cooperative challenge would represent a solution to marginality affecting the Upper Adriatic ports, establishing new partnerships and networks, i.e. a vision shared between the main actors involved. In the next paragraph we will try to understand how these ports can play their cooperative role, achieving important common (and individual) goals.

### **2.3 – Cooperation as a solution to marginality**

As previously demonstrated, the Upper Adriatic ports, even though being different from each other, have definitely something in common, but these similarities often seem to be negative. Soriani (2011) notes that, even though the Adriatic ports showed in the last years some dynamic situations of growth

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*interested in the port related business at New Zagreb Pier under BOT or similar contracts.*

<sup>373</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 495.

<sup>374</sup> SIMONELLA I., *Porti dell'Adriatico e Ionio. Dieci anni di traffici marittimi e politiche europee*, Forum delle Camere di Commercio dell'Adriatico e Ionio, Osservatorio Traffici Marittimi – relazione 2012, Brindisi, 6-8 giugno 2012, p. 5.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibidem*.

and development, they all share some weakness elements<sup>376</sup>. Such weaknesses are broadly deemed to be the following: the «inadequate railroad connections to inland markets»<sup>377</sup>, i.e. the infrastructural weakness and a general situation of marginality about the re-organization of the container transport development<sup>378</sup>. We are dealing here with a series of combined factors, along with «the irreversible process of technological change (i.e. the giant scale of the vessels), the process of re-organizing the maritime routes carried out by the navigation lines and the poor economies of scale» that affect the Upper Adriatic ports<sup>379</sup>.

These elements concur to make of the Northern Adriatic a *silent sea* in the context of the recent *revival* of the Mediterranean container market, previously mentioned (see 2.1)<sup>380</sup>. Indeed, as noted by Soriani (2011), «as far as the container sector is concerned, the role of the Northern Adriatic has grown very little in absolute terms over the past ten years, and has in fact decreased if compared to other Mediterranean sub-systems»<sup>381</sup>. In fact, it is sufficient to think about the size of the Adriatic container market in comparison to the Mediterranean basin: if the latter accounts for more than 35 million TEUs, Adriatic ports handled an overall traffic of 1.4 million TEUs in 2007, which is «slightly more than the traffic handled by a medium-sized port such as the port of La Spezia»<sup>382</sup>.

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<sup>376</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520, p. 492.

<sup>377</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 3.

<sup>378</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520, p. 492.

<sup>379</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 3.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>381</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 2.

<sup>382</sup> Regione Marche, PORTUS: Report WP4, *Development and evaluation of integrated scenario of Adriatic ports*, Ancona, 2008, p. 139.

We have already noted that the Upper Adriatic ports would need better infrastructures and an improved logistic and intermodal system, and recent experiences have shown that cooperation between port operators and other actors, along with these technical improvements, can be particularly important in solving the gap with the most developed area of the European continent. Cooperation can be a solution to problems and risks perceived by the Adriatic port system, and a growing awareness of such issue can lead to concrete actions aimed at achieving competitiveness and logistic goals.

First of all, some words must be spent about the current debate on the Upper Adriatic ports cooperation. As observed by Soriani (2009), cooperation can be considered as a key element to promote and develop common and organized actions and answers to chances and risks in the maritime transport and port competition field, as well as a fundamental integration and interregional cohesion element in the wider framework of the Upper Adriatic cooperation, i.e. the European Community policies and initiatives described in the first chapter<sup>383</sup>. Moreover, especially in a logic of proximity, cooperation between ports is welcome, as recalled by A. A. Pallis and P. Verhoeven (2009):

*Cooperation between ports and especially between those close to each other is most welcome, as it can lead, inter alia, to specialization in cargo or ship types, and organization and pooling of hinterland transport facilities. It would certainly lead in many cases to an improvement in output*<sup>384</sup>.

Otherwise, the concept of cooperation as competitiveness tool has been originated by the perception of «opinion leaders and local and regional elites» in

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<sup>383</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 501.

<sup>384</sup> PALLIS, A. A., VERHOEVEN, *Does the EU Port Policy strategy encompass 'proximity'?* in NOTTEBOOM T. E., DE LANGEN, P. W., DUCRUET C. B., *Ports in proximity: competition and coordination among adjacent seaports*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2009.

the context of growing networks between «institutions, mayors, governors and political leaders» that today act «as *ambassador* of new relationships between the Northern Adriatic coastal regions»<sup>385</sup>. As already observed in the first chapter, the historical events occurred in the 90s in the European Eastern countries with the consequent geo-economic and geo-political transformations, have offered the chance, for these actors, to *fill the void* originated by the end of the former regimes. New transnational actors, along with states and governmental institutions, managed to set such networks, that can be of fundamental importance even in the port system. In fact, ports are not only key actors of the logistic chain, but they are also part of an integrated system of institutional responsibilities, a governance instrument to balance the private interest with the real development needs of the territory, supported by political actions<sup>386</sup>.

In this respect, it is clear that ports can play a fundamental role in the development of the Adriatic area, and at the same time they can improve their market position in the worldwide context of growing competition. But such goals are quite hard to obtain without taking coordinated actions, and in this case the slogan *united we stand, divided we fall*<sup>387</sup>, seems to be particularly representative of the need for a better and more integrated cooperation between ports and port development policies.

In the last thirty years many calls for action have been made by experts (a quite prolific scientific literature) and programming documents, stressing the

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<sup>385</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 7.

<sup>386</sup> PAOLINI M., CARUSO M., *Il Mediterraneo nell'Oceano mondo*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, (pp. 9-20), p. 20.

<sup>387</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 12.

importance of supporting a «system approach» in the Adriatic port field<sup>388</sup>. At a national or regional level, the need for a real port system would bring to a group of structures organized in competence and sources specialized units, on territorial scale within a proximity logic<sup>389</sup>. The need for a real systemic integration and cohesion between the different elements of the Adriatic port field has been growing, even though the area has been often characterized by fragmentation and a general situation of disorder in planning coordinated actions.

Indeed, the Adriatic port system has always been a quite fragmented context: according to Merlini (1960):

*port activity is too fragmented to capture the attention of those who can invest in the Adriatic area. The Adriatic port system must be the first one built in Italy. But a port system can exist only if the struggle to attract ships stops: port administrators should cooperate and the function of different ports should be specialized*<sup>390</sup>.

Merlini thought that the organization of the port and of the inland structures is fundamental in order to improve the competitiveness of the Adriatic Sea, as well as the need for overcoming the insularity (the so-called *campanilismo*, in Italian), establishing relations of specialization and agreements between port administrations<sup>391</sup>. These provisions seem to be embodied by the term *co-opetition*, which indicates a system, more or less formalized and developed,

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<sup>388</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 502.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>390</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 6.

<sup>391</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), pp. 501-502, note (23).

between ports that, even though competing, still support cooperation initiatives aimed at improving their market performances<sup>392</sup>. According to the UNCTAD (1996), «cooperation fostered by the changing environment does not mean limiting competition. [...]. As cooperation is driven by market forces, parties may find it advantageous to cooperate in unexpected ways»<sup>393</sup>. The real challenge is to find a balance between cooperation and competition, in order to secure the general commercial interests of both port operators<sup>394</sup>.

Going back to Merlini's thinking, it is quite impressive and a bit disappointing that, after more than fifty years, the arguments that he presented in the 1960s still result in being still valid and suitable for some Italian ports, even though many are the improvements made in this respect.

Indeed, there has been a multitude of policies and plans implemented at the national and regional level, in order to develop a port system, but they all ended up to be unsuccessful, mainly because of the *top-down* institutional vision, which did not entirely recognize the importance of the perspective of the port business sector and market dynamics<sup>395</sup>. In addition, public investment policies have often been focused on re-distribution and socio-territorial compensation, without considering properly the evaluation of benefits and costs of the presented alternatives<sup>396</sup>.

Nevertheless, the general awareness about the importance of new market dynamics, with the consequent intermodal revolution, and the European policies of port privatization implemented since the 1980s have contributed to highlight the need for starting cooperation initiatives on voluntary base, promoted by

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<sup>392</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 500, note (1).

<sup>393</sup> UNCTAD, *Potentialities for regional port cooperation*, report by the UNCTAD secretariat, UNCTAD/SDD/PORT/5, GE.96-50043, 15 January 1996, p. 12.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>395</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 6.

<sup>396</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 502.

public actors but deeply designed and adapted for the needs of private operators, always coherent with the current market logic<sup>397</sup>. Having demonstrated the inadequacy of the traditional instruments of infrastructure planning and general *top-down* approaches, such awareness has been translated into new interpretative approaches that support voluntary actions of the actors involved, that can manage such policies, with a *bottom up* approach<sup>398</sup>.

The issue of better coordination between ports gained momentum in the early 1990s, within the Italian governmental framework, «in the context of the preliminary debate on the reform of Italian ports», when some asked for a *regionalized* port policy, thanks to the establishment of regional Port Authorities at a regional scale, and other argued that a more *systemic* approach was needed<sup>399</sup>. «At the end, the promulgation of the Reform Law n. 84/1994 led to the establishment of 19 Port Authorities, following the principle of *one main port – one port authority*»<sup>400</sup>.

However, at a wider level, the topic of the general lack of coordination regained importance in the current debate during the 90s and early 2000s, and Soriani (2011) identifies the reasons for such *revival* in the following observations<sup>401</sup>:

a) The beginning of the intermodal era and the progressive containerization of the international trade flows, along with the *gigantism* process, the organization of maritime routes in order to obtain the best economies of scale, and the whole process already described (see 2.1): such radical and global changes have led to a further marginalization of the Adriatic ports<sup>402</sup>.

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<sup>397</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 504.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>399</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 6.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>401</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 502.

<sup>402</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 503.

b) The growing and harder competition between ports and transport nodes, and the continental spatial scale: the market is complex and performances are obtained only through coordinated actions, promoted by a multitude of actors (not only ports), also taking into account the higher level of logistic integration<sup>403</sup>. In addition, the «acknowledgment that the spatial scale of competition had become continental helped to concentrate attention on the problems afflicting Italian ports: e.g. small size and low economies of scale; dispersal of public funding in an excessive number of port development plans; insufficient coordination between different initiatives, etc.»<sup>404</sup>.

Beyond these considerations, a further reason can be seen in the existence of territorial conflicts and wide environmental issues, that demonstrated that «the lack of coordination not only could hamper the competitiveness in the market but could also result in further environmental degradation and in territorial conflicts»<sup>405</sup>.

To sum up, the awareness of the importance of coordination and the need for a better coordination, along with «opportunities offered by the geo-economic and geopolitical transformations in Eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean» have contributed to put emphasis on the cooperation issue<sup>406</sup>. In addition, there is a common sense which argues that these opportunities can be obtained through cooperation and coordinated actions, also because the Adriatic space is still «characterized by a significant dispersal / fragmentation of economic, political and financial resources»<sup>407</sup>. Otherwise, according to some visions, the Adriatic region would be further marginalized by the European integration process, witnessing the conquer of the Western Balkans by the North-Western European

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<sup>403</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>404</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 6.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>406</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 7.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibidem.*

Countries, if suitable coordination policies and attitudes will not be pursued in the future<sup>408</sup>.

The need for a better and effective cooperation has been particularly stressed by many calls for action and agreements, started and signed by Italian public and local actors: documents involving Italian Regions, Port Authorities, Chambers of Commerce, other organizations (such as *Confindustria*) and the Italian Parliament have all stressed the importance of better coordination between the different actors involved in the Upper Adriatic area, as well as the integration and possible creation of a *North Adriatic Port System*<sup>409</sup>.

In this respect, Soriani (2011) reports the following examples of actions and agreements supported by Public Territorial Agencies (as the *Northern Adriatic Regional Governments*), in order to promote cooperation among Upper Adriatic ports<sup>410</sup>:

In the *2005-2007 Friuli-Venezia Giulia Regional Development Plan*, the need for cooperation between the ports of Trieste, Porto Nogaro and Monfalcone, (all belonging to the regional coastline) was emphasized, while a *Regional Territorial Coordination Plan* of the Veneto Region «pointed out the need for promoting the realization of a *Northern Adriatic Port System*, through the *integration* of Italian ports first, and consequently of those located in Slovenia and Croatia»<sup>411</sup>.

In 2007 the Emilia Romagna Region, the Municipality, the Port Authority and the Chamber of Commerce of Ravenna issued the *Document on the Port of Ravenna*, stating the need for greater coordination between port authorities and

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<sup>408</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>409</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), pp. 505 – 506. Examples of these initiatives are to be found in the *Piano Regionale Territoriale di Coordinamento della Regione Veneto* (2008).

<sup>410</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, J 2008, p. 7.

<sup>411</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 8.

territorial agencies, while the same concept was highlighted in the agreement stipulated between the Emilia Romagna and Friuli-Venezia Giulia Regions<sup>412</sup>.

But such agreements have been also signed between Municipalities only, like the one between the Municipalities of Trieste and Venice (2008), which focused on «the fields of mobility and transport policy, tourism development and port activity», also stating the necessity of re-thinking Northern Adriatic port activity «with the prospect of promoting the realization of a port system that runs from Ravenna to Rijeka, in order to increase the competitiveness of the Northern Adriatic area»<sup>413</sup>.

The same call for better coordination has been also pointed out in an Italian Parliament hearing (2007) by *Confindustria*, the confederation of Italian industries: «great attention was placed on the need for increased coordination to prevent a destructive and unrestrained, almost *fratricide* competition between Northern Adriatic ports»<sup>414</sup>.

Even if it would be possible to argue that the reasons to cooperate «should be based on more solid elements [...] these visions can affect social perceptions and the social legitimacy of new cooperative initiatives», also contributing to re-contextualize the problem of port policy at the Italian level<sup>415</sup>.

However, at this point, we should focus on the actors involved in the cooperation process in the Upper Adriatic area. As noted by the UNCTAD's report (1993), «a basic distinction can be made between these parties by allocating them either to the public or the private sector» even though «the

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<sup>412</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>413</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>414</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>415</sup> *Ibidem.*

borderline between the public and the private sector changes from country to country and may also change within a country over the years»<sup>416</sup>.

Concerning ports, port authority belongs usually to the public sector, and in many countries its functions and activities are limited to regulation and policy, port development, operations of coordination etc., often being overseen by a political body, such as a region, a city or state<sup>417</sup>. Generally speaking, «ports are key links in international transport networks», being «strategically located in the international transport chain as an interface in the cargo transfer from one mode of transport to another and as a logistical platform, now called *teleport*, for the exchange of information»<sup>418</sup>.

As widely acknowledged, Upper Adriatic ports have, among each other, specific distinctive features and different management options: in fact, some ports can be totally public structures, while others can be private structures that act within a public regulation framework, which can be more or less strong<sup>419</sup>. In addition, different ports act in different market contexts, providing answers to very different market demands, being characterized by often diverging attitudes, also pushed by local, regional and national interests<sup>420</sup>. Port Authorities (or port managements) play an important role in port cooperation initiatives, that can start, implement and promote in a direct or indirect way<sup>421</sup>. Indeed, given the nature of today's logistic and transport chain, where ports represent *key links*, cooperation between operators is essential, even because «the performance of one link of the transport chain depends on the performance of the other link»<sup>422</sup>.

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<sup>416</sup> UNCTAD, *Potentialities for regional port cooperation*, report by the UNCTAD secretariat, UNCTAD/SDD/PORT/5, GE.96-50043, 15 January 1996, p. 4.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>418</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 9.

<sup>419</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 491.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>421</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 490.

<sup>422</sup> UNCTAD, *Potentialities for regional port cooperation*, report by the UNCTAD secretariat, UNCTAD/SDD/PORT/5, GE.96-50043, 15 January 1996, p. 9.

Along with public actors such as port authorities, we find other private operators, such as terminal operators, port services- and logistic providers, transport companies, shipping lines<sup>423</sup>, other «port operators such as stevedoring companies and towage companies, and also port agents, whether shipping or customs agents»<sup>424</sup>. All these actors can play an important role in the port cooperation: in this respect, private companies are important actors, because they act in a wider public framework (regulated by the so-called *funzione di regia*, by public organisms), taking actions aimed at projecting, promoting and reinforcing processes of logistic integration<sup>425</sup>.

