



## Action Plan

2015-2016

On 22 October 2014 in Brussels, following the NOSTRA INTERREG IV C project final conference, the Memorandum of Understanding about the European Straits Initiative has been signed by political leaders from straits of Europe. This Memorandum of Understanding is aimed at:

- 1- *Gaining recognition of the particular characteristics of the Straits within European policies, particularly the Integrated Maritime Policy and the Territorial Cohesion Policy;*
- 2- *Working for the emergence of cooperation projects, either through INTERREG programmes or other European programmes, developing mutual cooperation and implementing common actions and projects, in order to promote economic development, protection of the environment, transportation and logistics, intercultural working and tourism activities.*

In the view of reaching these goals, the following action plan is adopted by the parties and provides that actions will be taken, as much as possible and depending on available resources, to:

### *At the partnership level*

- meet every two years at a political level and at least once a year at a technical level<sup>1</sup>
- engage in the process of submitting an INTERREG EUROPE bid in 2015 in order to follow up on the NOSTRA project involving all or part of the ESI members
- set up geographical/thematic working groups, with interested partners, in order to continue the exchange of good practices and specify the arguments of the advocacy and lobbying actions

### *At a strait, national or regional levels*

- organise or participate in meetings dealing with straits issues when relevant and taking advantage of existing meetings. In reference to the NOSTRA Project's way of working, 2 territorial meetings, including one cross-border meeting, per partner and per year could be organised to address the 2 objectives of the ESI (projects and lobbying)
- study the feasibility of organising, and if possible organise, a Day of the strait, a cross-border event gathering the business world, Universities, national governments, local authorities and the civil society around a topic concerning the whole strait area (which could be organised back to back to an existing meeting on the same subject)

More specifically on the two objectives of the ESI

### **PART 1. Gaining recognition of the particular characteristics of the Straits**

- **prepare the participation of the ESI in several events to promote the particular characteristics of the Straits and voice the concerns and claims of the European Straits**
  - *at a European level:* representatives of the ESI are encouraged to attend the European maritime day, the Open days, or other relevant European events each year, and when possible, set up a special session dealing with straits at a political level

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<sup>1</sup> Not including the various preparing meetings for the writing of the INTERREG EUROPE project.

- *at a strait, national or regional levels:* ESI members are invited when relevant to participate in events (about marine and coastal issues mainly) and consultation processes (on the definition of the national maritime policy for instance) for a better recognition of the Straits particular characteristics
- **organise, when relevant and possible, specific meetings on European Straits with members of the European institutions**
  - *at a European level:* such meetings can be organised in Brussels with the help of organisations such as the Seas and Coastal areas European Parliament Intergroup, or the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (member of IUCN), and the European offices of the partners that have one
  - *at a strait, national or regional levels:* partners are encouraged to organise such meetings when possible with the participation of a member of the European parliament according to their privileged contacts
- **respond to the European consultations at least once a year if relevant, specifically:**
  - about maritime issues such as marine environment, maritime transport, tourism, blue growth, maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management, etc.
  - about European macro-regional strategies
- **ensure a proactive communication about the ESI activities and the European Straits**
  - *at European and international levels:* the ESI quarterly Newsletter and website [www.europeanstraits.eu](http://www.europeanstraits.eu) will be mobilised, articles will be submitted to other media
  - *at a strait, national or regional levels:* partners are invited to dedicate a special section of their website on the ESI activities and news about their strait, propose an article at least once a year for the ESI Newsletter, ensure links exist between partners websites, partners contacts websites and the ESI website

## PART 2. Working for the emergence of cooperation projects

- **prepare the submission of an INTERREG EUROPE project by interested partners**
- **implement the new project (if adopted)**
- **carry out the NOSTRA implementation plans actions**
  - including through INTERREG V A (and B) projects
  - but also other European funds (European Structural & Investment Funds, Community Action Programmes) to reach out towards complementarities and consistency on the straits area through specific projects
  - and using the ESI geographical/thematic working groups
- **encourage when relevant cooperation/exchange of experience between straits from all parts of Europe on specific issues**
  - environment
  - transport
  - tourism, etc.