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# INTERREG ITALY-CROATIA PROGRAMME 2021-2027

D.3.1.2

Round Tables on Maritime  
passenger transport



## CYROS

Implementation, in the Programme area, of the EUSAIR flagship and crosspillar project idea Adriatic Ionian CYcle ROute for Sustainable tourism

<b>WP3</b>	Establishing cross-border strategies and governance
<b>Activity 3.1</b>	Developing cross-border strategies for sustainable mobility & tourism and for improving cross-border maritime passenger transport
<b>Deliverable 3.1.2</b>	Round Tables on Maritime passenger transport
<b>PP in charge</b>	PP4
<b>Version</b>	Final Version
<b>Date</b>	March 2026
<b>Availability</b>	Confidential
<b>PP contributors</b>	all



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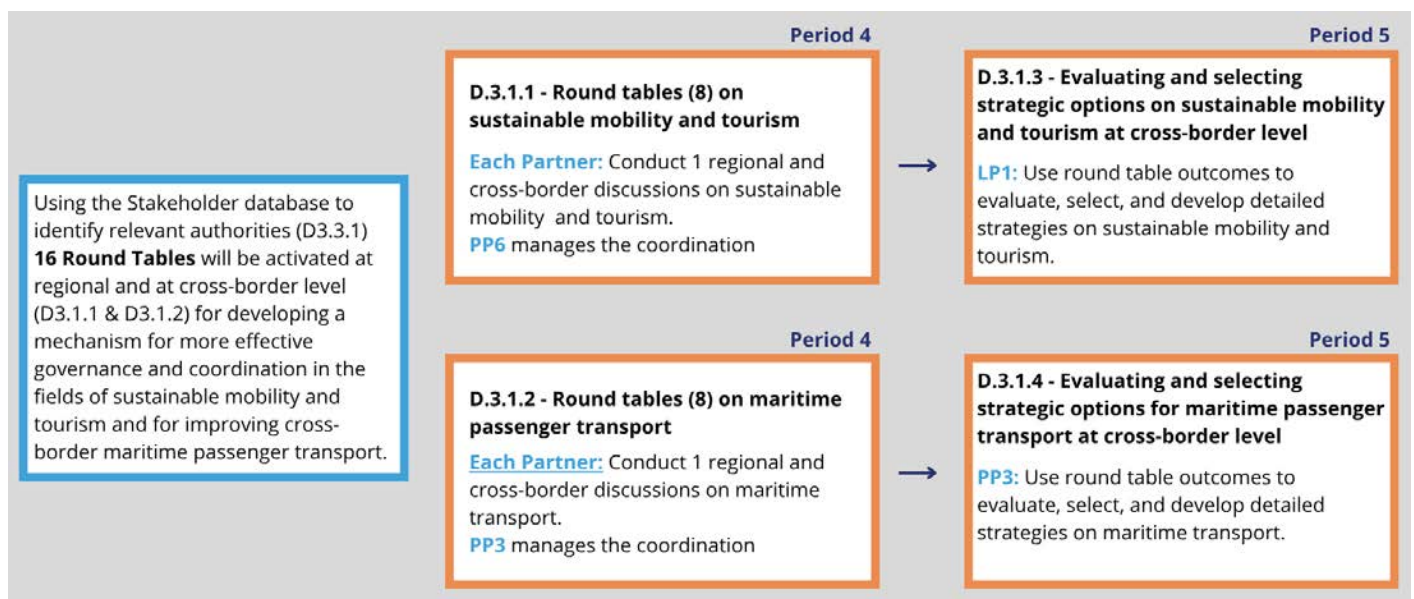


## 1. Introduction

Activity 3.1 of the CYROS project is implemented within the framework of WP3 aimed at developing cross-border strategies for sustainable mobility, tourism, and maritime passenger transport in the Italy–Croatia cooperation area. In line with the Interreg Programme approach, this activity adopts a participatory and result-oriented methodology, based on the active involvement of relevant stakeholders at both local and cross-border levels.

In this context, deliverables **D3.1.1** and **D3.1.2** represent the preliminary and foundational phase of the strategic development process, through the organisation and implementation of local Round Tables by each project partner. In particular, two types of meetings were organised:

- Round Tables dedicated to **sustainable mobility and tourism** (D3.1.1);
- Round Tables focused on **maritime passenger transport** (D3.1.2).



As defined in the common methodological framework shared among partners, each partner organised at least one Round Table for each thematic area, contributing to a total of 16 meetings at project level.

The Round Tables aimed to:

- collect qualitative inputs from institutional stakeholders, sector operators, experts and other relevant actors;
- identify needs, challenges and opportunities within the respective territories;

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- foster discussion on possible solutions and strategic options at both local and cross-border levels;
- strengthen governance mechanisms and coordination among different institutional levels.

The documents include the minutes and the main outcomes of the Round Tables organised by the partners, providing a structured overview of the evidence gathered through the participatory process.

In line with the intervention logic of the CYROS project and the Programme, the results of this activity constitute the knowledge and analytical basis for the subsequent phases of evaluation and selection of strategic options. In particular, the content presented here will directly feed into the development of the following deliverables as foreseen in the sequential process of Activity 3.1:

- **D3.1.3 – Cross-border strategy on sustainable mobility and tourism;**
- **D3.1.4 – Cross-border strategy on maritime passenger transport,**

	Deliverable & Lead Partner	Scope	Deadline
D3.1.1	Round tables on sustainable mobility & tourism – <b>PP6</b>	8 regional round tables + minutes	Period 4 (February 2026)
D3.1.2	Round tables on maritime passenger transport – <b>PP3</b>	8 regional round tables + minutes	Period 4 (February 2026)
D3.1.3	Evaluation of the strategic options in detail and the selection of the ones to pursue for developing a cross-border mobility & tourism strategy – <b>LP1</b>	1 cross-border strategy	Period 5 (August 2026)
D3.1.4	Evaluation of the strategic options in detail and the selection of the ones to pursue for developing a cross-border maritime transport strategy – <b>PP3</b>	1 cross-border strategy	Period 5 (August 2026)

This approach ensures coherence between territorial analysis, stakeholder engagement and strategy development, in line with the principles of cooperation, capitalisation and result orientation promoted by the Interreg Italy–Croatia Programme .

## 2. Deliverable 3.1.2 Round table on Maritime Passenger Transport

This document presents the outcomes of the Round Tables organised within Activity 3.1, specifically addressing cross-border maritime passenger transport. The discussions involved relevant stakeholders in exploring current gaps, potentials and operational challenges related to maritime connections across the Programme area. Particular attention was given to the role of maritime transport in enhancing multimodality and reducing seasonal congestion. The insights gathered constitute a key input for the development of a coordinated cross-border strategy in the maritime transport sector.

Project Partner	Round Table data	Stakeholder reached
LP	January 15th 2026	17
PP2	February 24th 2026	13
PP3	February 18th 2026	96
PP4	February 27th 2026	
PP5	January 16th 2026	
PP6	December 17th 2025	13
PP7	November 25th 2025	39
PP8	October 17th 2025	49

## 3. Round Tables Minutes (annexes)



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*INTERREG  
ITALY-CROATIA  
PROGRAMME 2021-2027*

*D3.1.2 Round Tables on  
Maritime passenger transport*



## CYROS

*Implementation, in the Programme area, of the EUSAIR flagship and crosspillar project idea Adriatic Ionian CYcle ROute for Sustainable tourism*

<b>WP3</b>	<i>Establishing cross-border strategies and governance</i>
<b>Activity 3.1</b>	<i>Developing cross-border strategies for sustainable mobility &amp; tourism and for improving cross-border maritime passenger transport</i>
<b>Deliverable 3.1.2</b>	<i>Round Tables on Maritime passenger transport</i>
<b>PP in charge</b>	<i>LP</i>
<b>Version</b>	<i>Final Version</i>
<b>Date</b>	<i>January 18th 2026</i>
<b>Availability</b>	<i>Confidential</i>
<b>PP contributors</b>	<i>LP</i>



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## 1. Introduction

*Activity 3.1 of the CYROS project is implemented within the framework of WP3 aimed at developing cross-border strategies for sustainable mobility, tourism, and maritime passenger transport in the Italy-Croatia cooperation area. In line with the Interreg Programme approach, this activity adopts a participatory and result-oriented methodology, based on the active involvement of relevant stakeholders at both local and cross-border levels.*

*In this context, deliverable **D3.1.2** represents the preliminary and foundational phase of the strategic development process, through the organisation and implementation of local Round Tables focused on **Maritime passenger transport**.*

*As defined in the common methodological framework shared among partners, each partner organised at least one Round Table. The Round Tables aimed to:*

- collect qualitative inputs from institutional stakeholders, sector operators, experts and other relevant actors;*
- identify needs, challenges and opportunities within the respective territories;*
- foster discussion on possible solutions and strategic options at both local and cross-border levels;*
- strengthen governance mechanisms and coordination among different institutional levels.*

*The documents include the minutes and the main outcomes of the Round Table organised by the Lead Partner FVG Region, providing a structured overview of the evidence gathered through the participatory process.*



## 2. Round Tables Minutes

### **MINUTE OF THE ROUNDTABLE ON MARITIME TRANSPORT – D.3.1.2 CYROS PROJECT – INTERREG VI-A ITALY-CROATIA 2021-2027**

*Date and venue: Microsoft Teams, February 18th 2026*

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

##### **AUTONOMOUS REGION OF FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA**

- *Massimiliano Tremul*
- *Giorgia De Marchi*
- *Irene Cermeli*
- *Viviane Basso*
- *Simone Stanic*
- *Giada Bovenzi*
- *Lorenzo Pellizzari*

##### **PROMOTURISMO FVG**

- *Alice Venaruzzo*
- *Caterina Gasparini*

##### **EPC**

- *Mauro Borin*

##### **MARCHE REGION**

- *Marina Marcozzi*

### **1. Opening of the meeting**

*The meeting opened with a round of introductions of the participants.*

## 2. Status of Regional Maritime Services

Lorenzo Pellizzari took the floor and outlined the current structure of the regional maritime services.

The river shuttle service along the cycling route between Bibione and Lignano Sabbiadoro was recalled, which recorded approximately 110,000 passengers, of whom 100,000 were cycle tourists, confirming its strong cycling-oriented vocation.

The multiannual award procedure for the seasonal maritime public transport services is currently underway. One of its objectives is to ensure stable scheduling that can be effectively communicated to operators. The connections planned for the next five-year period include:

- Lignano – Grado – Trieste
- Lignano – Marano Lagunare
- Lignano – Grado (intra-lagoon via Porto Buso)
- Grado – Aquileia
- Trieste – Monfalcone (with stops in Sistiana and Duino)
- Trieste – Sistiana (with stops in Porto Vivo, Barcola, Topolini and Grignano)

All vessels provide dedicated bicycle spaces, with a minimum capacity of 10 bicycles per vessel. Assistance staff for cycle tourists is also available on board.

## 3. Cycle Tourism and Services along the Adriatic–Ionian Network

Massimiliano Tremul introduced the topic of cycle tourism and gave the floor to Simone Stanic. Based on previous internal discussions, Simone Stanic highlighted shortcomings in maritime services along the Monfalcone–Trieste section. Among the strengths identified was the high attractiveness of the maritime service. Operators expressed the following expectations:

- Extension of the operating period to include spring and autumn;
- Introduction of a booking system;
- Strengthening of promotional activities;
- Provision of a replacement service in case of adverse weather conditions.



Lorenzo Pellizzari confirmed that a replacement service is envisaged in the event of adverse weather and sea conditions. He specified that any provision of a bicycle trailer would need to be agreed with the contracted operator.

#### **4. Promotional Tools and Travel Planner**

Alice Venaruzzo recalled that, within a previous project, an online travel planner had been developed to provide integrated information on cycling routes and intermodal public transport services. Once the transport schedule is finalised, the relevant information may be integrated into the tool to facilitate travel planning.