In this perspective, it is widely assumed that, given their growing importance in the worldwide context, private companies can be correctly defined as key actors. As already mentioned concerning their influence in the Mediterranean trade routes (see 2.1), container movements are managed by logistic companies and providers: a sector in which the Asian influence is getting stronger, even during the current international financial crisis, which damaged all private actors involved in the maritime worldwide traffic<sup>426</sup>. Indeed, private actors can be fundamental also in building *clusters and/or networks*<sup>427</sup>, which is one of the goals pursued by port cooperation initiatives. The importance of these private actors is so impressive that some scholars even point out that «the fate of ports is increasingly dictated from outside [...] with the growing decisional power of shipping lines, forwarders, and intermodal operators on supply chain spatial design through horizontal and vertical integration»<sup>428</sup>. In

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<sup>423</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 490.

<sup>424</sup> UNCTAD, *Potentialities for regional port cooperation*, report by the UNCTAD secretariat, UNCTAD/SDD/PORT/5, GE.96-50043, 15 January 1996, p. 4.

<sup>425</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 499.

<sup>426</sup> PAOLINI M., CARUSO M., *Il Mediterraneo nell'Oceano mondo*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, (pp. 9-20), pp. 10-11.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>428</sup> DUCRUET C., NOTTEBOOM T. E., DE LANGEN P. W., *Revisiting Inter-port Relationships under the New Economic Geography Research Framework*, in NOTTEBOOM T. E., DE LANGEN, P. W., DUCRUET C. B., *Ports in proximity:*

this context, as observed in the current reality, the most powerful private companies and firms are allowed to shift traffic whenever they want, as seen in the case, for instance, of the Maersk Line shifting from Singapore to Tanjung Pelepas (Malaysia)<sup>429</sup>.

Nevertheless, public actors are still important and influential as regulators, planners and coordinators in most worldwide ports, and such influence has been deemed to be given by the collective importance of infrastructure and port-related services to port innovation and many (often) collective assets, such as dredging operations, land distribution systems, environmental mitigation etc.<sup>430</sup>.

However, at this point, we could ask ourselves how does cooperation work within relations between all these different actors involved. First of all, it should be noted that the first actions implemented by the actors, in order to overcome the problems of the Upper Adriatic ports (for instance, their marginality in the continental context) are individual initiatives<sup>431</sup>. That means that ports act like single units, arranging new infrastructures (as already seen in point 2.2): they can manage new layouts and *distripark*, structures or banks, railway paths, dredging operations<sup>432</sup>. To sum up, they are free to pursue their own competition and market strategies, specifically designed on their needs, from their unilateral point of view. It must not be forgotten, then, without entering here into technical details, that ports can be also managed through different shares owned by different groups or companies: a fact which, we assume, could easily imply a form of pressure and influence on port performances and on the definition of cooperative strategies.

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*competition and coordination among adjacent seaports*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2009, p. 20.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>430</sup> HALL P. V., JACOBS W., *Ports in Proximity, Proximity in Ports: Towards a Typology*, in NOTTEBOOM T. E., DE LANGEN, P. W., DUCRUET C. B., *Ports in proximity: competition and coordination among adjacent seaports*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2009, p. 34.

<sup>431</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 492.

<sup>432</sup> *Ivi.*, see note (8).

As noted by Soriani (2011), in today's context it is clear the attempt at promoting and implementing new collective and organized actions, based on different cooperation initiatives between ports<sup>433</sup>. Indeed, cooperation between ports can be pursued, promoted, reinforced and concretely acted through very different kinds of organized actions: on the one hand, the lowest level of cooperation could be represented by simple and informal neighbor relations, e.g. the exchange of information on common issues<sup>434</sup>. On the other hand, a more complex cooperative action can be the starting of various formal integration processes, like the exchange of social capital shares, participation in new societies, or deeper transformations in the management of the port<sup>435</sup>. Such cooperative actions represent a rather deep technical field of analysis, which will not be further analyzed in the course of this work: here it is sufficient to acknowledge their existence within the inner structure of the port administration. Nevertheless, the most common use of cooperation initiatives in the port field is the one pursued through expressions of mutual acknowledgement in programming documents of the single organizations, taking organized actions on issues of common interest, as well as signing agreements on protocols and memorandums or establishing the creation of an agency with informative and communication functions on strategic or common issues<sup>436</sup>. In this respect, in the following section of this work (see 3.1 and 3.2) will be analyzed the creation of such agencies and organizations, e.g. the *Baltic Ports Organization* in the Baltic context, and the *North Adriatic Port Association* in the Upper Adriatic area.

However, before analyzing the current *praxis* concerning cooperative initiatives in the Upper Adriatic port field, it would be useful to spend some words about the reasons that concretely drive ports to work together. It has been noted

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<sup>433</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 492.

<sup>434</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 490.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>436</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 491.

(Soriani, 2011) that the experiences demonstrated in scientific literature show that ports can cooperate for very different reasons<sup>437</sup>.

First of all, cooperation initiatives can take place within a maritime *range*: the actors involved decide to work together, in order to become more attractive for investments and ships, in comparison to other *ranges*<sup>438</sup>. In this respect, among the actions to undertake, the exchange of information on vessels and loadings is deemed to be essential<sup>439</sup>: according to UNCTAD (1993), «information networks create opportunities for cooperation», because «efficient transport relies as much on updated steady flows of information as on reliable infrastructure»<sup>440</sup>. Within this situation, port authorities cooperate to exchange information required for port operations, such as time of departure of the ship, cargo description, dangerous cargo, etc.<sup>441</sup>. The exchange of information may lead to the creation of associations and other cooperative attitudes, because «getting information on specific points, comparing solution implemented in other ports or simply knowing the decision-makers of other ports is a powerful reason for port authorities to participate» in such informal meetings and conferences<sup>442</sup>. In fact, it must be noted, that «friendly relationships are often the starting point of more technical and formal cooperation»<sup>443</sup>. In addition, today's information field can benefit from the use of new Information Technologies, with the great chance that the use of internet can represent for the port sector, with the consequent creation of computer networks specifically designed for this kind of

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<sup>437</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 488.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>439</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>440</sup> UNCTAD, *Potentialities for regional port cooperation*, report by the UNCTAD secretariat, UNCTAD/SDD/PORT/5, GE.96-50043, 15 January 1996, p. 9.

<sup>441</sup> *Ivi.*, 10.

<sup>442</sup> *Ivi.*, 17.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibidem.*

communication<sup>444</sup>. In fact, the homogenization of Information Technology procedures can be a particularly relevant initiative of cooperation<sup>445</sup>.

At the same time, ports may also pursue the development of common activities of promotion of their infrastructures: this field implies the participation to transport and logistics fairs, the creation of links to websites of common interest, the realization of a logo or brand that recalls the existence of a network or an organized system of resources<sup>446</sup>. Common promotional policies of this kind should improve the general image of the Upper Adriatic, presenting features and characteristics of ports, terminals, infrastructures and services<sup>447</sup>. An example of such promotional attitude is the presentation of the NAPA members, on the official website of the association, (a presentation previously quoted in 2.2, talking about basic structural features of the Upper Adriatic ports). In addition, further cooperative initiatives shall consist in common lobby activities at a regional, national or international scale<sup>448</sup>: such actions can be particularly important if carried on at institutional levels of the European Community<sup>449</sup>, given the importance of Brussels' decisions in the transport field.

Generally speaking, it is possible to affirm that all these newly made cooperative approaches are due «to the general consideration that the position of the Adriatic in the Mediterranean market is increasingly threatened» and to the general situation of marginality, as already pointed out previously<sup>450</sup>. Some argue that these actions are expression of a kind of *defensive* attitude, taking into account the last twenty years of borderline situation of the Upper Adriatic in

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<sup>444</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>445</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 512.

<sup>446</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 488-489.

<sup>447</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 511.

<sup>448</sup> *Ivi.*, 489.

<sup>449</sup> *Ivi.*, 511.

<sup>450</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 9.

the container market<sup>451</sup>: at the same time, the low attractiveness of the Northern Adriatic *range* as a whole, is still conditioning the chances of taking advantage of the future development opportunities, as the growing Asian-Med trade, the geo-economic changes in the Balkans and in the Eastern European countries<sup>452</sup>. In this context, *working as a team* and the existence of effective and coordinated actions between ports, regional and local authorities seem to be the best solutions to such problems<sup>453</sup>.

Certainly, as also observed by the representatives of the Port Authority of Venice<sup>454</sup>, an effective cooperative solution would be aimed at attracting as many ships as possible to the common maritime *range* as a first step, letting ports free to compete about customers and market issues in the subsequent time<sup>455</sup>. In addition, it must be noted that a further weakness of the Upper Adriatic ports is represented by the low level of economies of scale, which is confirmed by the fact that none of the considered ports is able to shift the structure of traffics in the container market<sup>456</sup>. In this respect, even the most endowed ports, such as Trieste and Koper, do not seem to be able, if considered individually, to provide solutions to the marginality of the Upper Adriatic range<sup>457</sup>. Especially concerning these issues, it has been noted (UNCTAD, 1993) that «the need to develop economies of scale in the port industry is one explanation of the need to cooperate and explains the consolidation taking place in the stevedoring industry»<sup>458</sup>. In search of higher economies of scale, the coordination existing in a particular *range*, between

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<sup>451</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 511.

<sup>452</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 9.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>454</sup> BONALDO S., Port Authority of Venice, see Interview in Appendix, 4.1.

<sup>455</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 512.

<sup>456</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 510.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>458</sup> UNCTAD, *Potentialities for regional port cooperation*, report by the UNCTAD secretariat, UNCTAD/SDD/PORT/5, GE.96-50043, 15 January 1996, p. 12.

development policies enacted by ports considered as neighbors (the so-called *ports in proximity*) can represent an effective strategy alternative to methods based on pure competition, often too risky and less sustainable in the long run<sup>459</sup>.

Indeed, as noted by Soriani and Antonellini (2008), many are the cooperation agreements signed and stipulated between port authorities and governmental administrations in the Adriatic area, given the fact that «greater coordination and cooperation between port authorities and administrations on the one hand, and the many territorial public agencies with formal planning responsibility on the other, are regarded as a strategic factor that can prevent last-minute conflicts and delays in the implementation phase of planned investments, especially in the field of transport infrastructures and city-port relationships»<sup>460</sup>. In spring 2007, port authorities of Trieste, Venice, Ravenna and Ancona have jointly drafted a document which «seeks to promote initiatives for cooperation in the fields of promotion / marketing, planning, environmental management, safety and security»<sup>461</sup>. In the same year, other initiatives of cooperation in the development of railway and motorway systems, territorial marketing, environmental management and development strategies have been started by the Port Authority of Trieste and the Port Management Organization of Koper, along with the port of Rijeka<sup>462</sup>.

As a matter of fact, the creation and developing of new maritime services represent one of the constituent components of the strategy for improving the Upper Adriatic port system. Soriani (2011) observes that within this dimension, the Port Authority of Venice has developed a project (2008) for the development of a service of *common feeder* from the Egyptian *hubs*, in order to share it with

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<sup>459</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 489.

<sup>460</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 9.

<sup>461</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibidem*.

the ports of Trieste, Koper and Ravenna, that would have their *hub of transshipment*, then, located in Port Said or Damietta<sup>463</sup>. In this way, four Adriatic ports are going to present themselves in the international market as a single *gateway*, counting on private companies, as the Austrian Schenker and the transport company Samer & Co. (based in Trieste), quite active in creating links with Turkey and the Syrian and Iraq markets<sup>464</sup>. Indeed, the reintegration of these markets in a worldwide context, would be served by the traffic route developing in the South-Eastern Mediterranean Sea, where many private companies are willing to improve their position in this context<sup>465</sup>.

But this is not the only initiative aimed at attracting more ships to the Adriatic routes: more recently (2009) a new weekly service has been developed, thanks to a synergy between European financing, the Port Authority of Venice and promotional strategies implemented by a shipping line<sup>466</sup>. Such weekly service would cover the route Ravenna – Venice – Koper – Thessaloniki – Istanbul – Izmir – Ravenna, with a complex movement of 350-500 TEUs<sup>467</sup>. Such policies are all aimed at reaching a complex critical mass, overcoming the Adriatic marginality along with the target to attract new intercontinental direct services<sup>468</sup>, as will be pointed out in 2.4, concerning direct services linked to *Far East* ports.

Other protocols and agreements (Soriani, 2011) have been signed between port authorities in the last years, as the one stipulated in 2009, 17<sup>th</sup> April: the ports of Ravenna, Venice, Trieste and Koper, also involving smaller ports of the *range*,

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<sup>463</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 510.

<sup>464</sup> PAOLINI M., CARUSO M., *Il Mediterraneo nell'Oceano mondo*, in *Il Mare nostro è degli altri*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2009, (pp. 9-20), p. 15.

<sup>465</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 18..

<sup>466</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 510.

<sup>467</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>468</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 512.

like Chioggia, Monfalcone, Porto Nogaro, Rijeka<sup>469</sup>. Such documents are expression of the common will to improve the environmental management, *safe & security, training and re-training*, fostering cooperation in the following topics, already mentioned: inland connections (e.g. the railroad connection between Trieste and Koper); the development of maritime services through common actions, in order to be alternative to *shipping lines*; the harmonization and development of informatics management on vessels and loadings in order to improve inter-modality; harmonization processes of common activities and policies; promotional and *lobby* actions at regional, national and Community level<sup>470</sup>.

To sum up, as noted by Soriani (2011), we could split cooperation policies and initiatives in two categories: the actions aimed at pursuing economics goals, and those aimed at providing organized actions to respond to common risks<sup>471</sup>.

Initiatives of the first kind are market-based and acted by actors belonging to different categories (they can be individual or collective, public or private) that pursue the profit through organization and integration processes<sup>472</sup>. These actions seem to be the most effective, also highlighting today's situation, in which systems of relations, more than individual and single nodes, compete between each other<sup>473</sup>.

At the same time, initiatives carried out in order to respond to common risks, are more difficult to evaluate, given the embryonic phase they're going through. Indeed, from an operative and organization perspective, such initiatives feature elements that are typical of non-statutory plans on coastal zone management issues: for instance, the promotional approach, the definition of some common goals to achieve, the definition of a shared vision and the opening to other

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<sup>469</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>470</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>471</sup> *Ivi*, p. 515.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>473</sup> *Ibidem.*

actors<sup>474</sup>. Soriani (2011) also observed that these initiatives seem to constitute a sort of call for partners, aimed at starting a process of organization learning, based on shared vision and actions aimed at reaching common benefits<sup>475</sup>.

Anyway, it is possible to affirm that the current cooperative process in the Upper Adriatic area it's only at its first step: in fact, in the current context, improvements can be seen only in promotional activity issues and *lobby* at national and international scale, also involving the creation of associations, as the NAPA (see 3.2)<sup>476</sup>. Indeed, we could affirm that the current level of cooperation in the port field in the area is too superficial, because these two fields of action (promotional and *lobby*) are the most common, also because the implementation of such actions do not necessarily take into account more solid competition issues<sup>477</sup>. In fact, more complex seems to be the realization of cooperation initiatives focusing on other important issues, as the definition of common ICT procedures, a greater transparency on origin and costs services, a better coordination on infrastructures programming<sup>478</sup>. Such coordinated actions are certainly more difficult to obtain, given the implication of competition issues: however, they result in being fundamental in order to start and reinforce, along with a *bottom-up* approach, processes of greater systemic articulation<sup>479</sup>.