The tool was developed with funds from the Adrioncycletour project.

Massimiliano Tremul asked about the level of usage of the travel planner. Alice Venaruzzo clarified that the domain is currently owned by Salzburg and Land Tourismus authorities and undertook to verify usage data.

#### **5. Operational Needs and Market Demands**

Caterina Gasparini, representing PromoTurismo FVG, stressed the importance of providing accurate and timely information to tourists through the official portal and the network of information points.

A growing demand was highlighted, particularly from groups, for:

- The possibility to book the service;
- Guaranteed boarding to better organise daily itineraries;
- Differentiated pricing;
- Increased bicycle carrying capacity;
- Extension of services during the low season.

There is also growing coastal mobility among tourists who stay in one destination but wish to visit other locations.

#### **6. On-Demand Services and Cross-Border Perspectives**

Mauro Borin proposed the activation of an on-demand service with fixed fares and guaranteed service, also with a view to capitalising on the CYROS project, suggesting a pilot initiative on the Trieste–Parenzana route.



*Lorenzo Pellizzari clarified that fares for the 2026 season have already been set and may be adjusted annually. A differentiation between residents and non-residents has been introduced. Currently active on-demand services mainly concern the urban night service; no extra-urban services are foreseen at present, although this may be assessed in the future.*

*Giada Bovenzi informed participants that the Regional Public Transport Plan provides for the activation of flexible on-demand services in low-demand areas, in order to expand the public transport network to locations not yet served or to strengthen insufficiently served connections, such as in mountain areas. Two pilot on-demand services are currently active: one in the Val Degano mountain area and one related to the Trieste night service.*

*Regarding cross-border services, in 2024 an Operational Agreement was signed with the Republic of Slovenia for the joint planning and implementation of public transport services. Work is currently underway to conclude a Strategic Agreement with Austria. At present, no discussions have been initiated with Croatia on this topic.*

*Lorenzo Pellizzari also informed participants of an upcoming meeting within the framework of the Interreg Italy–Slovenia Programme – Kras-Carso II project, aimed at assessing the continuation of an on-demand service in the Karst area.*

### **7. Cross-Border Maritime Connections**

*Lorenzo Pellizzari presented the cross-border maritime connection operated by Liberty Lines on the Trieste–Piran–Poreč–Rovinj–Mali Lošinj route, highlighting the availability of timetables, services and booking systems through dedicated information material. The service has received high appreciation from tourists and is expected to continue.*

*Massimiliano Tremul raised the issue of the Trieste–Poreč bike-bus, noting its predominantly “Trieste-centric” approach and the difficulty of financing a service more effectively usable in the reverse direction on Croatian territory.*

### **8. Bicycle and e-bike Transport**

*Massimiliano Tremul asked whether the possibility of increasing the number of bicycles transportable on board had been assessed, including in relation to e-bikes.*

*Lorenzo Pellizzari specified that specific assessments regarding e-bikes are ongoing. Any increase in bicycle capacity is subject to navigation safety evaluations, which fall under the responsibility of the vessel's captain.*



*Offering a higher number of bicycle spaces than the minimum required has been included among the award criteria for the technical evaluation of bids; however, it is not possible to impose a higher mandatory number of bicycle spaces. Detailed monitoring of transported bicycles is planned for future assessments.*

#### **9. Intervention by the Region of Marche**

*Marina Marcozzi thanked the organisers for the invitation and informed participants that, within the framework of EUSAIR, a meeting will be held on February 27th focusing on the central role of Adriatic ports in the green transition. The topic may also be of interest in relation to the sustainability of maritime transport and cycle tourism.*

#### **10. Closing of the Meeting**

*The roundtable concluded at 11:18 a.m.*



# INTERREG ITALY-CROATIA PROGRAMME 2021–2027

(D.3.1.2

Round table on maritime  
passenger transport)

(Version 1- 14/04/2026)



## CYROS

Implementation, in the Programme area, of the EUSAIR flagship and crosspillar project idea Adriatic Ionian CYcle ROute for Sustainable tourism

<b>WP number</b>	<b>WP 3</b>
<b>Activity number</b>	<b>Activity 3.1</b>
<b>Deliverable number</b>	<b>D.3.1.2</b> <b>Round tables on maritime passenger transport</b>
<b>PP in charge</b>	<b>PP2 Puglia Region</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>14/04/2026</b>
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Public</b>





## Summary

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## 1. Overview

This document summarizes the main contributions gathered from stakeholders during the CYROS WP3 round table dedicated to maritime passenger transport, held online on February 24, 2026, and organized by the Puglia Region. The session represented the second of two consultation moments planned as part of the Puglia Region's activities within the CYROS project and focused on maritime passenger transport and its potential for integration with cycling mobility along the Adriatic-Ionian corridor.

The session saw the participation of representatives from the Southern Adriatic Sea Port System Authority (AdSPMAM), the Puglia Promozione regional agency, the Puglia Region Nautical District, FIAB (Italian Environment and Bicycle Federation), transport and intermodality experts, technical consultants, and representatives of the Puglia Region (sustainable mobility, local public transport, and internationalization), as well as professionals and university professors with expertise in port law and logistics.

The debate developed around four major themes: the efficiency and integration of maritime passenger transport; the safety and accessibility of routes toward boarding points; measures to incentivize ship-bike intermodality; and cross-border governance strategies to improve maritime connections toward Croatia.

## 2. Stakeholders involved

**Date: February 24, 2026**

**Method: Online Session**

During the round table dedicated to maritime passenger transport as an integral part of the CYROS WP3 activities, the key objective of the project was outlined: to develop an integrated system capable of connecting the tourist flows carried by the Adriatic-Ionian cycling network with maritime passenger transport through intermodal solutions. CYROS promotes a cross-border vision of the Adriatic region as a coordinated and functionally interconnected port system, oriented toward sustainable mobility models capable of improving transport efficiency, service quality, territorial accessibility, and multi-level governance.

The detailed list of participants, including names, institutions, roles, and territorial levels of



reference, is shown in the following table.

Name and surname	Institution	Role	Territorial level
Andrea Rollo	Puglia Region – Department of Mobility	Officer	Puglia
Marinella Murgolo	Puglia Region – Department of Tourism	Responsible for Transport & Infrastructure	Puglia
Pietro Bianco	Southern Adriatic Sea Port System Authority (AdSPMAM);	Director	Puglia / National
Ugo Patroni Griffi	Former President of the Southern Adriatic Sea Port System Authority (AdSPMAM) and Professor at the University of Bari	Expert in port law and infrastructure	Puglia / National
Francesco Venezia	FIAB Puglia & Basilicata	Regional Coordinator	Puglia
Antonio Venza	FIAB Villa Castelli	President / Vice Coordinator	Puglia
Nica Mastronardi	Puglia Promozione – ARET	Transport & Training Manager	Puglia
Cosimo Chiffi	Consultant	Transport Economist	National
Fulvio Morgese	ASSET	Technical Collaborator	Puglia
Carmela Cipriani	PRO LOCO Triggiano	Participant / Tourism Operator	Puglia
Giuseppe Danese	Puglia Region Nautical District	President	Puglia
Barbara Branca	Puglia Region Nautical District	General Secretary	Puglia
Andrea Santoro	Puglia Region Nautical District	Technical assistance	Puglia



### 3. Contextual information

#### 3.1 General presentation

Before the start of the debate, the Puglia Region presented the CYROS project to stakeholders, placing it within Priority 3 of the Interreg Italy-Croatia 2021-2027 program – dedicated to sustainable and multimodal maritime transport (OS3.1) – and in the broader EUSAIR strategy, of which CYROS represents a flagship and transversal project.

The project budget amounts to approximately 3 million euros, co-financed 80% with ERDF resources and 20% by the rotation fund.

The project involves eight partners – five Italian regions (Friuli Venezia Giulia as lead partner, Puglia, Abruzzo, Marche, and Emilia-Romagna) and three Croatian regions (Dubrovnik-Neretva, Primorje-Gorski Kotar, and Istria) – for a duration of 30 months, from March 1, 2024, to August 31, 2026. The general objective is to define and develop the Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route, promoting sustainable mobility and cycle tourism through systematic route planning, mapping, enhancement, and strengthening of multimodality at national, regional, and local levels.

#### 3.2 Thematic presentation

The round table addressed the issues through a structured debate, focused on the current situation of maritime transport in Puglia and the role of ship-bike intermodal integration within the context of the Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route.

The discussion was structured around four main thematic areas, which guided the comparison, as shown in the table below.

<b>Theme 1 – Maritime passenger transport</b>	<b>Theme 2 – Port safety and accessibility</b>
How to make the system more efficient, convenient, and integrated for cycle tourists, and the role of local authorities.	Improving routes toward boarding points and infrastructure dedicated to cyclists in Apulian ports.



### Theme 3 – Incentives for ship-bike intermodality

Operational, digital, and pricing solutions to encourage cyclists to use maritime transport and promote soft mobility.

### Theme 4 – Italy-Croatia cross-border governance

Models and tools to improve maritime connections toward Croatia within the framework of the CYROS Project.

## 4. Contributions and debate

### 4.1 Conceptual preface

This section presents the main contributions provided by stakeholders. The various interventions are organized by speaker and by theme addressed. Below is a summary of the positions expressed regarding the strengths and critical issues of the maritime passenger transport system in relation to cycling mobility along the Adriatic-Ionian corridor.

### 4.2 Speaker contributions

#### Ugo Patroni Griffi

*Former President of the Southern Adriatic Sea Port System Authority (AdSPMAM) and Professor at the University of Bari*

Offered a detailed overview of the Apulian port system, distinguishing between Ro-Pax traffic and cruise traffic. For cruise traffic, he emphasized that independent cruise passengers—those who do not purchase shore excursions on board—represent an opportunity for soft mobility: if public bike-sharing docks accessible via app were available in ports of call, it would create an offer with great immediate appeal. He highlighted the need to integrate port mobility with internal coastal shipping





lines that allow cruise passengers to reach nearby seaside and cultural destinations by sea. He identified the *water taxi* as the main untapped development opportunity in Puglia: a fast connection service between major and minor ports, replicable in almost all stops of the *Marine di Puglia* network, which could be launched with the institutional support of the Region in the start-up phase and inspired by 'water Uber' models already existing in other European contexts.

### Pietro Bianco

Director of the  
Southern Adriatic Sea  
Port System Authority  
(AdSPMAM)

Integrated Patroni Griffi's vision with specific operational considerations. He confirmed that recently established private entities in Bari and Brindisi have boosted bicycle tourism for cruise passengers, even going so far as to sign direct contracts with cruise lines—a positive signal that, however, calls for further effort from the public sector in terms of light infrastructure. He emphasized that every port has its own physical and traffic characteristics: there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and infrastructure for cyclists must be designed on a case-by-case basis. He pointed out that the new master plan for the port of Manfredonia—where passenger transport is the only remaining commercial activity—represents an opportunity to experiment with innovative port-city solutions. Regarding the Puglia-Croatia connection, he confirmed that the route is residual compared to traffic with Albania and Greece: the ships used are not of the latest generation and the market is limited, unlike in Ancona where traffic with Croatia is far more developed.



**Giuseppe Danese***Puglia Region Nautical  
District President*

Enriched the debate with the perspective of recreational boating. He highlighted how the lack of commercial connections with Croatia has paradoxically fueled pleasure craft traffic, with owners sailing down to Puglia to perform shorter crossings, thereby generating a cultural and information exchange with Croatian ports. He cited the experience of Brindisi as a best practice, where the port authority authorized boats equipped with bike racks for passenger transport within the port: a service that worked so well that it expanded from one to four vessels, including one completely electric. He fully shared the proposal for water taxis, emphasizing that the model fits any port in the *Marina di Puglia* network, whether large or small, and that collaboration with the port authority is the key to designing dedicated moorings even in multi-purpose ports.

**Cosimo Chiffi***Transport Economist*

Broadened the perspective by highlighting the World Bank project 'Giro di Ciro Greenway,' which involves the recovery of an old railway between Mostar and Dubrovnik, parts of which are already cyclable. He emphasized that a maritime connection between Bari and Dubrovnik, operating beyond just the summer season, could intercept cycle tourists interested in this itinerary. He drew attention to Puglia's minor ports—Monopoli, Otranto, Gallipoli, and Manfredonia—as potential access points for cycle tourism via small-scale cruises. He cited the Salento initiative 'Il Giro dei Venti,' which combines cycling and sailing competitions, as an example of hybridization between sailing and biking and a model for an innovative tourism product.



**Francesco Venezia***FIAB Puglia & Basilicata  
Regional Coordinator*

Highlighted the federation's multi-year work to enhance the Adriatic Cycle Route and transform it into an itinerary of European significance. He emphasized the need to guarantee updated mapping and active promotion of the cycle route, also in synergy with EuroVelo itineraries, to make it competitive on the international cycle tourism market.

**Antonio Venza***FIAB Villa Castelli  
President / Vice  
Coordinator*

Brought direct experience of cycle trips towards the Greek coasts, highlighting the logistical challenges related to boarding bicycles and itinerary planning in port contexts that are not always adequate. He emphasized the importance of making the access phases to ports practicable and safe for independent cycle tourists.

**Fulvio Morgese***Technical Collaborator  
ASSET*

Presented ASSET's contribution to the mapping and planning of cycling mobility in Puglia, with specific reference to the intermodal component. He noted that the Regional Cycling Mobility Plan already includes a section dedicated to intermodality, which can serve as a reference tool for future actions within the CYROS framework.

**Carmela Cipriani***PRO LOCO and  
Tourism Operator*

Raised, in an ironic yet constructive spirit, the question of whether cycle tourism could be a sufficient reason to incentivize the maritime route with Croatia. The response that emerged from the debate was that cycle



tourism alone cannot be the main driver for a commercial connection, but it can benefit from a route established on solid economic foundations. She also highlighted the synergies with the SoftMobility project, for which she serves as lead partner.

### 4.3 Strengths and critical issues

This section reports the main feedback collected from stakeholders during the round table, structured into strengths and critical issues for each consultation theme.

#### Theme 1 – Maritime passenger transport

Strengths	Critical issues / Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Articulated port network: Puglia has an extensive network of ports (Bari, Brindisi, Taranto, Manfredonia, Barletta, Monopoli, Otranto, Gallipoli) with diverse specializations.</li> <li>✓ Growing cruise traffic: This represents an opportunity for independent cruise passengers interested in soft mobility.</li> <li>✓ Active private initiatives: Bicycle excursion operators already have direct contracts with cruise lines in Bari and Brindisi.</li> <li>✓ Experience with bike-rack boats in Brindisi: A replicable model of internal port passenger transport integrated with bicycle carriage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>X Residual Puglia-Croatia route: Traffic is minimal compared to the routes toward Albania and Greece, and the ships used are not of the latest generation.</li> <li>X High seasonality: Services are concentrated between June and September, which is insufficient for cycle tourism during the shoulder seasons.</li> <li>X Multi-purpose ports: Interference between commercial traffic and light mobility is difficult to eliminate.</li> <li>X Absence of water taxis: A fast connection service by sea between different ports is currently unavailable in Puglia.</li> </ul>





<p>✓ "Marine di Puglia" network: 22 ports integrated into a system to share best practices and ensure synergistic development.</p>	<p>X Lack of dedicated infrastructure for cyclists: Secure bike racks, e-bike charging stations, and information points are either absent or inadequate.</p>
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## Theme 2 – Port safety and accessibility

Strengths	Critical issues / Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Flexible configurations in minor ports: Some smaller ports (such as Manfredonia and Monopoli) have more adaptable layouts that facilitate access for cyclists.</li> <li>✓ Manfredonia Port Master Plan: This represents an opportunity to integrate innovative port-city solutions.</li> <li>✓ Experienced private operators: Presence of private companies with specific expertise in organizing bicycle excursions starting from the port.</li> <li>✓ New port regulations: The master plan serves as a tool to plan cycling and pedestrian paths integrated with or overlapping port perimeter fencing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>X Mandatory security and border controls: Border and security checks cannot be bypassed, which slows down the flow of cyclists within the port area.</li> <li>X Lack of dedicated cycling paths: There are no specific paths connecting the port entrance to the boarding areas.</li> <li>X Urban design limitations: Cities were not originally designed for bicycles, creating difficulties for cycle tourists connecting the urban center to the port.</li> <li>X Lack of basic services: Absence of showers, luggage storage, and technical assistance points for cyclists within Apulian ports.</li> <li>X Lack of uniform standards: Every port requires a specific design solution, as there are no standardized models applicable to all contexts.</li> </ul>



### Theme 3 – Incentives for ship-bike intermodality

Strengths	Critical issues / Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Water taxi: An innovative model already existing in Europe, applicable to the Apulian network with the support of the port authority.</li> <li>✓ Full-electric boat in Brindisi: The first in Southern Italy, a model of excellence for sustainable passenger transport equipped with bike racks.</li> <li>✓ Bike rental apps: The possibility of placing docking stations in ports accessible via existing digital platforms.</li> <li>✓ Water Uber platform: A model already operational elsewhere, with potential extension to Apulian ports.</li> <li>✓ Recreational boating as a vehicle for integration: Boat owners using folding bikes and electric scooters as precursors to integrated mobility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>X Absence of an organized "bike+boat" offer: Bicycle rentals in ports are sporadic and not systematized.</li> <li>X Electric scooters replacing bicycles: E-scooters are partially taking the place of bikes, creating a need to adapt infrastructure.</li> <li>X Lack of fare integration: There is no integrated ticketing system for ship-bike-local public transport.</li> <li>X Poor information for foreign tourists: Insufficient communication regarding available intermodal options.</li> <li>X Inefficient port-station-city center connections: Links are not always efficient for cycle tourists with tight schedules (e.g., cruise passengers).</li> </ul>



## Theme 4 – Italy-Croatia cross-border governance

Strengths	Critical issues / Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Strategic geographical position: Puglia is the closest point to Croatia, offering a logistical advantage for navigation.</li> <li>✓ Growing Italy-Croatia pleasure craft traffic: A spontaneous phenomenon that proves the existing interest in the connection.</li> <li>✓ Croatian port network: The Nautical District has already developed relationships and exchanges with Croatian port authorities.</li> <li>✓ "Giro di Ciro Greenway" Project (World Bank): The Mostar-Dubrovnik cycle route is partially accessible, offering potential attraction for cross-border cycle tourists.</li> <li>✓ Sailing regattas (e.g., S105 Bari-Croatia): Key meeting moments between the Apulian and Croatian nautical communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>X Economically weak Puglia-Croatia route: Commercial traffic is currently insufficient to sustain a competitive, regular line.</li> <li>X Dependence on the Port of Ancona: The primary maritime connections to Croatia from the Adriatic coast are concentrated there.</li> <li>X Obsolete vessels: The ships used are outdated and have low capacity compared to those serving Albania and Greece.</li> <li>X Absence of fast catamaran services: Lack of quick transport options that would allow for day trips to Dubrovnik.</li> <li>X Border controls: Despite Croatia being in the EU, bureaucratic and customs aspects must still be factored into planning.</li> <li>X Cycle tourism as a secondary driver: Cycle tourism alone cannot economically sustain a route; a baseline of commercial traffic is necessary.</li> </ul>





## 5. Future recommendations

Based on the feedback gathered during the round table and the consultation process with Apulian stakeholders, the following future-oriented recommendations summarize the key priorities for strengthening the maritime passenger transport system and sustainable mobility along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route in Puglia. These recommendations reflect the operational, infrastructural, governance, and cross-border aspects necessary to integrate maritime services with cycle tourism:

N°	Key Recommendations
1	<p><b>Water Taxis and Internal Maritime Mobility</b></p> <p>Develop a water taxi service connecting the major and minor ports of the Marine di Puglia network, featuring dedicated moorings designed in collaboration with the Southern Adriatic Sea Port System Authority (AdSPMAM). Plan a start-up phase with regional support and evaluate integration with existing "water Uber" digital platforms already operating in Europe. Extend the model of electric boats equipped with bike racks, as developed in Brindisi, to other ports in the network.</p>
2	<p><b>Port Infrastructure for Cycle Tourists</b></p> <p>Equip the main Apulian passenger ports (Bari, Brindisi, as well as Manfredonia, Monopoli, and Otranto) with infrastructure dedicated to cyclists: secure bike docks with app-based access, e-bike charging stations, technical assistance points, showers, and luggage storage. Develop dedicated cycling paths from the port entrance to the boarding areas, including elevated solutions where interference with commercial traffic requires them.</p>
3	<p><b>Ship-Bike Fare and Digital Integration</b></p> <p>Establish a technical working group with local public transport providers (FSE, Trenitalia, bus operators) and port managers to define a single intermodal ticket (ship-bike-bus-train), following the "SUMMA" model developed in Puglia. Develop an integrated digital platform for real-time</p>



planning of multimodal itineraries, providing information on routes, schedules, rack availability, and ancillary services.

**4 Bike+Boat Cycle Tourism Products**

Promote the creation of integrated tourist packages that combine maritime crossing, cycling, and land-based services (accommodation, dining, themed guides). Enhance existing experiences such as Salento's "Il Giro dei Venti" as models for hybridizing sailing and cycle tourism. Encourage cruise lines to include organized bicycle excursions in Apulian ports by providing adequate supporting infrastructure.

**5 Cross-border Governance and Connection with Croatia**

Evaluate the economic feasibility of fast catamaran routes between Bari/Brindisi and Dubrovnik, targeting high-spending tourists and day-trippers. Strengthen relations with Croatian ports through the network already developed by the Nautical District, extending the sharing of standards for bike transport and services for cycle tourists. Intercept flows related to the "Giro di Ciro Greenway" (World Bank) as an attractive element for the Puglia-Croatia route.

**6 Regional Governance and Institutional Coordination**

Establish a permanent coordination board involving the Puglia Region, AdSPMAM, the Nautical District, FIAB, and private operators for the integrated management of the port-cycling system. Integrate the findings from the round table into the Regional Cycling Mobility Plan currently being updated by ASSET. Use the CYROS Project as a platform for sharing best practices between Italian and Croatian partner regions, promoting common standards for ship-bike intermodality.