Cooperation is still a difficult task to carry on, especially in relation with competition: a claim (Soriani, 2011) confirmed by current experiences of *wars on tariffs* between ports that, missing coordination on common decisions and actions, are able to offer extremely low port taxes and fees, thanks to an editing of the *Decreto Milleproroghe*<sup>480</sup>. In this respect, it is useful to remind the importance of effective public policies of regulation and coordination, that can be of great importance in determining the effect of voluntary based actions. In fact, the normative framework is particularly important for port cooperation,

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<sup>474</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>475</sup> *Ivi.*, 515-516.

<sup>476</sup> *Ivi.*, 516.

<sup>477</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>478</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>479</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>480</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 516, see note (46).

because it is fundamental to outline tasks and fields of action of port authorities<sup>481</sup>. As argued by Soriani (2011) voluntary-based actions, as the ones presented in this section, cannot represent a solution to problems caused by inefficient regulation policies: on the contrary, the quality of such policies determines the success of voluntary-based actions<sup>482</sup>.

## **2.4 – Future development and cooperative goals**

In the previous section we offered a broad perspective on different types of cooperative initiatives that may take place within the port field. It has been noted, that cooperation can be a fundamental tool, useful in order to cope with the situation of deep marginality which involves the whole Adriatic area, especially when referred to container traffic.

We observed, that cooperation may consist of different initiatives between different actors, that could be private or public, port authorities or transport companies, political actors or European Community organisms. Now it is time to stress the importance of having a wide vision on logistics for improving cooperative relations and obtaining successful goals.

Indeed, the Adriatic cooperation topic is robustly connected to transport and logistics issues, because cooperation is aimed at achieving specific goals, and in the port world such goals are mostly the ones of logistic nature. If cooperation is aimed at solving problems such as the marginality of the Upper Adriatic ports, in the context and within the praxis mentioned before, logistics is a key element, that must be taken into account when analyzing such matter. For this reason, we provide here a general analysis of the future development of the European logistic context and a review of some actions that can be undertaken in order to improve the Adriatic situation.

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<sup>481</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 517.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibidem.*

First of all, it should be noted that container movements constitute the most dynamic segment and the real engine of the port field, along with transport chains and distribution mechanisms<sup>483</sup>. That's the reason why we will especially refer here to container movements, even though other important and different traffic categories do exist (as the bulk transport, *general cargo*, *project cargo*, *ro-ro*, *ro-pax*, etc.), achieving high rates of development<sup>484</sup>.

In order to offer a clear and schematic view on these topics of future development, we will follow the pathway traced by Stefano Soriani in the article *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico* (2011)<sup>485</sup>, which constitutes the starting point of many considerations reported in this work.

The article considers the following elements as future development perspectives, also indicating the concrete actions to undertake: a) the transport demand by the most dynamic areas in Italy; b) the geo-economic changes in Eastern Europe; c) the capacity of the Upper Adriatic ports to bear a greater dynamism with the excellent development forecasts about container movements in the Suez channel<sup>486</sup>. In this section we will follow this schedule, adding other considerations, integrating the analysis with some articles and institutional documents, in order to describe the logistic framework in which future cooperative initiatives will take place, and the final cooperative goals to be achieved.

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<sup>483</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 496, see note (15).

<sup>484</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>485</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520).

<sup>486</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 496.

a) Transport demand by the most dynamic areas in Italy

Regarding the first point, it may be useful to remind that the basins that refer to the Italian ports of the Upper Adriatic area involve some of the most dynamic and economically developed regions of the Country: Emilia Romagna, Lombardy, Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia<sup>487</sup>.

This is definitely a local and regional consideration, which although involves a wider geo-economic context: in this respect, it is useful to remind the scientific research that led to the concept of *blue banana*. In fact, in 1989 RECLUS, «a group of French geographers managed by Roger Brunet presented a study on the development chances of urban areas in the European economy»<sup>488</sup>. The study was meant to demonstrate the existence, already observed by famous scholars as Braudel, Rokan and Tilly, of a banana-shaped area of economic development in the centre of Europe, a metropolitan axis running from London to Milan<sup>489</sup>. In other words, the *blue banana* (as it was soon called by the press) was presented as «the backbone of European economic development», dating back since roman times and consolidated in the course of the centuries: in fact, along this belt the industrial revolution spread all over Europe after the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>490</sup>. Moreover, the *blue banana* «shows how long-term structures may continue to be important to the present day», also contributing to make this area different if compared to other European zones<sup>491</sup>. In fact, the *blue banana* «still differs from other European locations in both demographic, economic, infrastructural and cultural educational aspects»: it is a highly urbanized and densely populated area, comprising many large or medium-size cities, also

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<sup>487</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 496.

<sup>488</sup> HOSPERS, G. J., *Beyond the blue banana? Structural change in Europe's geo-economy*, Intereconomics, ISSN 0020-5346, Vol. 38, Iss. 2, 2003, (pp. 76-85), p. 78. <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/41714>

<sup>489</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>490</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>491</sup> *Ibidem.*

presenting the largest industrial concentrations and highest per capita incomes<sup>492</sup>.

What matters most to our analysis, is that in such geographic vision, the Northern Italian regions represent the southern part of the *blue banana*, having in Milan and in the *Pianura Padana* its lower part: we are dealing here with the most dynamic areas of Italy, also involved in other geo-economic development processes, as those that have been recently identified (e.g. the *sun belt* from Milan to Valencia)<sup>493</sup>. In this respect, it is clear that the Upper Adriatic ports should be able to take advantage of the industrial production of the area. This fact implies that the demand of transport required by these areas is extremely important, thus leading to the creation of some *tank areas* of demand, i.e. areas that would express a further demand if adequate conditions existed (logistic integration, infrastructural and service improvements)<sup>494</sup>. In this respect, investing on infrastructures and service-related strategies may bring a huge benefit to the Italian ports involved, that would represent fundamental nodes within the regional context. In fact, «la domanda di trasporto è strettamente legata all'andamento della produzione»: the importance of the market is fundamental in pushing shipping lines and transport companies to serve that area, along with cost analysis and best conditions<sup>495</sup>.

Given the importance of the northern Italian regions, from an industrial and commercial point of view, the opportunities for the Upper Adriatic ports could be really impressive, especially taking into account the importance of emerging markets, as the Balkans and *Far East* ports.

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<sup>492</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>494</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 496.

<sup>495</sup> ARCHIBUGI F., *Il trasporto container: la scelta delle rotte*, Working Papers SIET 2011 - ISSN 1973-3208, Società Italiana di Economia dei Trasporti e della Logistica - XIII Riunione Scientifica –Messina, 16-17 June, 2011, p. 3. «La domanda di trasporto è tuttavia mediata dalle esigenze di caricatori e spedizionieri, i quali tendono a ricercare le migliori condizioni e opportunità per raggiungere la destinazione finale delle merci».

b) Geopolitical / geo-economic changes in Eastern Europe

In fact, beyond local issues, more attention should be focused on the eastern regions and the Balkans area, that potentially represent a chance for Italy and the Upper Adriatic ports, to expand their influence and market activities. As already observed in the first part, the historical events occurred in the 90s in those areas caused deep political changes (also putting emphasis on new regional approaches and policies), and new opportunities of market growth. In fact, such geo-economic changes can be particularly important in supporting new dynamics of development, especially concerning the ports of Venice, Trieste, Koper and Rijeka<sup>496</sup>. Obviously, we are dealing here with different political situations that still present elements of weakness and instability, given their recent history of violence and ethnic struggles. If the Bosnia and Herzegovina still remain a sort of *black hole*, characterized by never-ending struggles between different ethnic groups and by the absence of real geo-political substance, and the Kosovo still represents a problem within the Balkans region, a European solution can be found<sup>497</sup>.

Without entering here in political and institutional issues involving the Balkans, it is useful to bear in mind that the further political opening of the area would represent an opportunity of development, also for the ports located in the Upper Adriatic area. Through political (and European Community) processes of integration, regions belonging to the Balkans would avoid their further marginalization: according to Paolini (2005), the solution to marginalization is their integration in the Adriatic System<sup>498</sup>. In this respect, it seems necessary to

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<sup>496</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 496.

<sup>497</sup> PAOLINI M., *Perché l'Adriatico non diventi un Mar Morto*, in *I Balcani non sono lontani*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2005, (pp. 9-17), p. 10.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibidem*.

connect these regions to a wider internationalization project, representing a real interest also for the Italian and European regions facing the Adriatic Sea<sup>499</sup>.

Concerning diplomatic actions carried on by the current Italian Government (2012-2013) in order to contribute to the stabilization of the Balkans area, it is useful to mention a diplomatic meeting recently arranged and the following political outcome. July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012, in Brussels, Italy presented the *Italian Strategy for the Balkans*: a strategic project strongly promoted by the Italian Foreign Minister, Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata, aimed at arranging the fields of action of the Italian policies in the Balkans area<sup>500</sup>. The growing dynamism of diplomatic relations between Italy and countries of the area, as, for instance, the bilateral meetings with Croatia, witnesses the political effort to contribute to their development, even because Italy seems to consider the area as priority to its international perspective<sup>501</sup>.

Marta Dassù, undersecretary of the Foreign Minister, has stressed the symbolic importance of the initiative, because it has been presented in an historical moment featured by the approval, by the Italian Parliament, of the Community treaties crucial for the future of the European Union, as the *European Mechanism of Stability* and the European balance sheet<sup>502</sup>. The diplomat has also declared that Italy supports the enlargement of the European Union to

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<sup>499</sup> *Ibidem*. Quite complex is the complete review of the Italian initiatives involving Balkans regions and their own development and stability. One of the most recent and important initiatives seems to be the Italian Law 84/2001, which offers details about Italian participation to Balkans development actions [Cfr. ZACCAGNINI L., *Bar – Belgrado. Un corridoio verso il cuore dei Balcani*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2005, (pp. 9-17), p. 145].

<sup>500</sup> *Riunione a Bruxelles degli Ambasciatori d'Italia presso i Paesi dei Balcani Occidentali, presieduta dal Sottosegretario agli Affari Esteri Marta Dassù*, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, official website, [http://www.esteri.it/MAE/EN/Sala\\_Stampa/ArchivioNotizie/Approfondimenti/2012/07/20120720\\_Bruxelles.htm](http://www.esteri.it/MAE/EN/Sala_Stampa/ArchivioNotizie/Approfondimenti/2012/07/20120720_Bruxelles.htm).

<sup>501</sup> *Strategia Italiana per i Balcani, presentata a Bruxelles*, Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso, 27 luglio 2012, [www.coordinamentoadriatico.it](http://www.coordinamentoadriatico.it).

<sup>502</sup> *Riunione a Bruxelles degli Ambasciatori d'Italia presso i Paesi dei Balcani Occidentali, presieduta dal Sottosegretario agli Affari Esteri Marta Dassù*, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, official website, [http://www.esteri.it/MAE/EN/Sala\\_Stampa/ArchivioNotizie/Approfondimenti/2012/07/20120720\\_Bruxelles.htm](http://www.esteri.it/MAE/EN/Sala_Stampa/ArchivioNotizie/Approfondimenti/2012/07/20120720_Bruxelles.htm).

Western Balkans Countries, such as Croatia, because the deepening of integration policies shall bring an opening effort towards such countries, that always looked at Europe as a fundamental element for consolidating rights, stability, economical and social development<sup>503</sup>.

However, according to many experts, we should also take into account the fact that European integration acted from Brussels without a deeper and more complex analysis of the Adriatic context, not paying attention to integration and logistics issues, would even represent a negative output. Indeed, a short example is provided (Paolini, 2005): the possible entrance of Bulgaria and Romania in the European Union may bring to a further marginalization of the Adriatic area, because such regions already tend to create links with more central and northern regions of the European continent<sup>504</sup>.

Taking into account such risk, today's political actors attempt at thinking about the improvement of TEN-T (*Trans-European Transport Network*) and Pan-European corridors. These two systems of transport linkage differ from each other: in fact, the TEN-T Networks were designed in the 80s by the European Union and were approved by the Essen European Council (1994), also establishing the designation of thirty priority axis projects in the 2000s<sup>505</sup>. On the other hand, the Pan-European corridors were established by the European Community (through a coordination unit of the G24) in the 90s in order to extend towards the Eastern Countries the European transport networks, also drafting *Memorandum of Understanding* documents to be signed by the states involved<sup>506</sup>. Those actions were all carried on by Brussels, also in order to facilitate the application of PHARE, TACIS programmes, ISPA cohesion funds, Stability Pact - CARDS fund and Community financing: all those are Community instruments that make possible the implementation of development programmes and integration policies (as those described in 1.4)<sup>507</sup>. In the Pan-

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<sup>503</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>504</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>505</sup> Ministero delle Infrastrutture e dei Trasporti, official website, <http://www.mit.gov.it>

<sup>506</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>507</sup> *Ibidem.*

European conferences of Prague (1991), Crete (1994) and Helsinki (1997) ten main multimodal Pan-European corridors have been identified<sup>508</sup>.

However, here it is important to highlight the fundamental aim of transport Community policies: as reported on the official TEN-T website, «in order to establish a single, multimodal network that integrates land, sea and air transport networks throughout the Union, the European policymakers decided to establish the trans-European transport network, allowing goods and people to circulate quickly and easily between Member States and assuring international connections»<sup>509</sup>.

Moreover, it should also be noted, that the establishment of an «efficient trans-European transport network (TEN-T) has constituted a key element in the re-launched Lisbon Strategy for competitiveness and employment in Europe and will play an equally central role in the attainment of the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy»<sup>510</sup>. In fact, in this respect it is possible to affirm that transport field at a Community level, can provide employment and improve local development and competitiveness. European port management should not forget that they can also play a fundamental role in creating economic growth, also starting from the workers within their own structures. For instance, in other contexts, as in the USA, do exist ports that really like to emphasize their function of development engines and job creation possibilities: in the case of the Washington's ports, it is officially stated, on the official website, that «ports are the only public agencies whose primary purpose is economic development»<sup>511</sup>. They also declare, as public actors that «function much like private businesses», their will to invest in their communities, making significant long-term investments in infrastructure – building facilities, taking the risk, always «willing to spend today for returns that may not be seen for many years»<sup>512</sup>. In

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<sup>508</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>509</sup> European Commission, *Mobility and Transport*, [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/index_en.htm).

<sup>510</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>511</sup> Washington Ports website [www.washingtonports.org](http://www.washingtonports.org).

<sup>512</sup> *Ibidem*.

our opinion, some claims reported in these documents sound rather ideological, especially putting emphasis on considerations such as «communities are made stronger» by investments made in port facilities and related infrastructures<sup>513</sup>. However, without considering here the differences between the structures of European and USA port managements, it is possible to affirm that the Upper Adriatic ports (as well as ports in general) should be always aware, along with political actors, that their field represents an important chance for improving employment and economic growth.

Nevertheless, the same concept seems to be stressed by the European Union in Transport Community documents, (especially those involving TEN-T projects) in which it is affirmed the political will to pursue development goals: European Community policies should be aimed at building missing links and removing bottlenecks in transport infrastructures, ensuring future sustainability of transport networks, also taking into account the energy efficiency needs and the climate change challenges<sup>514</sup>. Europe has invested huge amounts of money, and will continue investing on transport projects (completion of the TEN-T network requires about € 550 billion until 2020), that are also undergoing a process of review, since the publication of the Green Paper, *Towards a better integrated trans-European transport network at the service of the common transport policy* (February, 2009)<sup>515</sup>.

However, without entering here into further details about the complex matter of the TEN-T projects, it is sufficient to recall the European corridors that would represent a chance of development for the Adriatic system: we are dealing here with the Adriatic – Baltic corridor, resulting from the implementation of the TEN-

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<sup>513</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>514</sup> Trans-European Transport Network Executive Agency, official website, <http://tentea.ec.europa.eu>

<sup>515</sup> European Commission, Mobility Transport, <http://ec.europa.eu>

T 23 and TEN-T 25, which could represent an important element for the development of Koper, Trieste and Venice<sup>516</sup>.

In this respect, Paolini (2005), notes that within particular logistic strategies, the Adriatic System would represent a solution to Balkans problems, and at the same time, the opening of the Balkans and an easier access to their logistic paths, would solve many problems affecting the Adriatic System<sup>517</sup>. In this way, Adriatic ports would expand their influence easily, also representing chances of development for the Balkans regions: a kind of mutual gain, let's say, that would also allow the Balkans to be linked to Europe, granting, at the same time, that Balkans will not be exclusively linked to Baltic regions, marginalizing the whole Adriatic system.

According to Paolini (2005), there would be two main possibilities, regarding Adriatic system connections: as already mentioned, the first one would be the Adriatic – Baltic connection, while the latter would be represented by the Adriatic – Black Sea link<sup>518</sup>.

Concerning the Adriatic – Baltic framework, the Adriatic Sea can be a real engine for networks and partnerships between the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, across the Adriatic Balkans, also providing answers to the claims of those territories that, after the European Community enlargement, are much more interested in North-South connections<sup>519</sup>. In this context, it should be necessary to mobilize networks belonging to the central-northern and central-southern circuits, along *strategic* connections: the northern node (Trieste

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<sup>516</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 496.

<sup>517</sup> PAOLINI M., *Perché l'Adriatico non diventi un Mar Morto*, in *I Balcani non sono lontani*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2005, (pp. 9-17), p. 17.

<sup>518</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>519</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 13.

– Rijeka), which links to Croatia with pan-European corridor V) and the southern node (Bar – Belgrade) connecting to Timisoara – Budapest<sup>520</sup>.

Through this redefinition of logistic connections, will be possible to activate interests of both Adriatic and Baltic territories, also involving Balkans areas of future European accession or proximity territories: the fundamental referee of this process would be Danzig, already partner of different development programmes supported by Brussels<sup>521</sup>.

Paolini (2005)<sup>522</sup> observes that the actions should be mostly focused on three interconnected axis:

I) The Northern Axis, aimed at promoting commercial, touristic and promotional contacts along the pathway Trieste – Rijeka – Zagreb – Budapest – Kosice – Danzig – Vilnius – Riga. In this framework, Trieste would represent an important node, because it would be the starting point for the Inter-Adriatic circuit towards South along two longitudinal directions, east and west;

II) The Southern Axis, aimed at improving the internal Balkans regions, capitalizing partnership experiences of Albania and Vojvodina and consolidating others on the coasts of Montenegro, also involving the Puglia region (Italy), the city of Dubrovnik (Croatia) and territorial partnerships with the Albanian cities of Durrës and Vlorë (*Durazzo* and *Valona*, in Italian);

III) The Carpathic Node, aimed at anticipating a spatial projection of the territories of future Community accession, like Romania, and other territories of proximity, as Ukraine. Such middle zone between Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine, would be accessed by the northern Vilnius – Budapest direction, by the western Trieste – Budapest and by the southern Bar – Belgrade, getting to Hungary through the Vojvodina.

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<sup>520</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>521</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>522</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 14.

Paolini (2005) also notes that this framework would be possible, thanks to the existence of the Baltic *macroregion* (see 1.4 about *Macroregions*) and different partnerships between universities, chambers of commerce and cities, as already pointed out in the first chapter of this work<sup>523</sup>.

The same actors that should be mobilized, within the Adriatic system, by Italian initiatives, activating the second possible framework, which is the one involving Adriatic – Black Sea connections<sup>524</sup>. Cultural, academic, commercial and touristic partnerships should represent links between the Italian and Balkans regions, always taking into account the development perspectives of the European Community enlargement towards the Black Sea<sup>525</sup>. In that context, the Aegean Node centered on Thessaloniki would be of growing importance for linking the Ionian and Eastern Mediterranean areas: a consideration which is based on the fact that new attraction poles will be developed in those areas<sup>526</sup>. In addition, Paolini (2005) observes that new political actions are required in order to establish partnerships with Athens, aimed at revitalizing Ionic and Adriatic maritime routes, creating synergies between Adriatic ports, Sea routes and Greek Trade fleets<sup>527</sup>. However, we personally argue that during the current financial situation of Greece (and of the other Mediterranean European Countries involved in this process, such as Italy) these topics have certainly lost their centrality and importance among the main political decisions of these countries, if ever had gained it before.

Nevertheless, in the here delineated context, Belgrade can be of fundamental importance and centrality both in the Adriatic – Baltic and in the Adriatic – Black Sea frameworks<sup>528</sup>. We are dealing here with an area that could take advantage of its position along the Danube course, directly connecting it to the Black Sea system, as well as, in a less direct way, to the Northern and Baltic regions,

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<sup>523</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>524</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>525</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>526</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>527</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 15.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibidem.*

along the Rein – Danube course<sup>529</sup>. At the same time, the city is linked to Thessaloniki and Bar, in the south, so that we can affirm that Belgrade is linked to the three large European maritime systems: the Black Sea, the Ionic – Adriatic gate, the Aegean and the Great North, as can be seen in the map<sup>530</sup>.

However, the logistic issues involving the city of Belgrade, highlight one of the most important problems affecting the Adriatic System, which is the bad communication between the Adriatic ports and the inner Balkans areas. In order to solve this problem, the Italian government has indicated some infrastructural solutions, due to its involvement in the area, established by the Italian Law 84/2001<sup>531</sup>. Italy has recommended the restoring and modernizing of the Port of Bar and the reactivation of the railways Bar – Belgrade: in fact, the political reorganization occurred in the 90s had left Serbia without maritime access, so that the port of Bar has been identified as the natural gateway to Belgrade (and the only Dalmatian not Croatian port), covering up to 95% of the maritime traffic of Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>532</sup> The most problematic element of the port of Bar seems to be the absence of inland connections: there are two main roadways (towards Podgorica, Belgrade) but their conditions do not allow a profitable and large commercial flow<sup>533</sup>. Concerning the railways that should be restored, we are dealing here with an old infrastructure (built between the years 1954 and 1976) whose strategic potential is of primary importance<sup>534</sup>. The railways, 476 kilometers long, going across the mountain regions of the territory, seems to be not fitting to consistent trade flows, also because the passages do not allow the transit of modern *high cube* containers, and the line presents some technical issues to improve or modify / modernize<sup>535</sup>. Zaccagnini (2005) notes that this is

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<sup>529</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>530</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 16.

<sup>531</sup> ZACCAGNINI L., *Bar – Belgrado. Un corridoio verso il cuore dei Balcani*, Quaderni Speciali di Limes, Roma, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, 2005, (pp. 9-17), p. 145.

<sup>532</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 146.

<sup>533</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>534</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 147- 148.

<sup>535</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 148.

a quite negative feature, because the majority of the Italian sea-way traffic implies the use of trucks and containers<sup>536</sup>.

Considering these issues, the Italian Distribution Council (IDC), which is the Italian logistics agency, has promoted the project of a multimodal corridor (Bar – Belgrade – Timisoara), also allowing transports to travel far beyond Belgrade<sup>537</sup>. Many are the advantages of creating such corridor, involving different Italian organisms, such as Italian companies (within the *Federtrasporto* framework), the *Ministero delle Attività Produttive*, the *Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero*, *Sviluppo Italia*, the CNEL and the AILOG (Italian Logistics Association), also studying the possibility to connect the port of Bar with Italian ports<sup>538</sup>.

However, beyond the example of Bar, which will offer many chances of infrastructural development and improvement, it is important to stress the fundamental goals that such political and logistics actions can achieve, both for the local territories where they are implemented, as for the whole Adriatic system, which would benefit from a more connected Eastern Europe, leading to a focus of these regions on the Adriatic Sea context and its features of growth. In fact, the building of corridors, connecting in a multimodal way (through roads, railways and inland waterways), would definitely link the Adriatic Sea to the heart of the Balkans, thanks to the connection with Timisoara, also involving and integrating Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania in the Adriatic system and offering a valuable alternative to their exclusive gravitation on the Greece – Sava axis<sup>539</sup>.

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<sup>536</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>537</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 148 - 149.

<sup>538</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>539</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 150.

c) Greater dynamism and the future container movements in the Suez channel

Going back to the perspectives of growth observed by Soriani (2011), it must be noted that the Upper Adriatic ports present infrastructural features that allow them to bear a greater dynamism: Venice and Ravenna dispose of large areas, where *distripark* could be built, while Trieste, Koper and Rijeka present an excellent marine accessibility, that could favor new direct lines services, particularly those involving flows between *Far East* and the Mediterranean Sea<sup>540</sup>. These ports should take advantage of the so-called *cascade effect*, linked to the *gigantism* phenomena: the growing dimension of the ships has led to a displacement of the smaller ships (4.500 – 6.000 TEUs) in favor of new direct intercontinental services<sup>541</sup>. This phenomenon and its consequences have already been analyzed (see 2.1): here it is sufficient to remind that the *cascade effect* can be an opportunity for the Upper Adriatic ports, if they will be able to seize it. In fact, the challenge that our ports may accept is particularly important, especially taking into account that «the primary beneficiaries of the arrival of mega-ships will be the top-tier hubs such as Singapore, Yantianm Yangshan, and Hong Kong»<sup>542</sup>, and our Adriatic ports should take advantage of this situation, providing adequate services.

In this context, the most important Mediterranean ports have implemented direct services with Chinese and Eastern Asian ports: it's the case of the port of Trieste, which, since 2009, offers a weekly direct container service (Maersk –

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<sup>540</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), pp. 496 – 497.

<sup>541</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 497, see note (16).

<sup>542</sup> LAM L., OOI BOON HOE, *Tomorrow's world*, www.portstrategy.com, in Port Opinion Portek, May, 2008, p. 44.

CMA, CGM), connecting Trieste and Koper to the most important ports in *Far East*, like Shanghai, Busan, Hong Kong, Tianjin, etc<sup>543</sup>.

Another chance of future development for the Upper Adriatic ports is the fact that they could be beneficiaries of the excellent development forecasts about trade movements in the Suez channel<sup>544</sup>. In fact, the current problems of transit in the Panama channel are favoring the development of *pendulum* routes between Eastern Asia and Northern America, using the Mediterranean Sea as a pathway (see 2.1)<sup>545</sup>. According to the Ocean Shipping Consultants Ltd. forecasts, container movements should experience a growth, in the years 2004/2015, of 90% in the *Far East*, 91% in America, 88% in Europe and 132% in the rest of the world<sup>546</sup>. Even though we think that such forecasts have been made before the current financial world crisis, not taking into account the consequences at a worldwide level, it is still valid the argument about the growth of the container movements, also taking into account the impressive growth of the BRIC countries and their robust market strategies that still keep alive the container movements. Moreover, as reported by the representatives of the Port Authority of Venice (see Appendix), recent market forecasts (MDS Transmodal Ltd for NAPA, 2011) predicted an impressive +348% growth in the Upper Adriatic container movements in 2030, if specific infrastructural achievements will be displayed, also given the future possible evolution of the geopolitical and geo-economic framework in the Adriatic area<sup>547</sup>.

However, it is undeniable that the BRICs play a fundamental role in today's container movements: in the last years, Chinese trade ships directed to the eastern shores of the USA, have brought the Panama channel to a complete saturation of the traffic<sup>548</sup>. In fact, the channel, which is 77 kilometers long,

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<sup>543</sup> SORIANI S., *Natura e forme delle iniziative di co-opetition tra porti. Evidenze, questioni aperte e rilievi critici nel caso Alto Adriatico*, Riv. Geogr. Ital. 118 (2011), (pp. 487-520), p. 497, see note (16).

<sup>544</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 497.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>546</sup> *Le nuove rotte del traffico container*, www.mglobale.it.

<sup>547</sup> BONALDO S., Port Authority of Venice, see Interview in Appendix 4.1.

<sup>548</sup> *Le nuove rotte del traffico container*, www.mglobale.it.

allows the passage of less than thirty ships a day<sup>549</sup>: in order to solve the problem, Panama's port authority has started enlargement operations, that will not be completed until 2014<sup>550</sup>. At the same time, some Asian transport companies directed to the USA have begun using the Suez channel, which is 163 kilometers long, but free of any closing: in addition, it allows the passage of larger ships and it is less crowded, representing a perfect valid alternative to Panama, especially for South Eastern Countries<sup>551</sup>.

In this context of current transformations of the worldwide market flows and maritime routes, among China, which is regarded as the giant of today's world economy, another Asian actor whose development rate is impressively growing, India, can represent a fundamental actor. We are dealing here with one of the most dynamic world economies: an yearly growth rate of 8-10%<sup>552</sup> and an impressive GDP (almost doubled in the years 1990-2005), while trade relations between India and EU have grown of 31% in four years, reaching the amount of €53 millions in 2009<sup>553</sup>. The Italian Foreign Ministry, (*Ministero degli Affari Esteri*), has confirmed the forecast of a potential growth rate of the Indian economy (<8%)<sup>554</sup>: those macroeconomics features will probably affect trade shipping flows at a worldwide level, and it should not be surprising that the Upper Adriatic ports are signing agreements within the NAPA framework (a port association that will be analyzed in the following chapter) in order to attract Indian ships.

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<sup>549</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>550</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosisistema, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009, p. 8, note 9.

<sup>551</sup> *Le nuove rotte del traffico container*, [www.mglobale.it](http://www.mglobale.it).

<sup>552</sup> *Trade and Investment Barriers, Engaging our strategic economic partners on improved market access: priorities for action breaking down barriers to trade*, Rapporto della Commissione Europea al Consiglio Europeo (2011). Link [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2011/march/tradoc\\_147629.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2011/march/tradoc_147629.pdf)

<sup>553</sup> *Rapporto paesi congiunti 2011*, Ministero degli Affari Esteri.

Link <http://www.rapportopaesecongiunti.it/rapporto-congiunto.php?idpaese=126>

<sup>554</sup> *Ibidem*.

In this way, cooperation can bring real and concrete outcomes, contributing to the growth of the Upper Adriatic ports: an agreement (2011) between some Upper Adriatic ports (Venice, Ravenna and Koper) and logistics actors (Gruppo Fremura, acting on behalf of the Shipping Corporation of India, Transagent for Slovenia and Sermar Line from Venice) has established the first container line of the Upper Adriatic ports, for Indian ports via Port Said West<sup>555</sup>. This can be an ideal example of how cooperation can work in a concrete way, achieving real logistics outcomes: the service, a rapid and dedicated connection to India (only 23 days from Venice to the Indian ports), links the Upper Adriatic ports to Port Said West (Egypt), Salalah (Oman), Columbus (Sri Lanka), Nhava Sheva and Mundra (India)<sup>556</sup>. The project is expected to double the container movement rates towards and from India and other BRICs: in addition, the Upper Adriatic ports, members of NAPA, have taken part in promotional conferences and meetings held in India, in order to provide information on their chances of development and activities<sup>557</sup>.

Cooperation actions of this kind, involving private and public actors, aimed at achieving promotional but also concrete development goals, can be a demonstration of effective cooperation, that can really work. Having said that, and having stressed the importance of having a wide vision about Continental and world-wide logistics, it is true that «the process towards greater cooperation is in a very embryonic phase, and it is easy to foresee that a generic *willingness to cooperate* will not easily translate into practical cooperative measures»<sup>558</sup>. In addition, not every Northern Adriatic port administrator will support cooperative actions «with the same degree of commitment»<sup>559</sup>, also taking into account the pursuit of power among different parts, as theoretically claimed by the Realism school (see 1.2).

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<sup>555</sup> *I porti dell'Alto Adriatico si collegano con l'India*, NAPA official website <http://www.portsofnapa.com/>

<sup>556</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>557</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>558</sup> SORIANI S., ANTONELLINI L., *Towards a co-opetition (co-operation & competition) approach in port governance? The case of the northern Adriatic*, IACP – 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference cities and ports – Stockholm, June 2008, p. 12.

<sup>559</sup> *Ibidem.*

However, effective cooperative outcomes as those promoted within the NAPA framework, are tangible examples of a will to cooperate that really does exist, even in contexts of competition and political struggle. In this respect, it seems to us that port associations as the *Baltic Ports Organization* and the *North Adriatic Ports Association* can be of fundamental importance in highlighting new cooperative approaches and concrete outcomes.