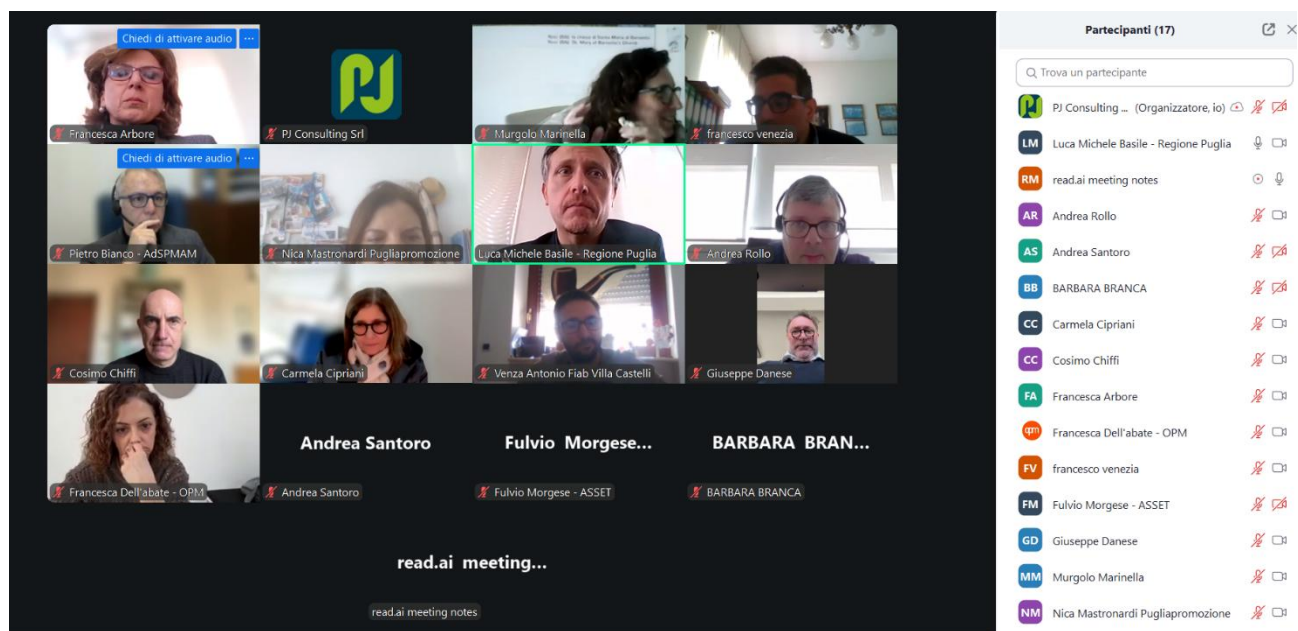
The maritime session concluded that the Port must be a Gateway, not a Barrier. To achieve this, the CYROS project must prioritize the separation of flows (passenger vs. freight) and the digital synchronization of the sea-land transition. Cooperation with Croatian counterparts is vital to ensure that a tourist starting in Ancona or Bari finds the same level of service upon arriving in Dubrovnik or Split.



## 6. Documentation

In compliance with reporting requirements, the following documentation is provided as evidence of the stakeholder consultation process:

- Full transcript of the telematic session of February 24, 2026 – (Round Table on Sustainable Mobility and Tourism);
- List of participants with respective institution and role;
- Screenshots of the online session.





The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting in progress. The main window displays a grid of 12 video thumbnails. The participants are:

- Pietro Bianco - AdSPMAM
- PJ Consulting Srl
- Murgolo Marinella
- francesco venezia
- Luca Michele Basile - Regione Puglia
- Carmela Cipriani
- Ugo Patroni Griffi
- Andrea Rollo
- Nica Mastronardi Pugliapromozione
- Venza Antonio Fiab Villa Castelli
- Cosimo Chiffi
- Francesca Arbore

Below the grid, there are four large name tiles:

- Giuseppe Danese
- OPM logo
- Andrea Santoro
- Fulvio Morgese...

At the bottom, there are two more name tiles:

- BARBARA BRANCA
- read.ai meeting...

On the right side, there is a 'Partecipanti (18)' list with a search bar and icons for each participant, including their names and organizational affiliations.



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# INTERREG ITALY-CROATIA PROGRAMME 2021–2027

## **D.3.1.2.**

# **Round Table on maritime passenger transport**



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## CYROS

Implementation, in the Programme area, of the EUSAIR flagship and crosspillar project idea Adriatic Ionian CYcle ROute for Sustainable tourism

<b>WP number</b>	<b>WP3</b>
<b>Activity number</b>	<b>Activity 3.1</b>
<b>Deliverable number</b>	<b>D.3.1.2. Round tables on maritime passenger transport</b>
<b>PP in charge</b>	<b>PP3-Abruzzo Region</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>18/02/2026</b>
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Public</b>





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## 1. Overview

This document summarizes the main contributions gathered from stakeholders during the CYROS WP3 roundtable held on February 18, 2026, in the Sala Europa of the former Aurum in Pescara. The session, organized by the Abruzzo Region, began with a presentation by ITID of the study prepared on behalf of the Region. The study analyzed the region's complex urban and tourism relationships, with a specific focus on the Abruzzo coastal port system and its relationship with the region's inland areas. It was a key moment in the project's territorial consultation process, ensuring the collection of specific perspectives from the Abruzzo context within the broader participatory process conducted across all CYROS partner regions.

The discussion focused on a priority strategic issue: the role of maritime passenger transport as a key element of multimodal integration in the Adriatic-Ionian corridor. Contrary to traditional perceptions that confine maritime transport to a purely logistical function, the consultation highlighted how ferries and maritime services must be reconceptualized as nodes of an integrated sustainable mobility system, capable of connecting cycle tourism, rail and land mobility, and distributing seasonal tourism pressure towards cross-border and inland destinations.

The consultation was structured with key institutional representatives—mayors of coastal municipalities in Abruzzo, European project managers (SUMMA, CYROS), and sustainable mobility experts—along with industry operators (port managers, maritime operators, hoteliers, bicycle rental companies), representatives of local authorities, universities, trade associations, LAGs (Local Action Groups), and tourism operators. The discussion was structured around five central thematic axes: Abruzzo's cycling network and assisted electric mobility; coastal-inland area connections and the intermodal bike+train+bus+ferry system; governance and local-regional-cross-border cooperation; cross-border perspectives and integrated services; and deseasonalization as a structural challenge. Additional stakeholders from the Abruzzo and Marche regions participated (with a specific focus on cross-border maritime transport), enabling structured feedback to be collected via a questionnaire and expanding the information base.





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This phase ensured that the findings summarized in this document reflect a regionally representative vision.

From the panel discussions and structured feedback, a key theme emerged that ran throughout the consultation: maritime passenger transport should not be considered an isolated infrastructure, but rather a strategic element of an integrated multimodal corridor connecting coastal cycling tourism, rail and land mobility, and Italian and Croatian cross-border destinations.





## 2. Involved stakeholders

**Date: February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Place: ex Aurum, sala Europa**

During the roundtable discussions scheduled as part of CYROS WP3 activities, the project's key objective was outlined: to develop an integrated system capable of connecting tourist flows carried by cycle paths in the Adriatic-Ionian area, both for sustainable mobility processes and to support maritime passenger transport through territorial interactions and intermodality.

CYROS promotes a cross-border vision of the region as a coordinated and functionally interconnected port system, oriented towards sustainable mobility models capable of improving transport efficiency, service quality, territorial accessibility, and multi-level governance.

The stakeholders involved were invited to actively contribute to the discussion, sharing their knowledge of local needs, highlighting critical issues and development opportunities, and co-designing solutions for cycle tourism mobility in relation to maritime transport. Particular attention was paid to multimodal sea-rail-bus-bike integration, accessibility for cyclists, seasonal capacity management, and coordinated governance at local, regional, national, and cross-border levels.

The event was part of a similar initiative by all partners in the CYROS project—an acronym for Adriatic Ionian Cycle Route for Sustainable Tourism—funded under the Interreg Italy-Croatia program. The project involves five Italian regions (Friuli Venezia Giulia, Emilia-Romagna, Marche, Abruzzo, and Puglia) and three Croatian regions (Istria, Primorje, and Dubrovnik-Neretva), with the goal of developing a cycling network along the Adriatic-Ionian axis integrated with public transportation—train, bus, and maritime connections—to strengthen intermodality, improve regional accessibility, and enhance natural and cultural heritage, with particular attention to the Trabocchi Coast and the connection between the coastal strip and inland areas.

The working groups provided an important opportunity for technical and institutional discussion to define shared strategies and build a stable governance model between Italy and Croatia, with the participation of local authorities, universities, Local Action Groups (GAL), port authorities, tourism operators, trade associations, businesses, research institutions, and stakeholders involved in mobility infrastructure planning.





From the panel discussions and structured feedback, a key theme ran throughout the consultation: maritime passenger transport should not be considered an isolated infrastructure, but rather a strategic element of an integrated multimodal corridor connecting coastal cycling, rail and land mobility, and Italian and Croatian cross-border destinations.

This recognition represents a significant conceptual shift compared to traditional sectoral approaches. Historically, ferries and maritime services have been governed by purely port-logistics logics (freight, incidental passengers), with cycle paths isolated by municipal logics, and local rail transport separated from national logics. The consultation highlighted how this fragmentation is the main obstacle to the sustainable development of Adriatic cycle tourism and the achievement of the estimated economic impact targets.

In this regard, it is important to note the suggestion to reconceptualize maritime transport as a strategic intermodal hub through the following steps:

- Standardize bicycle transport on ferries: define minimum capacity, uniform fares, simple and multilingual embarkation and disembarkation procedures, and access to secure dedicated spaces.
- Synchronize schedules between carriers: ensure reliable connections between coastal train arrivals and ferry departures; between ferry disembarkation and connection to the bus/internal cycle path.
- Integrate fares: offer single tickets covering cycle path, train, bus, and ferry, reducing costs and complexity for cyclists.
- Create complementary port infrastructure: secure bicycle parking, e-bike charging stations, repair points, and shower facilities at maritime terminals.
- Connect ports to cycle paths via a safe last mile: create protected cycle lanes between ferry disembarkation and access to the Costa dei Trabocchi.
- Develop direct routes between Italy and Croatia: overcome dependence on Ancona by creating direct routes (e.g., Pescara-Rovinj, Ortona-Hvar) that increase cross-border appeal.

The detailed list of participants, including names, institutions, roles, and territorial levels of reference, is shown in the attached table.





Name and Surname	Institution	Role in the Institution	Territorial Level
<b>Cipollone Carmine (Dirigente)</b>	SERVIZIO AUTORITÀ DI GESTIONE UNICA FESR-FSE - DPA011	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Di Giuseppantonio Enrico (Major)</b>	COMUNE DI FOSSACESIA	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Bozzelli Emiliano (Major)</b>	COMUNE DI SAN VITO CHIETINO	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Luisa Russo</b>	COMUNE DI FRANCAVILLA AL MARE	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Caravaggio Fabio</b>	COMUNE DI ROCCA SAN GIOVANNI	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Tonino di Fonso (Major)</b>	COMUNE DI TORINO DI SANGRO	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Marinucci Filippo (Major)</b>	COMUNE DI CASALBORDINO	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Angelo Di Nardo</b>	COMUNE DI ORTONA	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Emanuela De Nicolis</b>	COMUNE DI SAN SALVO	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Giovanni Mastrogiovanni</b>	COMUNE DI SCANNO	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Paraninfi Antonio</b>	COMUNE DI ORICOLA	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Catiuscia Cacciatore</b>	COMUNE DI ARSITA	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Fabio Altitonante</b>	COMUNE DI MONTORIO al Vomano	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo





<b>Augusto Barile</b>	COMUNE DI LECCE NEI MARSI	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Luigi Fasciani</b>	COMUNE DI MOLINA ATERNO	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Giuseppe Finamore</b>	COMUNE DI VILLA SANTA MARIA	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Giovanni Di Pangrazio</b>	COMUNE DI AVEZZANO	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Pietro Diego Ferrara</b>	COMUNE DI CHIETI	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Filippo Paolini</b>	COMUNE DI LANCIANO	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Pierluigi Biondi</b>	COMUNE DI L'AQUILA	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Carlo Masci   Luca Saraceni</b>	COMUNE DI PESCARA	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Luca Tirabassi</b>	COMUNE DI SULMONA	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Gianguido D'Alberto</b>	COMUNE DI TERAMO	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Jwan Costantini</b>	COMUNE DI GIULIANOVA	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Francesco Menna</b>	COMUNE DI VASTO	National, regional and local government	Abruzzo
<b>Ballone Antonella (Presidente); Salvatore Florimbi</b> (Dirigente Area Promozione Economica e Regolazione del Mercato)	CC.I.AA. di GRAN SASSO D'ITALIA	Chambers of Commerce	Abruzzo