### 3 – Port Organizations between cooperation and struggle

As already acknowledged, associations of ports can be an effective way for achieving successful cooperation goals: beyond the most used cooperative attitudes at a worldwide level, the creation of a group involving different ports belonging to the same area can represent a real tool in order to establish partnerships between the ports involved and try to find shared agreements.

There are many port organizations in the world, and especially concerning Europe, it is useful to recall the creation, urged by the European Commission, of two separate port organizations, in 1993: the European Sea Ports Organization (ESPO) representing Public Administrations, and the Federation of European Private Port Operators (FEPORT), representing private stevedores and terminal operators<sup>560</sup>. However, the interest by the European Commission in the port field had been showed far before the foundation of such institutions: in fact, the ESPO was established on the ground of a Port Working Group, set up by the Commission in 1974 and gathering all Pas representatives of the main ports in Europe<sup>561</sup>.

Among world port organizations or associations, we choose here to analyze two of them, particularly important and useful in our analysis, because of their peculiar history and connection to the matter of Adriatic cooperation: the BPO and the NAPA. The first one, the BPO (Baltic Ports Organization) is important because it is the oldest of its kind in Europe, also taking into account the consequences of its actions for the whole continental port system and its creation in the post-Cold War era. The latter, the NAPA (North Adriatic Ports Association), deserves a general description, because it involves the ports of the Upper Adriatic area and many regional issues that we describe in this work.

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<sup>560</sup> PALLIS, A. A., VERHOEVEN, *Does the EU Port Policy strategy encompass 'proximity'?* in NOTTEBOOM T. E., DE LANGEN, P. W., DUCRUET C. B., *Ports in proximity: competition and coordination among adjacent seaports*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2009, p. 110.

<sup>561</sup> *Ibidem*.

However, the short analysis of these two forms of associations will have a double meaning to us: on the one hand, the creation of such initiatives can be the real demonstration of the search, enacted by port managements, for achieving a greater cooperation and integration. On the other hand, it will be revealed, as some scholars argue, that such initiatives can be the opposite, trying to hide an old but still existing struggle between ports, in order to achieve greater power and individual gains.

In order to discuss these issues, the first two points will describe the most important features of the two organizations (3.1 and 3.2), while the third one will shortly focus on the so-called *war of ports*. These considerations will be of fundamental importance in answering the question about the possibility of real cooperation between ports in the Upper Adriatic Sea.

### **3.1 – The Baltic Ports Organization**

As reported in the BPO guidebook edited for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Baltic Ports Organization (2011), the organization was set up in Copenhagen, at a Founding General Meeting, on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1991<sup>562</sup>. The guide also declares that the ports involved had all commercial interests in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR): such ports were the port of Copenhagen, Tallinn and Rostock, that formed the organization, allowing the taking place of the first General Assembly, in Tallinn, on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1992<sup>563</sup>.

The founding of the organization should be regarded as an important event, especially taking into account the historic moment when it took place, i.e. the aftermath of the Cold War, with all related political consequences of such stunning transformations. Indeed, the end of the Soviet regime represented a

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<sup>562</sup> Baltic Ports Organization Guidebook, 1991-2011, 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, on <http://www.bpoports.com/>, p. 6.

<sup>563</sup> *Ibidem*.

change for many countries belonging to the Baltic area, that since then could finally enjoy a free market: the creation of a platform where Scandinavian and Eastern European ports could exchange their experiences was the main goal to achieve, also transferring knowledge and know-how from West to East, contributing to the dynamism of the rapidly growing Eastern European ports<sup>564</sup>.

In fact, concerning BPO, the goals to obtain have always been particularly ambitious: the main goal seemed to consist in the achievement of «rapid, yet rational development of maritime transport in the Baltic Sea Region»<sup>565</sup>. A development which had both the purpose of boosting economic growth of the states involved in the region, and the creation of «an efficient gate for the transfer of passengers and cargo» within the area<sup>566</sup>. Beyond development issues, the BPO aims at achieving other purposes, as the exchange of information, transfer of technology, and port management services, as well as education and training of port employees<sup>567</sup>.

At the same time, the BPO aims at cooperating with many international actors, also organizing forums and conferences, in order to promote the BSR as a strategic way for transport and logistics services<sup>568</sup>. As noted in the BPO document, «the organization implements its goals, cooperating with the European Sea Ports Organization (ESPO), International Maritime Organization (IMO), Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), Baltic Development Forum, European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA) as well as Danish, Swedish and Finnish Port Associations, among others»<sup>569</sup>.

As already mentioned, the new perspective of a free market began to seduce many institutions and political actors, also attracting new actors, willing to become part of such market, whose possibilities and potentialities of

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<sup>564</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 3.

<sup>565</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>566</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>567</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>568</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 3.

<sup>569</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 4.

development seemed to be incredibly hectic and growing at the beginning of the 1990s<sup>570</sup>. Indeed, as noted by the Guide (2011), in the mid-1990s, the slogan *The Baltic Sea – Europe’s new maritime highway* was created<sup>571</sup>: it witnessed the willingness to consider the Baltic area in a different and updated way, finally possible thanks to the fall of the Berlin wall and the changes enacted in the former Soviet bloc.

Of course, the situation, at the beginning of the 1990s, was really different than the present one: as noted by Julian Skelnik, BPO chairman, «at the very beginning, BPO members experienced problems with cross-border movement, customs and diverse stages of development in different parts of the BSR»<sup>572</sup>. In fact, ports have been changing in the course of time, and «operations of all ports are currently more businesslike than in the beginning of the 1990s», as noted by Heikki Nissinen, BPO Vice Chairman<sup>573</sup>. In addition, as easily predictable, private actors are now practically responsible for almost all service production, leading to a strongly changed context in the area. The same BPO functionary also noted that «ports of the early 1990s are no longer recognizable as the same ports physically or operationally. Especially ports in the Baltic States, which used to have a highly specified task as part of the Soviet Union’s transports, today provide services to a much more diversified traffic flow, even though Russia’s transit traffic is still an important part of their traffic»<sup>574</sup>.

Today, the BPO involves several ports of the following countries: Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland. As stated in the BPO guide (2011), concerning member accession, «commercial ports located within the Baltic Sea Region may apply for membership, while ports and organizations outside of the region can become friendship members»<sup>575</sup>. «Application for membership is to be considered and approved

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<sup>570</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 3.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>572</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 4.

<sup>573</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>574</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>575</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 6.

by the Board», who consists of a chairperson and other members (totally involving 10 board members), and whose primary aim is to represent all ports from all countries involved in the organization<sup>576</sup>. Otherwise, members of the Board are elected by the General Assembly for a period of four years<sup>577</sup>.

In addition, BPO can be really considered as a platform for cooperation, communication and exchange of information, even reinforced by the partnership with the European Union. In fact, since several states of the area joined the European Union (2004), many regulations and issues concerning the Baltic Sea have been decided and discussed in Brussels<sup>578</sup>. Indeed, it seems that the BPO is an organization «where ports and other stakeholders can meet and share their opinions on various matters», and, especially concerning environmental issues, the link between the BPO and the EU seems to be particularly strong<sup>579</sup>.

BPO has always been caring about environment: in 1998, an Environmental Policy was presented at the organization, including «guidelines on environmental planning, waste management and education in that field», also witnessing that «environmental problems were and still are one of the most important issues the organization deals with»<sup>580</sup>. Indeed, the BPO is an observer to the Helsinki Commission, also aiming at taking concrete actions in order to promote the protection of the environment, as when, in 2010, the organization took a stand on the new IMO regulations, measures which limited the sulphur content in ships' emissions and established *Sulphur Emission Control Areas*<sup>581</sup>. The BPOs stand on the matter was presented at the European Parliament, after having involved its members, ports, shipping lines, R&D institutions and stakeholders (Copenhagen, January, 2010)<sup>582</sup>.

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<sup>576</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>577</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>578</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 5.

<sup>579</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>580</sup> P. 4.

<sup>581</sup> P. 4.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibidem.*

Nevertheless, what may be of interest here, is to talk about the BPO's strategy for the years 2010-2013: what best expresses the feature of such cooperative machine.

The BPO documents report that the mission of the organization consist in the aim at contributing to the sustainable development of maritime transport in the Baltic Sea Region, while considering itself as an «active business organization supporting its members and cooperating with the relevant partners, well recognized within the Baltic region as well as outside of the Baltic»<sup>583</sup>. The BPO should also sustain the social building of a network, strengthening and developing relations involving transport fields, as shipping, rail and road sectors<sup>584</sup>.

In addition, the Baltic area should be the stepping stone of the BPO, starting point for all its initiatives and political actions. In fact, it should represent the interest of Baltic ports and transports, also in relation with institutions belonging to the European Union and other important organization<sup>585</sup>. Indeed, the regional context of the Baltic area seems to be fundamental in creating the basis and foundations of the BPO, and the actions carried on by the organization should all be aimed at contributing to the overall development of the region<sup>586</sup>. In this context, the BPO should also focus on initiatives and actions aimed at promoting the creation of a *Baltic Maritime Highway*, in order to improve the transport developments in the region, supporting entrepreneurs and ideas<sup>587</sup>. In order to achieve such goals, the BPO should also «support and take initiatives in research and science that will lead to a better understanding of the transport sector in the region, to study future challenges», also arranging cooperation agreements with research institutions in the region<sup>588</sup>.

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<sup>583</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 9.

<sup>584</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>585</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>586</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>587</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>588</sup> *Ibidem.*

In addition, as already mentioned, the environmental matters is still very important within the BPO's strategy 2010-2013: BPO should promote environmental managements in the ports, contributing to the clean environment and taking «an active role in international dialogues where the environment is concerned»<sup>589</sup>.

In order to try to cope with all these complex issues, the BPO guidelines indicate some activities that could be carried on. First of all, dealing with the environmental problems of the region, the BPO should establish a BPO *Environment Working Group*, composed of at least 4-6 members, that will have to find solutions about environmental issues relevant for port operations and development<sup>590</sup>.

About diplomatic actions and partnerships, the BPO should organize meetings with external partners, belonging to Europe, Asia, America and Africa: at the same time, the organization will have to strengthen relations with partners in the most developed and growing zones in those continents<sup>591</sup>. Such meetings should take place in the official conference of the organization or in dedicated seminars: the BPO document also indicates that the number of «seminars dedicated to port management, port operations, environmental management, IT systems, etc.» should be further enlarged<sup>592</sup>.

About debates organized by the BPO in Brussels for the European Union, we should recall the first ever held, for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and the European Commission, on April, 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007<sup>593</sup>. The debate, entitled *Transport development in the Baltic Sea Region – Future Challenge*, was moderated by a member of the Parliament and focused on European funds for port investments and hinterland connections<sup>594</sup>. The meeting, attended by

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<sup>589</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>590</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>591</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>592</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>593</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 7.

<sup>594</sup> *Ibidem.*

«representatives of Baltic ports, MEPs, representatives of the European Commission as well as European transport industry organizations», has been the first of a long series: since then, every year the seminar held in Brussels, concerning those issues already mentioned in this part<sup>595</sup>.

However, in the previous part, focusing on cooperation issues in the port field, we shortly recalled the importance of a promotional policy by ports (see 2.3). The same can be true for port organizations, as the BPO: the logo of the organization was changed in 2007<sup>596</sup>. Meaningful differences can be noted in the new logo, if compared to the old one: even the use of specific shapes and colours (*tonal effect in the graphic*)<sup>597</sup> seems to be particularly important for BPO, conveying specific messages. Also the website gained a new look (November, 2007): as stated in the BPO document, «with a more modern design and an improved navigational structure, offering a source of knowledge for port-members, the site became a showcase for the Baltic Ports Organization's latest news and events»<sup>598</sup>.

### 3.2 – The North Adriatic Ports Association

«NAPA was established in Trieste in March 2010 by the port authorities of Ravenna, Venice, Trieste and Luka Koper to start mutual cooperation to increase the potential, the quality and the efficiency of the Northern Adriatic ports, transport infrastructures and related services with the general goal to become a European multi-port gateway»<sup>599</sup>. In addition, the Port Authority of

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<sup>595</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>596</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>597</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>598</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>599</sup> *Adriatic Multiport Gateway*, official website, <http://www.its-napa.eu/>.

Rijeka joined the organization in November 2010, leading to the current composition of NAPA members<sup>600</sup>.

It is interesting to report the first aim of the association, as declared in the official NAPA documents:

*Gli scali dell'Alto Adriatico si impegnano formalmente a cooperare e a creare sinergie tra le realtà per proseguire fianco a fianco nel percorso di promozione territoriale per lo sviluppo dell'attività marittima lungo le rotte nord-sud tramite l'Alto Adriatico*<sup>601</sup>.

The association was created in harmony with the European Community policies that promote the creation of multiport *hubs*, also maintaining the continuity with the initiative started by the sign of the *North Adriatic Ports Articulation*, i.e. a *Memorandum of Understanding*<sup>602</sup>. Such document established a privileged relation between the ports, that join together in order to present themselves more determined in the international markets, also supporting the idea of an Upper Adriatic logistic platform, in order to manage traffics coming from the *Far East* towards Central and Eastern Europe<sup>603</sup>.

NAPA should be also regarded as fundamental for sharing restoring projects about port structures, also leading to the creation of a real team composed of different but integrated actors, working together. In fact, as reported in the NAPA document:

*La condivisione dei progetti di rinnovamento delle strutture portuali già in corso o di prossima*

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<sup>600</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>601</sup> *North Adriatic Ports Association: la promozione dell'Alto Adriatico per potenziare gli scambi con i mercati internazionali*, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/about-napa>.

<sup>602</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>603</sup> *Ibidem.*

*realizzazione rappresenta pertanto un passaggio fondamentale per fare squadra e poter diventare un punto di riferimento per il mercato dello shipping che cerca oggi soluzioni logistico - portuali integrate cui affidarsi per l'inoltro delle merci*<sup>604</sup>.

Indeed, the systemic approach is the stepping stone of the NAPA: all the members belonging to the Upper Adriatic system will project and share investment plans, financed by public and private funds, in order to improve infrastructures and guarantee competitive relations<sup>605</sup>. In fact, the improvement of competitive relations between ports should really represent one of the main targets of the NAPA action, and the winning solution is the coexistence of competition and cooperation. As declared by Claudio Boniciolli, President of the Port Authority of Trieste (in 2010), between NAPA ports, competition should always be accompanied by cooperation, «in modo da sfruttare al massimo i mercati di riferimento di ciascun porto»<sup>606</sup>.

However, NAPA aims do not differ so much from other associations' purposes. Indeed, similarly to the BPO case, the NAPA always aimed at establishing a network of ports belonging to the same area, taking into account the importance of creating a system «capable of integrating through internet all transport community members», also allowing the exchange of data about shipping lines and vessels operating in their territory<sup>607</sup>.

About other goals to achieve, the NAPA action expects to improve logistics and infrastructures, enhancing efficiency and productivity of NAPA ports activities, also fostering better intermodal competitiveness<sup>608</sup>. In addition, the association should provide updated data, developing and sharing best practices in the area,

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<sup>604</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>605</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>606</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>607</sup> *Adriatic Multiport Gateway*, official website, <http://www.its-napa.eu/>.

<sup>608</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/about-napa>

trying to deal with a cut of administrative costs of communication exchange<sup>609</sup>. Moreover, the NAPA should also allow the vessels (cargo) to benefit from reduced time for crossing a port node, taking into account the total amount and composition of cargo: «more than 100 million tons of water-borne cargo are handled in the NAPA seaports every year», consisting «mainly of general cargo, containers, cars, ores and minerals, fossil fuels, chemicals and others types of cargo»<sup>610</sup>.

Given this fact, and the existence of the fifth Pan European corridor, which allows the «link to 500 million European consumers», NAPA ports present themselves as «a perfect multimodal gateway to the key European markets»<sup>611</sup>. Indeed, Pan European corridors and TEN-T projects should be fundamental for the improvement of the Upper Adriatic ports that, «combining their strengths in order to promote the Northern Adriatic route [...] present themselves as an alternative to the North-European ports»<sup>612</sup>. In this context, a strong link can be consolidated through the Adriatic Baltic European corridor: providing «a complete information interoperability in a large region at the crossing of Corridors 1 and 5 and extended to the Adriatic-Baltic corridor»<sup>613</sup>.

Afterwards, the association should act for a better «cooperation in the development of maritime and hinterland connections, visits from cruise lines, environmental protection, safety and information technology», also investing «efforts into the coordinated planning of road, rail and maritime infrastructure, as well as the harmonization of regulations and procedures in the field of port service provision»<sup>614</sup>.

In fact, it should be noted that the NAPA website reports an interesting consideration about the geographic position of the NAPA ports: «the five NAPA

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<sup>609</sup> *Adriatic Multiport Gateway*, official website, <http://www.its-napa.eu/>.

<sup>610</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/about-napa>

<sup>611</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>612</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>613</sup> *Adriatic Multiport Gateway*, official website, <http://www.its-napa.eu/>.

<sup>614</sup> NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/about-napa>

seaports are located at the northern tip of Adriatic sea, a natural waterway that penetrates deep into the middle of the European continent»<sup>615</sup>. Such thought reflects the considerations made in the first part of this work, concerning the geographic and classic idea of an Adriatic space on the one hand, and the chances of a more integrated space from a logistic point of view, on the other hand. As already acknowledged, the use of the Upper Adriatic ports from an Asian point of view would represent an advantage, «providing the cheapest naval route from the *Far East* via Suez to Europe with a distance that is about 2,000 nm shorter than other North European ports»<sup>616</sup>.

Thus, as already maintained, NAPA ports should finally work as a team, presenting themselves as a valuable alternative to the *Northern Range*. However, we should also be aware of the logistic issues and problems affecting the Adriatic (and Italian) context, which, as already reported from a document issued by the Bank of Italy<sup>617</sup>, do not allow a competitive use of the logistic chain. In this perspective, then, the use of the Adriatic gateway (Upper Adriatic ports linked together and presented as a single gateway in the worldwide shipping market) would represent lower costs for ships (a far longer trip to the *Northern Range*) but costs that could be higher for inland transports, as railway, not particularly efficient in Italy.

Nevertheless, we believe that one of the most effective and useful achievement given by the action of the NAPA may be the promotion of worldwide links and networks, as the relations recently established with India. As already mentioned in 2.4, India is one of the most growing realities in the world and an important member of the so-called BRICs. Given this fact, since 2011 some NAPA ports (Venice, Ravenna and Koper) do have direct links with the Indian ports of Nhava Sheva and Mundra, leading to the creation of the first container line

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<sup>615</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>616</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>617</sup> BERETTA E., DALLE VACCHE A., MIGLIARDI A., *Il sistema portuale italiano: un'indagine sui fattori di competitività e sviluppo*, Banca d'Italia, Eurosystem, Occasional Papers (Questioni di Economia e Finanza), n. 39, febbraio 2009.

going from the Upper Adriatic to India via Port Said (and back)<sup>618</sup>. In addition, this case shows how fundamental can be private actors in supporting actions of this kind: such commercial and operative agreement has been possible thanks to the alliance between the Fremura Group, which is The Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) general agent for Italy, (based in Livorno, Italy), Transagent (agent based in Slovenia) and Sermar Line (shipping company based in Venice, Italy)<sup>619</sup>.

The link between NAPA ports and India is operating with a weekly service provided by Sermar Line for Port Said West, and with I-MED link operated by The Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) for the Indian ports<sup>620</sup>. The itinerary should touch the ports of Port Said West (Egypt), Salalah (Oman), Colombo (Sri Lanka), Nhava Sheva and Mundra (India)<sup>621</sup>.

According to the official NAPA documents, such agreement should reinforce the role of the Upper Adriatic ports in managing traffic from India to Triveneto and Central European markets<sup>622</sup>. Indeed, the SCI also made an announcement, expecting the insert of a second full container ship, which should allow to double the current traffic<sup>623</sup>.

One more time, NAPA promotes its potential in the worldwide arena with meetings and promotional initiatives, as the one held in Chennai on November, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011, with the title of *India Port expansion and capacity upgrading*<sup>624</sup>. As highlighted in the documents, the meeting was aimed at presenting the potentialities of the Upper Adriatic area and the development projects for the ports of call, in order to improve progressively the commercial intermediation

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<sup>618</sup> *I porti dell'Adriatico si collegano con l'India*, on the NAPA official website, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/about-napa>

<sup>619</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>620</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>621</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>622</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>623</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>624</sup> *Ibidem.*

with India<sup>625</sup>. The interesting thing here, is that, at the same time, another NAPA member (Trieste) acted individually, promoting the custom advantages of the Porto Franco of Trieste at the SITL of Mumbai, but always within the NAPA framework<sup>626</sup>. Those are actions that may be slightly seen as an individual pursuit of gains, which can create struggles, often hidden behind cooperative attitudes. Nevertheless, it should be also reckoned that ports must not lose their own autonomy, even within a stronger cooperative framework. In the following paragraph a few examples will show how ports can also struggle, even if linked together with signed agreements.

### 3.3 – The War of Ports

As already reckoned, the creation of associations and organizations as the BPO and the NAPA can represent a series of concrete actions, part of a wider process aimed at achieving cooperative outcomes. However, the emphasis put on cooperation issues, even at a more global level, not only referred to the port world, is sometimes exaggerated and a bit overrated if compared to reality.

Indeed, the case of the NAPA represents a sort of paradigm, considering cooperation between ports and associations through a more realist perspective: for instance, if we look at the current situation of the Upper Adriatic area, we see that cooperation processes can also hide real struggles, taking place between ports, in order to achieve the most profitable individual gains, in spite of the common pursuit of mutual gains expressed by the optimistic statutes and documents signed within the organization framework.

Ports may certainly cooperate, but they often express a far less cooperative attitude, especially when referring to the pursuit for investments and projects,

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<sup>625</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>626</sup> La Gazzetta Marittima, *A Mumbai la Monassi per NAPA*, <http://www.lagazzettamarittima.it/?p=9449>.

for a better location in the area, more capable of intercepting markets and traffic flows.

For instance, let's take the case of Koper. Among the members of the NAPA, Koper seems to be the most active, considering the total amount of movements: as noted by De Sanctis (2012), the Slovene port has achieved better performances if compared to the other competitors<sup>627</sup>. In fact, Koper exceeded the volume of Trieste in 2007 (305.648 TEUs in Koper, 265.863 TEUs in Trieste) and the traffic of Venice in 2010 (476.731 TEUs in Koper, 393.913 in Venice)<sup>628</sup>. Given this fact, it is clear that the Slovene port is ready to opt for a more aggressive attitude, aiming at reaching the level of main node in the Adriatic basin, a southern gateway towards the large Central European markets: last year (2011) Koper reached 589.314 TEUs of volume, a record in the area<sup>629</sup>.

At the same time, the other ports of the area (especially the Italian ones) are not going to suffer this condition silently: a myriad of projects has been produced in Italy, often in a fragmented way, as traditionally reckoned<sup>630</sup>. Projects aimed at improving infrastructures and logistics, linking together the ports of Venice, Trieste, Monfalcone and Ravenna: for instance, the Port Authority of Venice developed a plan for creating a brand new terminal with *distripark*, while the partnership set up by the Unicredit group opened new perspectives of development<sup>631</sup>. Indeed, in the last years a project aimed at improving the structures of the port of Monfalcone (Italy) had been supported by a joint venture with Unicredit and Maersk: the project has been defined as an innovative mix of financial and logistic forces.<sup>632</sup> We are dealing here with one of the most important banks (Unicredit) and one of the biggest international

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<sup>627</sup> DE SANCTIS A., *L'Italia sta perdendo la guerra dei porti*, in Limes, *La guerra in Europa non è mai finita*, n° 1, 2012, Gruppo Editoriale l'Espresso, p. 26.

<sup>628</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>629</sup> *Ivi.*, 27.

<sup>630</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>631</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>632</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 29-30.

logistics operators (Maersk)<sup>633</sup>. However, the project was soon abandoned because, according to the Maersk Italia CEO Merli, such project represented a *greenfield* investment, which means that infrastructures had to be built entirely: a too complex task, apparently<sup>634</sup>.

Nevertheless, the most recent interviews by the Maersk CEO show that the company would be still interested in establishing a big gateway in the Upper Adriatic area, beyond the other one in the northern Tyrrhenian Sea, currently on construction<sup>635</sup>. In fact, the creation of one big Adriatic gateway is still taken into account by the logistics group, given the perspectives of growth of the Central European Countries and the Community projects for improving logistics:

*Maersk è fortemente intenzionata a realizzare e gestire due porti gateway in Italia: uno nel Nord Tirreno, e lo stiamo facendo, e uno nel Nord Adriatico. Le analisi di mercato continuano infatti a prevedere un forte sviluppo dei traffici verso i Paesi dell'Est Europa, oltre a un'ulteriore crescita dei mercati di Austria e Baviera e anche la politica dell'Unione Europea, in particolare con la creazione delle reti TEN-T, è fortemente orientata in questa direzione e favorisce queste soluzioni<sup>636</sup>.*

In this context, the Maersk company would invest on the ports of Trieste and Koper, that together could share 2 million TEUs: as declared by the Maersk CEO, «Trieste è una partita che ci può interessare. Altre opportunità, come quella di Capodistria, ci interessano in una logica globale che non può non tener conto del fatto che operano nello stesso bacino»<sup>637</sup>.

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<sup>633</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>634</sup> Il Piccolo, *Riparte il superporto, Maersk punta su Trieste*, 04.10.2012.

<sup>635</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>636</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>637</sup> Il Piccolo, *Superporto, Maersk punta su Trieste e Capodistria*, 03.03.2012.

As a matter of fact, in a global context a global actor as Maersk can choose where to invest in order to achieve the best outcomes. In fact, beyond the future perspectives of such project, which we do not take into account here, this is an example of the general context, pretty uncertain, where private actors such as banks and other companies, and public actors (such as the European Union) choose where to invest and how. At the same time, ports do compete for attracting investments and ships, being constantly in competition.

It is a sort of *war of ports*, as observed by De Sanctis (2012)<sup>638</sup> and it seems a bit ironic to talk about war and struggles in a work which should be focused on cooperation. Such is the real nature of the area, though, and it is undeniable that beyond cooperative attitudes each single port tries not to succumb under the other competitors actions, aiming at attracting new investments, as the case of European loans and projects shows<sup>639</sup>. De Sanctis (2012) even claims that the creation of the NAPA itself is a demonstration of the deep situation of weakness of the Adriatic ports, though aiming at achieving a systemic approach, as proclaimed in February 2010, by establishing the NAPA<sup>640</sup>.

In this *war of ports*, ports do also compete for achieving a better position in the European framework: European corridors, TEN-T networks and the other logistic projects implemented by the EU (shortly explained previously) can represent the advantage of a particular geographic position, or the fact of being totally excluded by the most important traffic routes of the continent. For these reasons, decisions made in Brussels do expect an immediate reaction in the Adriatic: when in April, 2011, rumors from the EU said that the European Community transport organisms were willing to choose Koper instead of the Italian ports as end zone of the Corridor 1, a great confusion took place<sup>641</sup>.

Indeed, the rumor was going to push aside the Unicredit investments, while Koper was signing for a 35 million euro loan for the Luka Koper from the

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<sup>638</sup> DE SANCTIS A., *L'Italia sta perdendo la guerra dei porti*, in Limes, *La guerra in Europa non è mai finita*, n° 1, 2012, Gruppo Editoriale l'Espresso, p. 27.

<sup>639</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>640</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>641</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 28.

European Bank for Investments<sup>642</sup>. In July, 2011 the rumor was officially denied, and Institutions (at a regional level, concerning the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region) certified the will by the EU to end the Corridor 1 in Italy, inserting the Italian ports in the financing programmes 2014-2020<sup>643</sup>.

In fact, as reported in the *Connecting Europe Facility* (CEF), edited in October, the 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Adriatic-Baltic corridor will move from the north, through Austria (Wien-Graz-Klagenfurt-Villach), towards Udine (Italy), Venice, Bologna, ending in Ravenna<sup>644</sup>. Among the ports expected to act in this community project, Trieste has been inserted, thus excluding Koper<sup>645</sup>.

In this perspective, Trieste has been acting in promoting, in Southern Korea, the future advantages of the Adriatic-Baltic corridor, as well as the participation in many international meetings (Berlin and Istanbul, for example) in order to promote partnerships, as the one established between the To Delta group (manager of the Trieste Marine Terminal) and Rail Cargo Austria (part of the Austrian railways) in 2011<sup>646</sup>. Otherwise, as reported in the newspaper *Il Piccolo* (May, 2012), other commercial proposals for accessing the Port of Trieste railway system have been advanced by the Slovene State Railways<sup>647</sup>. The company (*Slovenske železnice* in Slovene) seems to be willing to take advantage of the position of the Port of Trieste, even though its own financial situation is not really positive: indeed, last year (2011) rumors were talking about an assignment of the Company to the German Railways (DB, *Deutsche Bahn*) or to the Austrian ones (OBB, *Osterreichische Bundesbahnen*)<sup>648</sup>. However, as noted by the press, the NAPA framework seems to be working, when new investments and services are being attracted to the Upper Adriatic area: according to the President of the Port Authority of Trieste, Marina Monassi, the new railway services can be important for providing the services

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<sup>642</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>643</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>644</sup> *Ivi.*, p. 30.

<sup>645</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>646</sup> *Ivi.*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>647</sup> *Il Piccolo*, *Trieste, Porto: via alla trattativa con le Ferrovie Slovene*, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>648</sup> *Ibidem*.

from the hub of Lubjiana, active for many directresses towards Eastern and Southern Europe, but also towards the South of Germany<sup>649</sup>.

We provided here a few sketched examples, without aiming at offering complete and detailed considerations, just to delineate the general atmosphere in the current port field context of the Upper Adriatic area. It is a complex cobweb of relations between private and public actors, and the pursuit of power expressed by each actor seems to be undoubtedly strong.

So should we definitely be negative about cooperation? We would say that cooperation, even though not being always “pure” and free of any individual and opportunistic consideration, is still possible and effective. As already reported in the part concerning the institution and aims of the NAPA, ports should integrate between each other, also overcoming their individual interests, that can have negative consequences on the benefits created working together<sup>650</sup>.

In fact, competition is a value if wisely driven: what we would like to claim here is that in the Upper Adriatic basin the possible risk is to have a struggle for investments, without taking into account that the marginality of the Adriatic Sea is a problem common to all ports in the area. In this context, the rivalry between Trieste and Koper, always struggling for reaching the best traffic rates, risks to be a struggle between isolated dwarves:

*Troppo vicine per coesistere, Capodistria e Trieste hanno attraversato una lunga stagione fatta di intense rivalità che, deflagrate per la primazia nell'Alto Adriatico, rischiano di declinare a semplice lotta fra pigmei costretti in un cantuccio del Mediterraneo<sup>651</sup>.*

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<sup>649</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>650</sup> *North Adriatic Ports Association: la promozione dell'Alto Adriatico per potenziare gli scambi con i mercati internazionali*, <http://www.portsofnapa.com/about-napa>.

<sup>651</sup> DE SANCTIS A., *L'Italia sta perdendo la guerra dei porti*, in Limes, *La guerra in Europa non è mai finita*, n° 1, 2012, Gruppo Editoriale l'Espresso, p. 32.

That's the reason why, if ports won't be able to cooperate together, although maintaining their own legitimate and independent choices, the Adriatic Sea will remain a silent and empty sea, far from the most important container movements in the continent and representing a negative feedback for many international and national investors.

## CONCLUSION

The present work aimed at outlining the general terms of cooperation between ports in the Upper Adriatic area. First of all, the reporting of its fundamental features needed an overview of the Adriatic context, taking into account its cultural peculiarity and its highly fragmented reality.