<b>Gennaro Strever (Presidente) Tosca Chersich (Dirigente Area Promozione e Sviluppo del Territorio)</b>	CC.I.AA. di CHIETI PESCARA	Chambers of Commerce	Abruzzo
<b>Presidente: Fabiano Aretusi - Direttore: Stanislao D'Argenio</b>	AREA MARINA PROTETTA TORRE DEL CERRANO	Public management authorities	Abruzzo
<b>Presidente: Francesco D'Amore   Direttore del Parco: Dott. Iginio Chiuchiarelli</b>	PARCO REGIONALE SIRENTE - VELINO	Public management authorities	Abruzzo
<b>Presidente: Dott. Giovanni Cannata - Direttore: Dott. Luciano Sammarone</b>	PARCO NAZIONALE D'ABRUZZO, LAZIO E MOLISE	Public management authorities	Abruzzo
<b>Presidente: Prof. Lucio Zazzara   Direttore: Dott. Luciano Di Martino</b>	PARCO NAZIONALE DELLA MAJELLA	Public management authorities	Abruzzo
<b>Presidente: Tommaso Navarra - Direttore Avv. Elsa Olivieri</b>	PARCO NAZIONALE DEL GRAN SASSO E MONTI DELLA LAGA	Public management authorities	Abruzzo
<b>Presidente: Dario Colecchi - Direttore: Marcello Squicciarini</b>	PMC CONSORZIO ABRUZZO INNOVATUR INNOVAZIONE TURISMO	Incoming tourism agencies and tour operators	Abruzzo
<b><i>Institutional contact   No direct name</i></b>	CONSORZIO RIVIERA DEL SOLE SCARL	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b>Luigi Amorosi</b>	CONSORZIO ABRUZZOTRAVELLING	Incoming tourism agencies and tour operators	Abruzzo
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<b><i>Institutional contact   No direct name</i></b>	DMC GRAN SASSO LAGA SCARL	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b><i>Institutional contact   No direct name</i></b>	DMC CUORE DELL'APPENNINO – TERRE D'AMORE IN ABRUZZO SCARL	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b><i>Institutional contact   No direct name</i></b>	DMC TERRE DEL SANGRO AVENTINO	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b><i>Institutional contact   No direct name</i></b>	DMC TERRE PESCARESI	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b><i>Institutional contact   No direct name</i></b>	DMC RIVIERA DEI BORGHI ACQUAVIVA SCARL	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b>Giovannelli Giammarco</b>	DMC HADRIATICA SCARL	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b>Giuseppe Di Marco</b>	DMC COSTA DEI TRABOCCHI SCARL	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b><i>Institutional contact   No direct name</i></b>	DMC ALTO SANGRO TURISMO	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b><i>Institutional contact   No direct name</i></b>	DMC ABRUZZO QUALITÀ	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b><i>Institutional contact   No direct name</i></b>	DMC MARSICA SCARL	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo





<b>Presidente: Gianluca Buccella - Direttore: Domenico Francimano</b>	GAL Terre Pescaresi	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b>Direttore: Carlo Ricci</b>	GAL Costa dei Trabocchi Scarl	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b>Presidente: Pasquale Cantoro - Direttore: Dott.ssa Rosalia Montefusco</b>	GAL Terre verdi Teramane Scarl	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b>D'Andrea Donatella</b>	GRUPPO AZIONE LOCALE PESCA ABRUZZO S.c. a r.l.	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b>Presidente e delegato nazionale: Giuseppe Delli Compagni - Direttore Regionale: Catia Soardi</b>	FAITA FEDERCAMPING Abruzzo	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b>Presidente: Antonio Marascia - Direttore: Filippo Turi - Coordinatore FedAgriPesca: Angela Colangelo</b>	CONFCOOPERATIVE ABRUZZO	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
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<b>Pescara: Dott.ssa Laura Federicis</b>			
<b>Referente turismo Chieti: Dott. Renzo Cipollini</b>	CONFINDUSTRIA Teramo	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
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<b>Annalisa De Luca</b>	CONFCOMMERCIO FIAVET ABRUZZO MOLISE	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b>Giammarco Giovannelli</b>	CONFCOMMERCIO - FEDERALBERGHI ABRUZZO	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo
<b>Direttore dell’Agenzia: Francesca Bocchi - Presidente: Mara Quaianni - Referente Centro Studi: Matilde Fiocco</b>	CRESA / AGENZIA PER LO SVILUPPO	Research and statistics institutes	Abruzzo
<b>Antonino Zecca</b>	Enel - Responsabile Area Abruzzo, Marche, Molise	Energy management companies	Italy
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<b>Presidente: Nicola Dell’Acqua - Componenti: Clara Poletti, Stefano Saglia,</b>	Arera   Presidente e componenti	Public management authorities	Abruzzo





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<b>Manuela Baudana: referente per mobilità sostenibile e iniziative ESG</b>	A2A	Energy management companies	Italy
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<b>Giuseppe Marco Litta</b>	BPER	Credit Institutions - Banking Foundations	Italy
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<b>Presidente: Savini Alfredo - Direttore Generale: Di Giampaolo Simone</b>	BCC di Castiglione Messer Raimondo e Pianella	Credit Institutions - Banking Foundations	Abruzzo
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<b>Roberto Di Vincenzo - Simone D'Alessandro - Oscar Buonamano</b>	Fondazione Hubruzzo	Private Foundations	Abruzzo
<b>Alberto Amoroso</b>	Sangritana	Bus passenger transport companies	Abruzzo
<b>Gabriele De Angelis - Maxmilian Di Pasquale</b>	TUA	Bus passenger transport companies	Abruzzo
<b>Alfonso Di Fonzo</b>	Di Fonzo	Bus passenger transport companies	Abruzzo
<b>Sandro Di Carlo</b>	Di Carlo	Bus passenger transport companies	Abruzzo
<b>Franco Chiacchiaretta</b>	Satam	Bus passenger transport companies	Abruzzo
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<b>Prof. Gino D'Ovidio</b>	Centro Interdipartimentale Trasporti e Mobilità Sostenibile (CITraMS) L'Aquila	Universities, Schools and school departments	Abruzzo
<b>Arch. Dante Pallotta</b>	Ordine Architetti Pescara	National and local Orders of Architects and Engineers	Pescara
<b>Arch. Maria Cicchitti</b>	Ordine Architetti Chieti	National and local Orders of Architects and Engineers	Chieti





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<b><i>Institutional contact   No direct name</i></b>	Abruzzo Bike	Cycling associations	Abruzzo
<b>Stefano Antonio Donnarumma</b>	Trenitalia	Railway systems companies	Italy
<b>Giorgio Fraccastoro</b>	SAGA Società Abruzzese Gestione Aeroporto S.p.A.	Airports	Abruzzo
<b>Vincenzo Garofalo, Salvatore Minervino</b>	<u>Autorità di Sistema Portuale del Mare Adriatico Centrale</u>	Public management authorities	Marche - Abruzzo
<b>Carla Tiboni</b>	Fondazione Edoardo Tiboni - Associazione Flaiano - Mediateca   Premio Flaiano	Territorial associations and confederations [for tourism and land promotion]	Abruzzo - Italia
<b>Carlo Toto - Consigliere di Toto Holding S.p.A. Mattia Toto - Consigliere Toto Holding / Giuseppe Scopa - Relazioni esterne</b>	Toto Holding Spa	Energy management companies	Abruzzo - Italia

### 3. Input information provided to stakeholders

#### 3.1. General presentation

Prior to the launch of the thematic roundtables, the Abruzzo Region presented the CYROS project to the stakeholders involved in the consultation process, with a specific focus on maritime





passenger transport and Italy-Croatia connections along the Adriatic axis. General information on the project was provided, placing it within Priority 3 of the Interreg Italy-Croatia program—dedicated to sustainable maritime and multimodal transport (OS3.1)—and the broader EUSAIR strategy, of which CYROS is a flagship and cross-pillar project.

### **The Abruzzo port system as a tourist interconnection**

The core of the presentation, produced by ITID srl - consultants appointed by the company - introduced an innovative and strategic vision of the Abruzzo port system, structured around the four ports of Giulianova, Pescara, Ortona, and San Salvo-Vasto. This vision was not seen as a collection of separate and competing infrastructures, but as an integrated system for interconnecting tourism. To frame this vision, a fundamental conceptual distinction was proposed between two port organization models: the vertical port system, based on a dominant port with satellite ports in a centralized model, and the horizontal port system, understood as a diffuse system with a predominant, non-centralized function. It was forcefully emphasized that, currently, the entire 131-kilometer Adriatic cycle path in Abruzzo is effectively a satellite of the port of Ancona, creating a structural dependency that limits the region's potential for autonomous development. CYROS represents an opportunity to overturn this logic, adopting the horizontal model as the reference paradigm.

The presentation illustrated the logic of the horizontal system through a key principle: it is not the territory that serves the port, but the port that penetrates the territory. In the diffuse system, each port—Giulianova, Pescara, Ortona, San Salvo-Vasto—generates its own autonomous hinterland, maximizing the overall regional port territory and requiring structured connections with the interior. The result of this approach is a radical transformation of territorial identity: the diffuse horizontal system transforms the Abruzzo Region from a region with ports to a port-region, in which the entire regional territory becomes a distributed functional hinterland. This vision implies that every area of Abruzzo—coastal, valley, or mountainous—becomes a potential destination reachable through the port system, and that the cycling and intermodal network is the tool through which this connection is concretely achieved.

### **The sea-mountain development guidelines**

Consistent with this vision, the presentation outlined the five territorial development and agreement axes that structure the relationship between ports and inland areas of Abruzzo: the sea axis from Atri to San Salvo, serving as the coastal backbone; the San Vito Marina-CasteldiSangro axis toward the Sangro River and Alto Molise; the Ortona-Passo Lanciano axis toward the Maiella; the strategic Pescara-L'Aquila axis toward the heart of the Abruzzo Apennines; and finally, the Roseto-Lago di Campotosto axis, passing through Teramo, toward the Gran Sasso and the Teramo mountains. These five axes form a comb-like system that, starting from the ports and the coastal





cycle path, penetrates inland through the main river valleys, making areas of extraordinary natural, cultural, and scenic value, currently poorly integrated into slow tourism circuits, accessible by bicycle—including assisted bicycles.

### **Simulation of an aggregated port multi-service system**

To complement the strategic presentation, a simulation of an aggregated multi-service port system was proposed, drawing on cutting-edge European experiences already in operation. The model presented envisions the integration of four types of complementary structures in Abruzzo's ports: floating tourist facilities modeled after the *Wikkelboat Floating Rotterdam*, for reception and hospitality directly in port areas; library and cultural facilities modeled after the *Atlantide Biblioteca dal Mare*, for the cultural enhancement of port spaces; integrated production facilities modeled after the *Floating Farm Rotterdam*, for the economic and environmental sustainability of the system; and supporting photovoltaic systems, to ensure the energy self-sufficiency of port infrastructure. This vision transforms ports from mere embarkation facilities to vibrant places of aggregation, culture, tourism, and production, capable of generating attractiveness and economic value year-round, well beyond the summer season.

Stakeholders were finally briefed on their specific roles within this project framework. The responsibilities assigned to each stakeholder include participation in the processes of defining and validating the maritime passenger transport strategy, providing data and operational knowledge within their respective institutional and sectoral expertise, coordinating with port authorities and maritime operators, and supporting the implementation of integrated solutions for cycle tourism mobility in ports. Their active engagement has been identified as essential for building a stable and long-lasting cross-border governance model capable of ensuring the sustainability and capitalization of CYROS results well beyond the project deadline of August 31, 2026.