In fact, as starting point of our analysis we chose the definition of the Adriatic space, with the consequent observation of its multiple and different cultural roots. A consideration which led us to see the Adriatic space as a context particularly featured by fragmentation and, at the same time, by a series of cultural elements that are common and mutual to all countries involved, thus expressing a kind of unity in the diversity. We are referring here to historical and cultural tidings, such as the Venetian heritage, that after centuries do still survive in the shared memories of many different peoples and communities living near the Adriatic shores.

Secondly, given its configuration, the Adriatic Sea obviously includes Eastern European Countries, and such awareness led our analysis to focus on the effects brought in the area by the end of the bipolar world order. Indeed, once witnessed the collapse of the Berlin wall, in the aftermath of the Cold War many non-state actors emerged, finally filling the void caused by such dramatic and upsetting event. Such actors led to a renovated geo-economical and geopolitical dynamism in those areas, that had previously lived statically during the bipolar order: the consequent triumph of the *Washington Consensus* and the development of the globalization processes managed these trends, also bringing to a resurgence of regionalism and a growing cobweb of relations and networks.

Taking into account such resurgence and the role that these networking processes have played and still play in the Upper Adriatic area, with the implementation of *bottom-up* initiatives, we observed the cooperation topic from a general point of view, expressing its fundamental core of *win-win deal* and its

pursuit of mutual advantages. In a second time, we looked at some integration and cohesion policies and instruments, that we chose to split into two different categories, although not being necessarily conflicting between each other: policies conceived by national and supranational institutions (European Community and Government), and by local subjects (multiple non-state actors).

In the first level we broadly analyzed the INTERREG projects, the IPA *Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation Programme* by the European Union, and the proposal for the *Adriatic Ionian Initiative* by the Italian Government. On the local side, we looked at some *bottom-up* initiatives, such as the *Ancona charter*, the *Adriatic Euroregion* and the *Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce*, that share its development aims with the higher political framework.

Once having reported such examples of cooperation in the Upper Adriatic area, we finally moved to the port field, which is experiencing the same trends of *bottom-up* initiatives. Starting from the Adriatic issue, which is represented by its marginality if compared to the main container traffic routes in the Mediterranean Sea and in the wider continental context, we tried to understand how cooperation could be useful in order to ease such negative trend. If today's perspectives concerning the Mediterranean Sea are positive, confirming it as a natural pathway for maritime traffic coming from Suez and shifting to Gibraltar, the Adriatic Sea is often by-passed, in favor of the concurrent *Northern Range* ports. Through a general presentation of the main ports of the Upper Adriatic range, we certified the fragmentation of such context, urging the need for a better *co-opetition* between them, that would be finally able to cooperate while competing in the market.

Consequently, we briefly recalled some elements that might be of growing importance in the future development of the Adriatic area, then reporting the most important port cooperation modalities. We noticed that port associations seem to be the most successful and frequent cooperative procedures, so we briefly described two of them: the *Baltic Ports Organization* and the *North Adriatic Ports Association*. We noticed that such instruments can be of

fundamental importance: in that way we can consider such cooperative initiatives as important tools in order to solve the marginalization issue, also given the future development of traffic rates in the area, that seem to be promising and positive, as reported by experts. However, at the same time, we also claimed that, among the emphasis put on cooperation chances and achievements in the last decades, it is important to consider the current situation through a more realistic lens, given the *War of Ports* that is going on in the Adriatic Sea, concerning many trade and logistics issues.

Finally, having maintained the importance of effective cooperation initiatives within Adriatic port policies, even though realistically admitting the existence of struggles that still do exist, we can ask ourselves if cooperation between ports is a key element within more general cooperative processes involving the Adriatic area. In that case we can give a two-way answer: on the one hand, of course it is, because ports and transports are proper key tools by a specific area (the Adriatic area) for competing in the current global competition, which pushes every small or big port to adequate its infrastructures in order to take part in the competition trends. On the other hand, from a political and more concrete point of view, cooperation between ports is difficult and still at an embryonic level, given the complex relation between cooperation and coordination. As a matter of fact, coordination is especially needed in this framework, where the actions provided by the renovated role of today's states are fundamental. It's in that way that states can favor and coordinate *bottom-up* and voluntary initiatives, expression of the needs of the local port actors.

On the whole, apart from the future geo-economical and geo-political forecasts of the region, the following years might be witnessing a successful level of cooperation between the ports of the Upper Adriatic range, if they only will be able to seize the opportunity of representing themselves more effectively as a team in the world market, though legitimately competing. Beyond that, such cooperative actions will be winning if the wider institutional level will be able to support such trends, along with the proper and adequate allocation of resources.



## APPENDIX

### Interview 4.1 - Dott. Stefano Bonaldo, Autorità Portuale di Venezia

Venice, November 8, 2012

**In qualità di rappresentante dell'Autorità Portuale di Venezia, come considera le attuali prospettive dell'arco Adriatico a fronte anche della progressiva marginalità dell'area Adriatica?**

L'attuale situazione della distribuzione territoriale dei porti in ambito europeo ha delle origini storiche che risalgono all'inizio del secolo scorso, e le ragioni sono di carattere esclusivamente economico. Fino a non molti anni fa la direttrice di traffico che maggiormente movimentava merci era la direttrice transatlantica, dalla costa orientale degli USA all'Europa. E' evidente, guardando qualsiasi mappa geografica, che il lato costiero europeo più favorevole a questi traffici è il lato del nord Europa, perché più vicino e perché comprende paesi aggregati e vicini tra loro, offrendo contemporaneamente la vicinanza all'Europa continentale e al Regno Unito. Ora, questo è durato per molti anni, consolidando questa situazione e creando la realtà strutturale portuale di oggi: nel nord Europa, da Le Havre fino ad Amburgo, con il recente inserimento del porto di Gdansk. I dati di traffico 2009 però, dicono che la rotta transatlantica ha dei volumi che sono 1/3 rispetto alla rotta Asia - Europa. Ciò è dovuto al fatto che le economie degli USA e dell'Europa tendono a commerciare di meno tra loro, in quanto sono Paesi simili tra loro dal punto di vista dello sviluppo economico, diversamente dal confronto di questi Paesi occidentale con il *Far East*. Una dimensione di traffico simile la si osserva attualmente nella rotta trans Pacifica, tra *Far East* e USA (Porti di Long Beach, per es.). Quello che sta succedendo è che a fronte di un'evoluzione dei traffici con tempi medio - lunghi, non si assiste ad una equivalente variazione dello scenario infrastrutturale,

anche perché modificare un flusso implica certi tempi, mentre modificare una struttura ne implica altri molto più lunghi.

Quello che si verifica oggi è che i porti del nord Europa continuano ad essere i porti di ingresso delle merci provenienti dal *Far East*, ma la cosa che non si può negare è che dal punto di vista dell'efficacia ed efficienza dei trasporti, questa non sia la soluzione migliore, ma la migliore *sic stantibus rebus*. Questi porti hanno caratteristiche tali per cui riescono a ricevere merci e navi con una frequenza e una dimensione che noi non possiamo permetterci, però ci sono migliaia di chilometri in più da fare sul mare (componente marittima), centinaia di chilometri in più da percorrere via terra (componente terrestre), se è vero che buona parte dei traffici che arrivano in Pianura Padana originano da Rotterdam, Amburgo etc. Siamo arrivati ad un punto per cui per arrivare a portare le merci ad un grande magazzino, per esempio, esse passano da Amburgo piuttosto che da Venezia. C'è da dire che nessuno dei clienti finali è interessato a quale rotta segue la merce che comprano e ordinano dal *Far East*: ai clienti interessa solo il costo, la *delivery*, un servizio ed una serie di parametri che prescindono dalle loro competenze. Ciò detto concerne l'aspetto "mercato", tanto marittimo quanto terrestre: il mercato ha queste caratteristiche e sta producendo tali fenomeni. Non si può non considerare in parallelo la componente sociale ed istituzionale della questione: l'UE e la Commissione Europea nello specifico stanno pensando a delle linee di politica portuale che si basano su degli assunti che mirano a perseguire risultati diversi da quelli dei privati. Sono risultati di sviluppo, la distribuzione delle risorse nell'ambito dell'ampio territorio europeo.

### **Per quanto riguarda invece i traffici Suez-Gibilterra?**

Suez - Gibilterra non esiste come rotta a sé, ma è componente di una rotta che parte da Busan in Corea e passa per Shanghai, Hong Kong, Colombo, Dubai, Port Said e Suez. Fino a Suez le cose sono generalmente equivalenti: da Suez invece, le navi grandi continuano ed attraversano il Mediterraneo arrivando in Spagna e Portogallo, per poi dirigersi ai porti del *Northern Range*. Altre navi si

fermano a Port Said e con il meccanismo *hub and spoke* danno vita a meccanismi di distribuzione. Altre ancora non fermano a Port Said ma raggiungono altri porti (Gioia Tauro, per es.) utilizzando sempre lo stesso metodo di *feeder*. Altre ancora, e questo è un fenomeno che sta gradualmente prendendo piede, continuano il loro servizio diretto e da Port Said arrivano a La Spezia-Genova-Valencia, mentre altre ancora risalgono l'Adriatico per Venezia-Trieste-Koper.

Per quanto esistano servizi diretti che rimangono all'interno del Mediterraneo, questi sono serviti ed operati da navi che hanno caratteristiche diverse rispetto a quelli diretti al Nord Europa, dove dall'anno prossimo servizi operanti con navi (Maersk) da 18.000 TEU. Sono navi da più di 400 metri.

Dal punto di vista strettamente aziendale, e legato all'utilità degli operatori logistici inseriti a vario titolo nella catena, questa soluzione può ancora essere la migliore, perché possono ottenere grandi economie di scala con navi enormi e lente, un flusso lento ma costante dal punto A al punto B. D'altra parte, da una prospettiva politica ed istituzionale, essa non può essere la soluzione ideale a causa degli impatti molto forti sul territorio.

Dopo questa sintesi generale introduttiva, tornando alla potenziale centralità dell'Adriatico, è da notare come il nord Adriatico sia la costa più vicina al nord Europa per le merci provenienti dal *Far East*. Siamo tutti consapevoli dell'impatto sul territorio di questi traffici: 7000 TEU che arrivano in un porto e che devono essere inoltrati passando da uno (o pochi) *gateway*, possono creare situazioni di congestione. L'UE attua delle politiche che vanno di certo nella direzione dello sfruttamento dei porti in modo che possano ricevere navi, che garantiscano l'efficienza di un servizio, ma si vorrebbe d'altra parte cercare di ridurre al minimo la componente terrestre del trasporto, arrivando il più vicino possibile a dove la merce deve essere scaricata. Il nord Adriatico è per sua costituzione morfologica la miglior situazione a questo problema.

In definitiva, le prospettive dell'arco Adriatico sono delle ottime prospettive di sviluppo, nella misura in cui l'Adriatico è la miglior soluzione per un trasporto efficiente verso l'Europa: è chiaro che ci sono delle pre-condizioni che vanno

garantite, come il permettere a navi moderne ed aggiornate di scalare con efficienza e senza problemi nei porti dell'Adriatico.

**Non Le sembra che però vi siano ostacoli a questa soluzione, come per esempio gli alti costi nel caso italiano, come ci ha recentemente ricordato un rapporto della Banca d'Italia?**

Osservando la situazione, non può essere negata l'esistenza di ostacoli a questa soluzione Adriatica. Tuttavia, non è rilevante il problema dei costi per quanto riguarda l'Italia, o perlomeno non maggiormente rispetto a qualsiasi altro Paese. Per esempio, in Olanda il porto di Rotterdam sta raddoppiando la sua dimensione, con investimenti enormi (parliamo di migliaia di euro) che qualcuno pagherà. Probabilmente l'Autorità portuale di Rotterdam (che ha strutture amministrative completamente diverse rispetto a quelle italiane) si è fatta carico di un costo per la realizzazione di questa infrastruttura. Costo per il quale è sicuramente previsto un rientro. I problemi esistono, ma sono legati al fatto che non si è, finora, secondo me, investito adeguatamente nel settore portuale, non riconoscendone la centralità e rilevanza che ha e che merita di avere nell'ambito dei meccanismi di sviluppo del Paese, un sistema economico sempre più integrato.

**Date queste complessità, quali crede possano essere i risultati possibili - obiettivi - derivanti dalle attività di cooperazione, come, per esempio, l'istituzione del NAPA? In cosa consiste al momento la cooperazione tra porti e cosa sta facendo concretamente il NAPA?**

NAPA nasce formalmente nel 2010 con l'accordo di quattro porti europei (nemmeno tutti comunitari), con l'idea di creare un sistema di porti che, per caratteristiche morfologiche e geografiche non sono molto diversi, nella propria dimensione fisica, da un singolo porto o due porti del nord Europa. Il porto di

Koper e di Trieste distano 6 km l'uno dall'altro, mentre Ravenna e Venezia distano un centinaio di km: sono tutte distanze non immediatamente percepibili da una nave con servizio che viene da oltre Suez. Il tema è quindi quello di mettere a sistema un *cluster* di porti al fine di poterli considerare come un unicum portuale per creare quella *massa critica* che permetta al sistema di porti di essere visibile a livello internazionale. Noi come porto di Venezia facciamo meno di 500.000 container, così come, al massimo, tutti gli altri porti del NAPA: i porti di Rijeka e Ravenna fanno molto meno. Il porto di Shanghai fa 29 milioni di container, quello di Singapore circa 26 milioni, quello di Hong Kong 23 e quello di Rotterdam 10.

Personalmente ho visto che se ci si presenta a un cinese come porto di Venezia, ci si sente chiedere quanto disti il porto da Parigi: un'idea molto vaga dell'Europa. Allo stesso modo, è difficile pensare che un sistema di trasporti con una componente marittima così lunga possa anche solo considerare un porto che faccia 400-500.000 container come un porto da utilizzare efficientemente per il traffico. Pertanto, la ragione alla base del NAPA è creare un sistema di porti per il quale valga il neologismo, ideato dal nostro Presidente, di *co-opetition*, ovvero cooperare nella lunga distanza e nel mercato aperto al fine di perseguire ciò che si è detto in termini di visibilità, senza però rinunciare alla competizione tra i porti. Infatti ogni porto è un ente a sé che possiede propri operatori e proprie caratteristiche funzionali / operative che deve cercare di massimizzare. Per cui, il primo obiettivo è far sì che le navi risalgano l'Adriatico: la scelta del porto preferito spetterà poi agli operatori. Tutto questo senza perdere di vista l'importanza di servizi adeguati alle caratteristiche delle navi e le relative esigenze operative della nave che devono essere soddisfatte.

Questa quindi la principale ragione dell'unione, in un'associazione comune, dei porti dell'alto Adriatico. La peculiarità del NAPA rispetto alle altre associazioni di porti, esistenti prima e dopo il NAPA stesso, è che è l'unica a comprendere porti comunitari e non comunitari: un caso particolarmente interessante per come si è proposto, ed oggetto di studio ed interesse da parte di altri operatori ed autorità portuali.

**Se quindi l'obiettivo principale è attrarre navi nel *range* Adriatico, cosa si fa concretamente per raggiungere questo obiettivo? Ci sono attività di promozione, per esempio?**

Assunto che il mondo della logistica e dei trasporti ha degli operatori che fanno il loro mestiere ogni giorno e con le proprie aziende, esistono degli incontri comuni periodici, come fiere della logistica ed eventi finalizzati alla promozione del settore. Ciò che facciamo come NAPA è proporci in questi consessi non più come singoli porti, ma come associazione e gruppo che complessivamente movimentano 122-123 milioni di TEU. Se ci proponessimo come porto unico saremmo il quarto porto d'Europa.