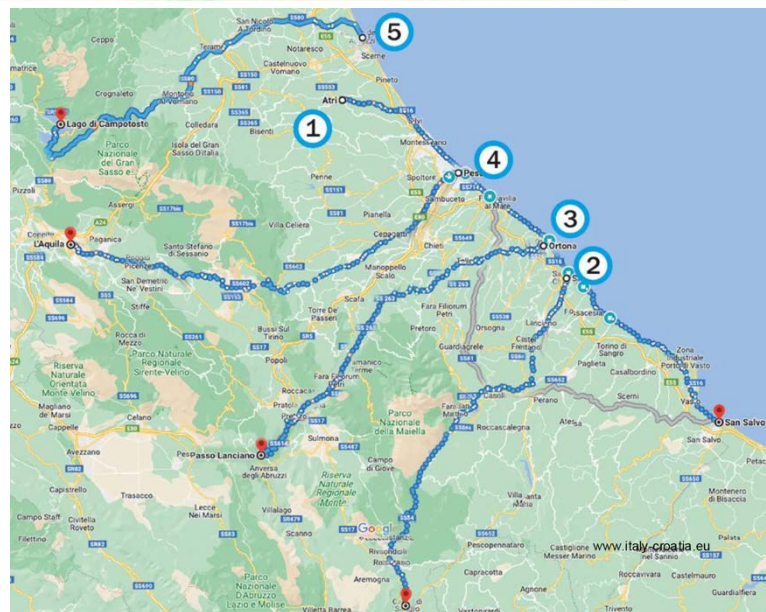
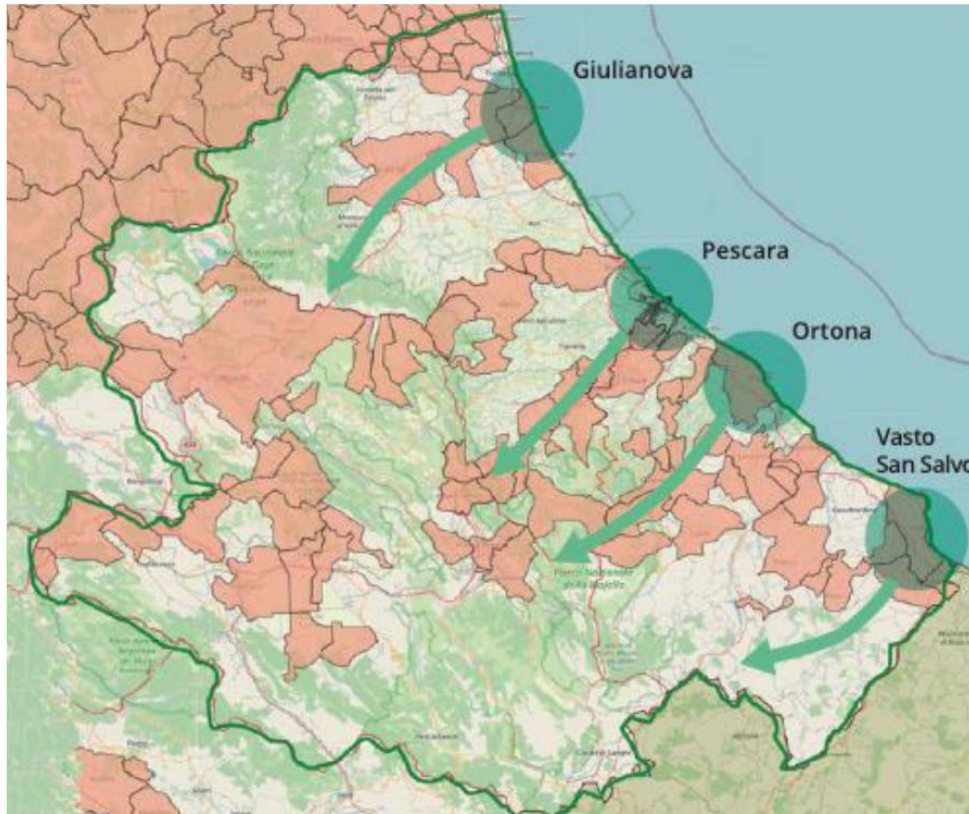


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## 3.2 Thematic presentation

The thematic areas were addressed through a structured round table discussion, focusing on the current situation in the Abruzzo region and the role of sustainable cycling mobility within a broader framework of multimodal coastal-hinterland integration and Adriatic cross-border cooperation.

### **Cycling Network and Assisted Electric Mobility in the Maritime Context**

The maritime passenger transport system represents a strategic element for enhancing Abruzzo's cycling network, particularly the Trabocchi Coast, as a key hub for regional cycling tourism. The four Abruzzo ports considered—Giulianova, Pescara, Ortona, and San Salvo-Vasto—must be reconceptualized not as isolated infrastructures, but rather as nodes of a widespread port system interconnected with coastal cycle paths. The spread of electric mobility (e-bikes) amplifies the potential of this integration: e-bike tourists can travel longer distances and tackle elevation changes more easily, but require specific port infrastructure—charging stations, secure storage, and technical assistance services—currently almost entirely absent in Abruzzo's ports. Furthermore, maritime transport would enable the development of integrated thematic itineraries (nature, culture, food and wine) connecting the coastal strip with the inland towns and protected areas through the main river valleys, transforming travel from a linear to a circular, multi-destination experience.

### **Coast-Inland Area Connection and Intermodal System: Bike, Train, Bus, and Ferry**

The Abruzzo axis occupies a strategic position in cross-border Adriatic-Ionian cycle tourism flows, with an estimated potential of 480,000 additional annual users along the corridor, rising to 620,000 when integrating the inland areas. Maritime passenger transport becomes a crucial element in realizing this vision through the integration of bike, train, bus, and ferry. Cyclists do not choose a single means of transport, but combine cycling along the coastal stretch, ferries for travel to islands or cross-border destinations, and regional trains for return journeys or connections to the hinterland. This multimodal chain expands the geographical reach of cycle tourists and increases tourism spending, distributed across multiple overnight stays and services. However, realizing this vision requires standardization of bike carriages on all maritime carriers, time synchronization between ferries, trains, and buses, and integrated fares through a single ticket covering the entire chain. Currently, these conditions are completely absent: ferries and railways operate on separate platforms, bike fares are not standardized, and timetables are haphazard. Coastal and valley-level railway stations must become preferred intermodal hubs, ensuring standardized bicycle transport and safe infrastructure at the connections between the coastal path, stations, and access points to





the inland valleys, particularly addressing the critical last-mile problem that currently disrupts the continuity of routes.

### **Local and regional governance and cooperation**

The need to establish a stable regional coordination body for the integrated development of cycling infrastructure and sustainable mobility services, involving all six stakeholder sectors identified by the project: regulatory and administrative, economic, infrastructure and transport, energy and technology, culture and local heritage, and tourism.

The role of Cohesion Pacts as an institutional tool for the active involvement of inland communities, recognizing their role not only as a tourist destination but also as a key player in territorial development.

Presentation of the Municipality of Pescara's SUMMA project as a best practice for fare integration and multimodal mobility governance in the Functional Urban Area, illustrating how a single intermodal ticket system can simplify access to transport services for residents and tourists.

### **Cross-border perspectives and integrated services**

Strengthening the multimodal bike+train+bus networks along the Adriatic-Ionian corridor, with the Abruzzo ports of Giulianova, Pescara, Ortona, and San Salvo-Vasto serving as tourism interconnection hubs within a widespread port system.

Improving cross-border cooperation frameworks between Italy and Croatia and digitally integrating passenger information through the WebGIS platform and ICT tools envisioned in CYROS WP2.

Long-term investment in safe cycling infrastructure connecting inland routes with rail hubs and coastal ports, with the aim of deseasonalizing tourist flows and generating an estimated annual economic impact of approximately €910 million for the entire regional system.

These key points provided the framework for subsequent stakeholder input and the development of forward-looking recommendations.

#### *Conceptual preface for feedback from key stakeholders.*

This section reports the key stakeholder feedback. The various pieces of feedback are divided into strengths and weaknesses for each consulting topic. Strengths refer to the aspects that stakeholders appreciated and found valuable for each consultation topic. Weaknesses refer to the aspects that identified gaps among stakeholders.

### **Completion of the Costa dei Trabocchi Infrastructure**

There is general consensus on the need to complete the remaining 41 kilometers of coastal cycle path by 2027 (CYROS deadline). Currently, the Costa dei Trabocchi is fragmented into segments: excellent sections (Pescara-Francavilla) coexist with critical gaps (Vasto-Francavilla, Ortona-Lanciano)





characterized by persistent vehicular traffic, lack of traffic protection, and inconsistent signage. This fragmentation discourages cycle tourists who plan continuous routes and reduces its appeal compared to competing destinations (Tuscany, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia). Priority identified: completion by 2027 in accordance with the European EuroVelo standard (minimum width of 2.5 m, traffic protection, multilingual signage, and year-round maintenance).

### **Electric Mobility as a Demand Multiplier**

Recognition that the spread of e-bikes in Europe (30% annual growth) radically expands the potential for cycling tourism. E-bikes allow the elderly, disabled, families, and mid- to high-income riders to access cycling tourism with less effort. However, complementary infrastructure currently lacking in Abruzzo remains a critical deterrent: charging stations (at least 20 distributed), specialized e-bike repair points, and secure parking at ports and stations. Consensus on the need for a widespread network of standardized services by 2026.

### **Unified Digital Platform as Enabler**

Lack of integrated visibility is a critical obstacle. Cyclists must consult 5-6 separate portals (Trenitalia, TUA, maritime operators IT-HR, ciclopiste.it, accommodation booking) without synchronization.

### **Desseasonalization through Thematic Packages**

Extreme seasonality (80% demand June-August) creates unsustainable pressure on coastal infrastructure; demand remains marginal in September-May. Consultation has identified how curated thematic packages ("Nature and Biodiversity" in spring, "Historical Heritage" in autumn, "Food and Wine" in October) can attract seasonal cycle tourists at premium rates (€400-600 for 3-4 days, all-inclusive). A parallel approach is necessary: public subsidies to maritime carriers to maintain seasonal frequencies.

### **Coordinated Regional Governance as a Prerequisite**

No operational measure can be implemented without stable governance. The Consultation highlighted how institutional fragmentation (separate Port Authorities, autonomous municipalities, private maritime operators, and the Region as a planner but not an executive) impedes standardization. It is necessary to establish a Permanent Regional Task Force (representing the six stakeholder sectors: administrative, economic, infrastructural, technological, cultural, and tourism) with the operational mandate to sign protocols, allocate funding, and monitor implementation.

### **Cross-border perspectives between Italy and Croatia**

The Abruzzo axis is strategically positioned on the Adriatic-Ionian corridor but remains heavily dependent on Ancona (150 km north) for connections to Croatia. The consultation identified how





direct Abruzzo-Croatia routes (e.g., Pescara-Rovinj, Ortona-Hvar) could transform cycling itineraries, extend average stays, and generate distributed spending. Necessary: bilateral agreements between Italy and Croatia on bike carriage standards, shared port infrastructure, digital integration of booking platforms, joint promotional campaigns (branding "Adriatic Bike and Boat").

Regional Cycling Plan as a Unified Framework.

Crucial cross-cutting issue: fragmented measures (cycle paths, services, fares, digital platform) remain ineffective without a unified strategic vision.

### Conclusion: An Integrated Vision

Maritime passenger transport is not an isolated technical issue, but rather a strategic element of territorial integration, regional competitiveness, and environmental sustainability. Achieving a harmonious vision requires reconceptualizing the port as an integrated multimodal system hub, cross-border standardization of rules and tariffs, structural infrastructure investment in port amenities, permanent governance with an operational mandate, and multi-year funding guaranteed beyond 2027. Without these elements, CYROS will remain a passionate study and Adriatic cycle tourism a marginal summer phenomenon, rather than evolving into a driver of sustainable and cross-border territorial development.

## 4. Contributions and Debate

### 4.1 Conceptual preface for key stakeholder feedback

This section reports the main contributions from stakeholders who participated in the roundtable discussion on maritime passenger transport held on February 18, 2026. The various feedback is divided into strengths and weaknesses for each consultation topic. Strengths refer to the aspects that stakeholders deemed most significant and worthy of development within the CYROS project. Weaknesses, on the other hand, relate to the gaps and structural criticalities identified, which require priority interventions to achieve the project objectives.