Partendo dalle indicazioni del Prof. Theo Notteboom riguardo i *cluster* portuali europei e riconosciuti dall'UE, vediamo come il NAPA non costituisca un unicum nel panorama marittimo portuale europeo: lo è nel momento in cui lo riconosciamo dal punto di vista formale ed istituzionale, però operativamente i porti tendono sempre a lavorare come cluster portuali. Per quanto i porti di Amburgo, Anversa e Rotterdam siano giganteschi, nessuna nave che arriva nel porto di Rotterdam dal *Far East* arriva solo in quel porto. Proporzionalmente alla loro dimensione, tutte le navi fanno delle toccate in alcune zone territoriali e vanno a scalare porti in prossimità gli uni agli altri. Per cui più porti dello stesso *range* vengono toccati (classico il servizio con toccata al porto di Anversa, Rotterdam ed Amburgo). Per quanto questi porti non si promuovano come cluster dei porti del *northern range*, in ogni caso lavorano in questi termini, operativamente: nessuna nave di ultima generazione viene dal *Far East* per dirigersi in un solo porto, e nessun porto da solo può ricevere e dare servizi adeguati ad una sola nave. Il porto è infatti sempre sotto-dimensionato rispetto alle potenzialità della nave.

**Si può dire quindi che nel *northern range* la co-opetition funzioni bene?**

Sì, assolutamente.

## **Nell'Adriatico, invece, ci stiamo arrivando?**

Qui ci stiamo arrivando, come sempre purtroppo, in ritardo. In quel contesto i porti hanno il vantaggio che erano già fatti ed abituati da sempre a trafficare e ad essere le principali porte marittime per l'Europa. Quindi i porti del nord Europa, se prima erano abituati a giocare il ruolo di *player* naturali e più efficienti del sistema, adesso si trovano ad essere i *player* che sfruttano il vantaggio competitivo del sistema che riproporrà in un medio termine, se non un ribaltamento da nord a sud, un riequilibrio verso sud, perché il sud presenta comunque dei margini di crescita maggiori in termini relativi.

In una ricerca di mercato compiuta dalla MDS Transmodal Ltd. e commissionata dal NAPA, si è chiesto, considerando il NAPA come sistema, quali sono i potenziali di crescita in tema di allargamento del mercato per un arco temporale 2012-2030. In base a parametri specifici in termini di sviluppo ed indicando i prerequisiti infrastrutturali necessari, gli esperti hanno stimato quale potrebbe essere il mercato dei porti NAPA in tale arco temporale. Alla fine del 2011, anno in cui lo studio era stato commissionato, il nostro volume totale era di 1.800.000 container: la simulazione, prudentemente sottostimata, porta il mercato raggiungibile nel 2030 a 6 milioni di TEU, un aumento del 348%! Nello stesso arco temporale si è stimata la crescita dei nostri competitor (*northern* e *Tyrrhenian range*): tutti crescono ma nessuno cresce al nostro tasso di crescita. L'aumento del *cluster* NAPA porta sì ad una riduzione della quota di mercato dei porti del nord Europa, ma limitata al 7%: la nostra crescita quindi non va a discapito, se non marginalmente, degli altri competitor, bensì a beneficio del sistema.

**Crede che l'attuale quadro normativo sia adeguato all'instaurarsi di relazioni di cooperazione tra porti ed altri attori? La cooperazione può sostituirsi al coordinamento organizzato dalla regolazione (anche alla luce della riforma della legge portuale 84/94 attualmente in discussione in Parlamento)?**

Prima di tutto è necessario distinguere il caso NAPA dagli altri casi che si presentano, nel senso che essendo il NAPA un sistema portuale internazionale, con un porto non comunitario al suo interno, il sistema normativo italiano può agire fino ad un certo punto nell'accrescere o modificare l'efficacia o l'opportunità del sistema stesso. Diverso sarebbe il caso di Venezia, Trieste e Ravenna come unici porti NAPA, ovviamente. Comunque, attualmente il sistema italiano (e questo è il mio personale punto di vista) non è quello che maggiormente favorisce lo sviluppo e permette la massima efficienza dei trasporti e dello sviluppo della portualità. Ciò è dovuto al fatto che purtroppo, e questa è la ragione per la quale i porti del nord Europa sono i preferiti, l'autorità portuale che, ex l. 84/94 dovrebbe avere il ruolo di coordinatore e promotore del porto, in realtà ha ben poco titolo e ben pochi poteri nello sviluppo della promozione del porto.

In ogni caso, la cooperazione tra porti non può sostituirsi al coordinamento organizzato dalla regolazione, in quanto la prima è volontaria e, per questo, non ascrivibile ad un quadro normativo che definisce i ruoli di ciascun attore. In assenza di coordinamento organizzato però, lo strumento della cooperazione può comunque produrre buoni risultati.

**Con la riforma della l. 84/94 le Autorità Portuali dovrebbero però ottenere maggiore autonomia finanziaria...**

L'autonomia finanziaria è una cosa della quale si parla, sebbene io non conosca gli ultimi sviluppi dell'iter di riforma: sicuramente la riforma in direzione di questa maggiore autonomia è una cosa che si perseguirà poiché se ne parla

da sempre. E', secondo me, a torto, la cosa sulla quale si è puntato di più e che si ritiene più di tutto indispensabile per lo sviluppo del porto: lo è senz'altro, nel senso che essere autonomi dal punto di vista finanziario e poter disporre delle proprie risorse senza dover ricorrere ad un trasferimento centrale e dopo ad una redistribuzione permette maggiori gradi di libertà e maggiore autonomia. D'altra parte, non c'è possibilità di essere autonomi se all'autonomia finanziaria non si associa quella funzionale: l'Autorità Portuale di Venezia, come tutte le altre, dovrebbe essere l'unico ente "titolato" allo sviluppo del porto, mentre gli altri enti dovrebbero essere non dico subordinati, ma perlomeno collaboratori. E' un problema italiano: come in molti settori all'interno di questo Paese, ognuno ha la giurisdizione sul suo piccolo ambito ed ognuno se vuole può bloccare qualsiasi iniziativa e condizionare tutto il sistema.

Se poi a ciò si assommano i rapporti con Croazia e Slovenia, i problemi aumentano; inoltre, se si prende in considerazione che in Italia i porti sono *landlord* (enti pubblici ed amministratori del territorio portuale per conto dello stato) e in Slovenia, per esempio, sono s.p.a., è evidente come le finalità siano assolutamente differenti. In prospettiva privata si vuole fare utile e reddito, in quella pubblica si vuole fare sviluppo, vagamente inteso: anche alla luce di una vaga idea di sistema portuale Italiano che non esiste, ma esiste il sistema dei porti.

**Lei ha appena affermato che i porti italiani dovrebbero creare sviluppo. Leggendo alcuni documenti dei porti di Washington ho notato come in questo ambito la finalità di creare sviluppo anche sociale e di posti di lavoro sia prioritaria. Non è possibile dire lo stesso del caso Adriatico?**

No, nel senso che per quello che dice la l. 84/94, essenziale riforma della legge portuale, che ha definito ed "ordinato" le funzioni del porto nella parte privata / operativa e pubblica / amministrativa. Ciò significa che noi come Autorità Portuale non abbiamo alcun potere, e siamo tenuti a non interferire nel business: non possiamo fare marketing commerciale ma solo promozione

istituzionale e rendere visibile il porto. Di conseguenza, solo in modo molto lato ed indiretto possiamo agire in modo da promuovere l'occupazione e il lavoro nelle imprese.

**Dal punto di vista logistico, cosa possiamo aspettarci dai prossimi anni, anche alla luce dei rapporti sempre più intensi con i paesi dell'Europa orientale e delle loro positive prospettive di crescita? Il NAPA potrà servire concretamente per lo sviluppo dei Balcani?**

Basandomi sulle previsioni di sviluppo dei traffici che questo documento (MDS Transmodal Ltd. 2012-2030) ha sottolineato direi di sì, come anche rispetto alla prossimità di questi mercati all'Adriatico. Ci sono le condizioni per cui i porti del nord Adriatico diventino ancor più funzionali a questi mercati: già ora dal porto di Koper molte merci vanno verso il mercato ungherese. Un esempio importante in questo frangente è Samsung, che ha il suo *quarter* logistico in Ungheria per la distribuzione di merci in Europa, tramite il porto di Koper.

**Condivide la tesi secondo la quale proprio l'istituzione di associazioni come la NAPA certifichi in realtà lo stato di profonda debolezza sistemica?**

Da addetto ai lavori ho una visione diversa: non è un mistero che il porto di Venezia adesso movimenta la stessa quantità di merci che movimentava prima dell'alluvione del 1966. Se in parallelo vediamo le quantità movimentate nel porto di Rotterdam nello stesso arco temporale vediamo come gli ordini di grandezza siano completamente diversi. Venezia si è sviluppata presto, con caratteristiche che al tempo la rendevano un porto di grandi dimensioni e con natura diversa da quella attuale. Fino a vent'anni fa la vocazione del porto era prevalentemente industriale (Porto Marghera era la più grande zona industriale d'Italia, dove ci lavoravano decine di migliaia di persone): non è riconducibile a

nessuno degli operatori in Marghera la responsabilità di cambiamenti che sono avvenuti nell'industria e nel modello economico italiano, che si è modificato. La chimica è scesa in termini di rilevanza per il sistema stesso, come la metallurgia e tutta l'industria di base che caratterizzava il porto allora, oggi è completamente diversa. Ora il mercato maturo europeo vuole servizi, logistica e produzione. Noi nel nord-est Italia, come bacino europeo, siamo ancora oggi tra le regioni europee con la più alta propensione alla produzione manifatturiera (tra il 25 e 30% delle attività produttive sono manifatturiere). Chiaramente i Paesi recentemente entrati in UE hanno stime più alte, però se guardiamo la quota di produzione manifatturiera inglese, sono a livelli infinitesimali rispetto a noi.

Il prodotto manifatturiero deve essere necessariamente trasportato, sia esso come materia prima, sia come prodotto finito, per cui si è assistito ad una modifica della natura e struttura operativa del porto che non è però concisa con uno sviluppo del porto stesso: ripeto, siamo agli stessi traffici di quarant'anni fa, perché ci sono una serie di vincoli e limiti che ci caratterizzano. La stessa cosa potrebbe valere per il porto di Trieste, per quanto questo sia un porto "strano" e diverso da noi, facendo il 65% del suo traffico in prodotti di greggio e derivati, con una componente molto bassa di merci solide. Ravenna è un caso più simile al nostro, per quanto Venezia presenti maggiori peculiarità.

Sono tutti porti che nascono in ambiti cittadini, nelle loro città: vediamo quindi come la debolezza sistemica è data da condizioni che rappresentano di fatto dei vincoli, ai quali stiamo cercando una soluzione con i progetti di sviluppo che stiamo mettendo in atto. Il porto di Venezia ha attuato un progetto, oggi in stato di avanzata realizzazione, del terminal offshore, un progetto definito in quella che è l'idea di base, avendo calcolato quanto sia realizzabile e i dati sono confortanti. Il porto di Ravenna sta realizzando un nuovo terminal container per aumentare la capacità di quello esistente e per renderlo in posizione più accessibile per navi e terrestri, come anche Koper.

Sono però porti che hanno caratteristiche morfologiche infrastrutturali particolari che non permettono loro di diventare porti da 500 milioni di TEU, come Anversa, Rotterdam o i porti cinesi.

Non mi sembra quindi il caso di parlare di una debolezza sistemica: è chiaro che i competitor che ci sono adesso non esistevano vent'anni fa, le dimensioni sono cambiate e se vogliamo adattarci a questa situazione dobbiamo cercare di migliorarci.

### **Cosa si può fare per migliorare la cooperazione portuale, attori pubblici e privati?**

A partire dagli attori pubblici, sarebbe possibile migliorare la funzione pubblica, definire la funzione di regia e migliorare l'efficienza. Come già detto, in un sistema che funziona, un'istituzione controlla e gli altri attori hanno ruoli differenti, ma non è possibile bloccare tutto il sistema solo perché una di queste componenti ostacola una particolare iniziativa.

### **In ambito NAPA si coopera anche per gestire le questioni ambientali?**

In quanto istituzione non credo che NAPA abbia una vocazione ambientale. Tuttavia, ciò non toglie che lo sviluppo dei traffici dovuto anche alla promozione del NAPA avrebbe sicuramente delle implicazioni ed impatti di tipo ambientale. Non nasciamo come ente il cui fine è il ridurre le emissioni, ma possiamo dire che arrivare nell'alto Adriatico piuttosto che nel *northern range*, da un punto di vista europeo globale, implica una *carbon footprint* minore, quindi un vantaggio netto.

E' un effetto indotto, che è comunque nella nostra agenda: il vantaggio per la comunità è sicuramente positivo per tutti.

**State cooperando sulle infrastrutture? Penso soprattutto all'ambito ferroviario..**

Non si sta cooperando direttamente sul settore ferroviario, mettendosi formalmente attorno ad un tavolo, però si è presa la sintesi finale dello studio MDS e si è visto come la modalità ferroviaria sia quella sulla quale basare lo sviluppo dei traffici. Infatti, non c'è possibilità di aumentare i nostri traffici senza uno sviluppo delle ferrovie.

**E' vero che in questo il nostro Paese è ancora arretrato, basandosi ancora troppo sul trasporto su gomma?**

Sicuramente, come ricordato recentemente dall'AD di Trenitalia, l'Italia non investe nel ferro-cargo. E' una debolezza, perché se guardiamo il *modern split* dei porti fra ferroviario - stradale e fluviale (chiatta se disponibile), il porto di Rotterdam si lamenta perché ha il 20-30% di ferroviario, mentre noi arriviamo al 2%.

Il ferroviario come unico ed imprescindibile elemento di sviluppo: puoi stare nel tuo mercato *next door* con i camion, però o decidi di rimanere porto del tuo *hinterland / backyard*, o decidi di arrivare ai mercati ungheresi ed allargati, ed allora è necessario il trasporto ferroviario.

**Bruxelles dovrebbe dare un impulso importante in materia, con le reti TEN-T?**

Sicuramente è fondamentale, vista l'ultima revisione del TEN-T che ha ridotto da 30 a 10 i corridoi europei, e che ha operato una riduzione delle direttive di trasporto, anche per una questione di costi, mantenendo quelle giudicate più importanti. Quattro dei dieci corridoi che l'UE ha mantenuto passano dall'Italia: L'Adriatico-Baltico, il Mediterraneo, Helsinki-La Valletta e Genova-Rotterdam.

**In definitiva la cooperazione tra porti può favorire l'arrivo di nuove linee marittime? (dirette o *common feeder*?)**

**Dott. Bonaldo (Autorità Portuale di Venezia)**

Come già ricordato, non c'è una nave che parta dal porto Asiatico A e caricando tutto, scarichi tutto al punto B: almeno cinque porti nel *Far East* e tre in Europa deve toccarli, perché nessun porto è in grado di ricevere tutta la merce, e anche via terra, per quanto capillare sia il sistema, non è possibile raggiungere tutte le destinazioni.

Nel momento in cui tu offri ad un vettore marittimo maggiori opportunità in termini di inoltro di merci via terra, offri una soluzione, vantaggio competitivo e vantaggio in termini di servizio. Quindi sicuramente essere in un sistema di porti (il formale NAPA o l'informale *northern range*) è condizione necessaria.

**Dott.ssa Bonadei (Segreteria NAPA)**

Anche da un punto di vista ambientale e morfologico, l'arco Adriatico si presenta come un contesto particolare, con fondali più o meno profondi. Per esempio, ad un porto come Venezia che non può ricevere linee dirette, conviene che una nave prima di arrivare nel suo porto, scarichi precedentemente a Rijeka, Koper e Trieste. In questo modo la nave si alleggerisce prima, scavando meno e costituendo un minor impatto sui fondali veneziani, che rappresentano un fattore di difficoltà. In questo contesto, avendo il nord Adriatico come bacino di riferimento il nord-est Europa e ciascuno con mercati più o meno diretti, e presentandosi però come unico porto nei confronti del *Far East*, la cooperazione va a vantaggio sia degli armatori sia dei porti che quindi possono ospitare navi più grandi che diversamente non potrebbero ospitare.

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