Within the framework of the general presentation, ITID — through the contributions of Alfredo Padovano and Andrea Padovani — presented the methodological approach adopted in the urban-tourism port study commissioned by the Abruzzo Region. The activity interpreted the port system according to a dual dimension, horizontal and vertical: on the one hand as a network of relationships linking the port, the city, and the regional tourism





system; on the other as a multi-level structure capable of integrating logistical, urban, and territorial development functions.

From this perspective, the port is understood not merely as a maritime infrastructure, but as a strategic node connecting the coastal belt with inland areas, guiding the study toward the creation of new functional linkages and a stronger level of regional territorial integration.

Below are some contributions that clearly highlight the relationship between the topic discussed and the stakeholder category.

**Marco Pesce – Development Agency of the Chieti-Pescara Chamber of Commerce** *Internationalization and European programs as a lever for the Abruzzo port system*

Marco Pesce, head of the Internationalization and European Programs Department at the Development Agency of the Chieti-Pescara Chamber of Commerce, framed the topic of maritime passenger transport within the broader internationalization strategy of Abruzzo's economic system. He emphasized how European programs—and in particular Interreg Italy-Croatia—represent not only a source of funding but also a structural platform for building lasting economic and trade relations between the two shores of the Adriatic. In this context, CYROS was highlighted as a tool capable of combining tourism development and international openness, positioning Abruzzo's ports as hubs in a broader exchange system that extends well beyond seasonal tourism. The importance of aligning project initiatives with the European programming tools available for the 2021-2027 period was highlighted, maximizing synergies between the various programs active in the Adriatic-Ionian area and building a territorial governance system capable of attracting long-term international investments and partnerships.

**Sladan Tupozovic – Chieti-Pescara Chamber of Commerce, Balkan Hub** *Abruzzo-Croatia relations: strengthening connections and institutional integration*

Sladan Tupozovic brought to the discussion the operational perspective of the Balkan Hub of the Chieti-Pescara Chamber of Commerce, an organization that has been working for years to strengthen economic and trade relations between Abruzzo and the countries of the Balkan and Adriatic regions. His presentation emphasized the untapped potential of the Abruzzo-Croatia maritime routes, highlighting how the expansion of the Ancona-Split route—currently the main maritime connection between Italy and Croatia—represents both an opportunity and a limitation, as it tends to concentrate traffic flows on a single hub





to the detriment of Abruzzo ports. In this sense, the development of direct connections with Jadrolinija—the main Croatian maritime operator—was identified as a priority strategic objective to give Abruzzo ports an independent and recognizable presence in the Adriatic transport system. Tupozovic also presented the Din system as a model of institutional integration between municipalities, the Region, and the Chamber of Commerce, capable of creating a coordinated direction for the development of maritime routes and related services, overcoming the current fragmentation between the various levels of governance and building a unified representation of the Abruzzo region at international negotiating tables.

**Angelo Di Nardo – Mayor of Ortona** *The Port of Ortona as a Strategic Hub: Masterplan, Accessibility, and Tourism*

Ortona Mayor Angelo Di Nardo offered direct and concrete testimony to the discussion regarding the strategic role of the port of Ortona within the Abruzzo port system and the CYROS project. The port of Ortona was presented as an extraordinarily important hub for several reasons: geographically, as it is located at the most accessible point between the Costa dei Trabocchi cycle path and the routes leading inland; tourism and hospitality, thanks to its proximity to the historic center, reception facilities, and the surrounding cultural and landscape resources; and strategically, due to its location within the Adriatic routes to Croatia. The Mayor expressed the city administration's full willingness to initiate a structured discussion on the port's role within the CYROS project, actively participating in the development of a port master plan that integrates the needs of bicycle accessibility, tourist reception, maritime connectivity, and urban development. It was emphasized that Ortona could become a practical laboratory for the port-as-gateway model to the hinterland promoted by CYROS, with targeted investments in bike-friendly infrastructure, reception services, and integrated signage that would make the port a natural starting point for exploring the area.

**Gino D'Ovidio – University of L'Aquila, CITRAMS** *The Abruzzo-Marche axis and cross-border relations: a systemic perspective*

Gino D'Ovidio of the Interuniversity Center for Sustainable Transport and Mobility (CITRAMS) at the University of L'Aquila presented the results of studies conducted on the Abruzzo-Marche axis and its implications for Adriatic cross-border relations. The research highlights how Abruzzo and Marche constitute a unified territorial system on the Adriatic





coast, with complementary infrastructural, economic, and tourism features that necessitate a coordinated approach to mobility and port development policies. In this context, the presence of the Marche Region among the associated partners of CYROS was highlighted as an opportunity to build a shared Adriatic strategy that transcends regional boundaries and positions the entire central-southern Adriatic coast as an integrated system of tourism and maritime connectivity. D'Ovidio emphasized how the traffic data and simulation models developed by CITRAMS can provide CYROS with a solid scientific basis for strategic choices regarding ports, routes, and connection infrastructure, helping to direct investments toward the most effective and sustainable long-term solutions.

**Pasquale Grilli** *The Library from the Sea: culture and sustainability as qualifying elements of the port of the future.*

Pasquale Grilli's contribution introduced an original and visionary perspective, focusing on the Biblioteca dal Mare project as a model for the cultural and functional regeneration of port spaces. Drawing on the experience of Atlantide Biblioteca dal Mare presented during the introductory session—and the broader concept of an aggregated port multi-service system inspired by the Rotterdam experience—Grilli argued how the cultural dimension represents a qualifying and differentiating factor for Abruzzo's ports within the CYROS framework. A port that hosts a library, a cultural space, a meeting place and a hub for knowledge production becomes an attractive place not only for passing cycle tourists, but also for the local community, young people, researchers, and international visitors seeking an authentic and profound experience of the region. In this vision, sustainability is not only environmental or infrastructural, but also cultural and social: the port is a lived-in public space, capable of generating identity, cohesion, and attractiveness year-round, well beyond the summer months.

**Dott.ssa Marcozzi – Marche Region** *The Marche Region's perspective on the Adriatic system and interregional cooperation*

Dr. Marcozzi's participation, representing the Marche Region, enriched the discussion with the perspective of a neighboring region that shares with Abruzzo many of the challenges and opportunities related to Adriatic maritime transport and coastal cycling tourism. Her contribution emphasized the importance of developing a coordinated interregional approach—between Marche, Abruzzo, and the other Italian Adriatic regions—to build sufficient critical mass to negotiate improved and more structured service conditions with





Croatian maritime operators. The need to avoid duplicating similar initiatives and infrastructures in neighboring territories was emphasized, instead promoting specialization and complementarity among the various port hubs along the central-southern Adriatic axis. Interregional cooperation was identified as the key to making the Italian Adriatic system competitive at the European level, and CYROS was identified as the most appropriate platform to initiate this integration process in a structured and sustainable manner.

## 5. Future-oriented recommendations

Based on the feedback gathered during the roundtable and online consultation process, the following forward-looking recommendations summarize the key priorities identified by stakeholders. These recommendations reflect operational, infrastructural, governance, and cross-border aspects necessary to strengthen the integration between maritime passenger transport and cycle tourism, particularly in the Adriatic-Ionian context. The proposals aim to improve multimodal connectivity, increase bicycle accessibility in port areas, reduce seasonal imbalances, and promote consistent cross-border standards between Italy and Croatia. Where relevant, the recommendations also indicate possible implementation paths, including institutional coordination mechanisms, infrastructure upgrades, digital integration, and pilot testing supported by European funding instruments. The proposals, organized according to the five thematic areas addressed during the consultation, also highlight cross-cutting priorities related to seasonal adjustment and long-term financial sustainability.

### **Port Integration for the Abruzzo Cycle Network with Electric Mobility Assistance:**

#### **Operational Priority**

As part of the CYROS project, standardizing Abruzzo's port infrastructure is a priority so that it is fully compatible with the integrated cycle tourism flows envisaged along the Adriatic-Ionian coastline. This means:

- Creation of safe and standardized bike parking facilities in all four ports (Giulianova, Pescara, Ortona, San Salvo-Vasto), according to uniform technical specifications defined by CYROS in coordination with the Abruzzo Region and the Port Authorities.





- Installation of e-bike charging stations at the main ports, considering that assisted mobility is the fastest growing segment (30% annually in Europe) and determines the destination's attractiveness to high-end cyclists and seniors.
- Standardized complementary services: shower facilities, baggage storage, repair shop, and multilingual information points in each port, compliant with European standards and financed through a pool of CYROS funds, the PNMC (National Cycling Mobility Plan), and co-financing from municipalities.

### Implementation Path

CYROS WP (Work Package) dedicated to port infrastructures should include:

1. Detailed mapping of infrastructure gaps in each port in Abruzzo and Croatia.
2. Definition of common technical standards for bike parking, charging, and services.
3. Pilot design and implementation in at least two ports in Abruzzo (Pescara, Ortona) as a testbed for replication in Croatia.
4. Procurement of EU funds for implementation plans through CYROS: allocation by the Abruzzo Region of a budget share for the study and identification of structural EU funding processes.

### Integration with Thematic Itineraries

Port infrastructure should serve as a hub for integrated thematic itineraries connecting the coast (coastal cycle paths) with the hinterland (protected areas, villages, food and wine heritage) through the main river valleys (Pescara Valley, Sangro Valley, Trigno Valley).

Support to:

- Creation of supplementary maps showing coastal cycle and pedestrian paths, inland routes, and port access.
- Uniform multilingual signage at ports to direct cyclists to themed itineraries.





- Partnerships with protected area managers (Maiella Park, SCI/SPA managers) to facilitate safe transit for cyclists, integrated with environmental protection constraints.

## Coast-Inland Area Connection and Intermodal System: Bike+Train+Bus+Ferry

### Operational Priority

Maritime transport must be transformed from an isolated infrastructure to a central hub in an integrated multimodal chain. Operational recommendations include:

- Standardization of bicycle transport on maritime carriers: implementation of operational protocols signed by IT-HR maritime authorities that define minimum capacity (e.g., 20 bicycles per ferry), uniform fares (e.g., €5 per bicycle), integrated booking, and simplified embarkation/disembarkation procedures.
- Bike+ferry+train+bus fare integration: creation of a single cross-border ticket that unifies fares across all carriers, encouraging multimodal travel. A cyclist traveling 60 km by bike, 2 hours by ferry, and 90 km by train should pay a single ticket at a discount compared to purchasing it separately.
- Guaranteed time synchronization: railways, buses, and maritime carriers sign certified time coordination commitments (e.g., a ferry departs 30 minutes after the train arrives).
- Last-mile connection infrastructure: protected cycle lanes between train stations, bus stops, and ports; multilingual signage; transition areas with complementary services.

### Implementation Path

1. Negotiation of operational protocols: signing of MOUs between the Abruzzo Port Authorities, Jadrolinija (Croatian maritime operator), Trenitalia, TUA (Abruzzo regional bus), and equivalent Croatian operators.





2. Integrated digital platform design: development of a single app/portal where cyclists can book ferry + train + bicycle services, displaying synchronized timetables, bike availability, and integrated fares. This should be integrated with the WebGIS envisioned by CYROS WP2.
3. Summer pilot: launch of a pilot route (e.g., Pescara-Ancona-Croatia) with integrated fares, coordinated timetables, and standardized bike carriages; evaluation of feedback for scaling.
4. Finalization: guaranteed operation of the supplementary services after CYROS funding.

### **Involvement of Economic Stakeholders**

The Region must ensure that private operators (hoteliers, bicycle rental companies, tour operators) actively participate in the design of rates and services, reducing the risk of top-down solutions not utilized by the market. Mechanism: quarterly public-private co-design roundtables during implementation.

### **Governance and Local, Regional and Cross-border Cooperation**

#### **Operational Priority**

It is necessary to catalyze the establishment of a stable coordination body at the Abruzzo regional level, with an explicit operational (non-consultative) mandate that unites all six identified stakeholder sectors:

- Regulatory and administrative sector: Abruzzo Region, coastal municipalities, Port Authorities, Ministry of Infrastructure.
- Economic sector: maritime operators, tourism operators, hoteliers, bicycle rental companies.
- Infrastructure sector: cycle path managers, TUA, Trenitalia, regional railway operators.





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- Energy and technology sector: e-mobility operators, charging infrastructure providers, digital platform developers.
- Cultural and heritage sector: Park authorities, protected area managers, superintendencies.
- Tourism sector: regional tourism boards, DMOs (Destination Management Organizations), cycle tourism representatives.

This body should have explicit responsibilities for:

- Signing and monitoring operational standardization protocols.
- Allocation and management of dedicated public funding (PNMC, regional ordinary funds).
- Monitoring of CYROS and SUMMA implementation; real-time adaptation.
- Coordination with equivalent Croatian bodies for cross-border alignment.

### Implementation Path

1. Establishment of a Regional Task Force: The Abruzzo Region formalizes a coordination body through a resolution, with a dedicated technical secretariat (1-2 FTEs).
2. Multi-year memoranda of understanding: signing of MOUs between operators on standardization of tariffs, timetables, and port infrastructure.
3. Public-private partnership: creation of a co-financing model between public bodies (Region, municipalities) and private operators (hoteliers, charterers) for port infrastructure and additional services.
4. Periodic co-design roundtables: quarterly meetings with stakeholders to monitor progress and adapt strategies.





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## Cross-border dimension

The Regions must facilitate the establishment of a permanent Italy-Croatia coordination table for:

- Alignment of operational protocols for bike carriages, port access, and tariffs on both sides of the Adriatic.
- Digital integration of information platforms (CYROS WebGIS + national IT-HR platforms).
- Signing of bilateral agreements on joint maritime carriers operating on the Abruzzo-Croatia axis.
- Joint promotional campaigns towards European markets (Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, France).

Cohesion Pacts can serve as an institutional tool for involving internal areas as development actors, not simply destinations.

## Cross-border Perspectives and Integrated Services

### Operational Priority

The fragility of the Abruzzo-Croatia connection represents the main gap with respect to CYROS's Adriatic-Ionian vision. Specific recommendations:

- Signing of bilateral agreements between Italy and Croatia for joint maritime carriers operating between Abruzzo ports and Croatian destinations (e.g., Rovinj, Hvar, Split). Abruzzo currently depends on Ancona; direct routes between Abruzzo and Croatia amplify the region's appeal.
- Cross-border standardization of bike-carriage protocols: Italian and Croatian port authorities are signing common protocols on bicycle capacity, uniform tariffs, and boarding procedures.





- Digital integration of the WebGIS platform with national IT-HR portals to allow cycle tourists to book direct ferries with integrated bike-carriages in a single transaction.
- Joint promotional campaign "Adriatic Cycle-Ferry Corridor" targeting high-value European markets (German, Austrian, and Dutch cycle tourists) to deseasonalize and increase average spending.
- Deseasonalization: scheduling ferry services during the shoulder seasons (April-May, September-October) to attract European cyclists when Italian coasts are less congested. Incentive rates and combined packages (bike + ferry + accommodation) for shoulder seasons.

### Implementation Path

1. Bilateral negotiations: signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between IT and HR governments on maritime standardization for cycle tourism.
2. Pilot direct Abruzzo-Croatia route: experimental launch of a Pescara (or Ancona)-Split ferry line with a standardized bike carriage, integrated fares, and coordinated timetables. Demand assessment and feedback.
3. Shared promotional campaign: IT-HR co-marketing, positioning Adriatic Cycle-Ferry as a single destination.
4. Shoulder-season programs: fare incentives and packages to attract European cycle tourists during low-demand periods (April-May, September-October).

### Market Potential

An estimated 480,000-620,000 additional cycle tourism users per year are expected along the Abruzzo route, with a significant economic impact (accommodation, catering, services, bicycle rental).





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## Deseasonalization and Long-Term Financial Sustainability

### Cross-cutting Priority: Deseasonalization

The June-August concentration of cycle tourism creates unsustainable pressure on coastal infrastructure and local services; September-May remains marginal demand. Support is needed:

- Deliberate scheduling of ferry services during the shoulder season: Maritime carriers receive public subsidies to extend services between April and May and September and October, when European cycling tourism is high but Italian coastlines are less congested.
- Incentivised fare packages for shoulder seasons: one integrated ticket (bike + ferry + train + accommodation) offered with a 20-30% discount during the shoulder season; incentives for accommodation providers to offer reduced rates for April and May and September and October.
- Specific promotional campaigns: Marketing to European markets to promote "shoulder season" cycling tourism (moderate weather, smaller crowds, lower prices).
- Diversification of thematic itineraries: promotion of autumn (harvest/food and wine), spring (nature), and winter (light cycling + cultural services) itineraries to broaden their appeal beyond the summer.

### Cross-cutting Priority: Financial Sustainability

The Cyros-associated study concludes in August 2026. Some recommendations upon completion of the phase:

- **Commitment of the Regions:** annual allocation in the ordinary budget for:
  - Maintenance of coastal cycle paths.
  - Management of port infrastructure (bike parking, charging, service area).
  - Operation of an integrated digital platform (WebGIS + booking app).
  - Coordination of a stable regional governance body.
- **Structured public-private partnership:** Maritime operators, hoteliers, and bicycle rental companies co-finance port infrastructure and additional services





- **Establishment of a dedicated tourist tax:** €2-5 per cycle tourist per overnight stay, with the restriction that the funds will be used for maintenance of cycling infrastructure, port services, and the digital platform.
- **Access to national ordinary funds:** Abruzzo's candidacy for integrated funding from the annual Budget Law, and contributions from the PNMC for cycle paths beyond 2027.
- **Transparent financial governance model:** Annual public reporting of expenses, results, and KPIs to ensure effective funding and accountability to stakeholders.

## 6. Strengths and weaknesses

The aim of this section is to collect information on the following topics:

- How can the maritime passenger transport system be made more efficient, convenient, and integrated for cycle tourists?
- What role should local authorities play in promoting sustainable transport options for cyclists?
- What are your area's main strengths in promoting cycling in port areas?
- What weaknesses or barriers currently affect the integration of cycling, trains, buses, and maritime transport?
- What multimodal solutions and best practices are already in place (projects, services, digital tools, etc.)? What operational proposals would you suggest to improve sustainable mobility?

In this section, key stakeholder feedback is structured into identified strengths and weaknesses, followed by an overview of key challenges and current multimodal experiences in the region.

1. Maritime passenger transport system and sustainable, multimodal mobility along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle path	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abruzzo's geographic positioning: a linear and accessible coastline, with potential for rail and cycle/pedestrian</li> </ul>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of direct connections between Abruzzo and Croatia: the Abruzzo cycle path network converges towards Ancona</li> </ul>





<p>connections to the hinterland (Majella, Gran Sasso).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal rail network: the Adriatic line connects Pescara to Bari, providing a backbone for train-bike-bus integration.</li> <li>• Potential for autonomous development: Abruzzo has the basic infrastructure to create its own cycle tourism system without relying on external hubs.</li> </ul>	<p>(150 km north, in another region), resulting in dependence on external infrastructure and high logistics costs; this reduces the appeal for international cycle tourists who could reach Croatia directly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme seasonality: maritime services are concentrated between June and September; insufficient for shoulder-season cycle tourism.</li> <li>• Non-standardized bicycle capacity: regional railways (Trenitalia) and local buses do not have uniform regulations for bicycle transport.</li> <li>• Operational fragmentation: Trenitalia, regional bus operators (TUA), and port operators operate with little coordination regarding fares.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. How can we transform the Costa dei Trabocchi from a fragmented national landmark into a continuous and safe cycling route, integrating national and European funds (CYROS) into a unified completion strategy?</b></p>	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <p><b>Excellence recognized as a starting asset</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trabocchi Coast</li> <li>• Strategic Route</li> <li>• Landscape Value</li> </ul> <p><b>Design strategy consistent with CYROS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with the Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route</li> <li>• Integrated vision</li> <li>• Identification of critical sections.</li> </ul> <p><b>Availability of structured financing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Cycling Mobility Plan (PNMC)</li> <li>• Resources</li> </ul>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <p><b>Network fragmentation still critical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interrupted sections</li> <li>• Localized unsafety</li> <li>• Discontinuity of experience</li> </ul> <p><b>Interference with unresolved nature reserves</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project solutions still under negotiation</li> <li>• Risk of procedural blockage</li> </ul> <p><b>Persistence of critical driveways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incompatibility with cycle tourism</li> <li>• Non-compliance with European standards</li> </ul>





<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dual funding sources</li> </ul> <p><b>Integrated environmental awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue with conservation organizations</li> <li>• Environmental compatibility</li> <li>• Environmental education opportunities</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential territorial continuity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coast-inland connection</li> <li>• Regional replicability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of roadmap</li> </ul> <p><b>Coordination between national and European funds</b></p> <p><b>Fragmented complementary services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent signage</li> <li>• Lack of unified construction standards</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of integrating port infrastructure and sustainable cycle tourism in Abruzzo?</b></p>	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot projects in Pescara: bike parking initiatives at train stations and incentives for bike rentals.</li> <li>• Bike to Coast cycling corridor: potential connection between Vasto and Ancona, creating a continuous cycle/pedestrian backbone.</li> <li>• Port-station integration in Pescara: physical proximity between the train terminal and the port offers opportunities for an intermodal hub.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor port infrastructure: unsafe bicycle parking, lack of e-bike charging stations, insufficient information points.</li> <li>• Lack of services for cyclists: Abruzzo ports (Pescara, Ortona) lack repair points, shower facilities, or baggage storage.</li> <li>• Weak last-mile connections: port access not integrated with the cycling network; dangerous crossings on busy roads.</li> <li>• Non-standardized practices: each port independently manages bike carriages on ferries; lack of inter-port agreements.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the maritime passenger transport system and sustainable, multimodal mobility along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle path in Abruzzo?</b></p>	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CYROS backbone as a structural opportunity: a cross-border project creates a framework for standardizing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragmentation of the Abruzzo cycling network: cycle paths are not always safe, lack of uniform signage, infrastructure gaps between municipalities.</li> </ul>





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<p>fares, timetables, and bicycle regulations on an Adriatic scale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal connectivity in Abruzzo: the possibility of creating cycle/pedestrian loops connecting the coast (Giulianova, Pescara, Ortona, San Salvo-Vasto) to inland villages (Chieti, Teramo).</li> <li>• One Ticket SUMMA (Pescara): a replicable model for train-bus-bike fare integration at the regional level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor public transport connections: bus and train schedules are not synchronized with cycle/pedestrian routes; bike-friendly stops are absent.</li> <li>• Lack of a single digital platform: impossible to plan intermodal train-bus-bike-ferry trips on a single portal; information is fragmented among operators.</li> <li>• Insufficient tourism promotion: foreign cycling tourists are unaware of the existence of integrated services; marketing is absent or fragmented.</li> </ul>
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## 7. Further expectations

Based on feedback gathered during the roundtable and the online consultation process with Abruzzo stakeholders, the following forward-looking recommendations summarize the key priorities for strengthening the maritime passenger transport system and sustainable mobility along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route in Abruzzo. These recommendations reflect operational, infrastructural, governance, and cross-border aspects necessary to integrate maritime services with cycle tourism, creating a multimodal backbone connecting the Abruzzo coast (Pescara, Giulianova, Ortona, San Salvo-Vasto) to the Adriatic hinterland and ports of Croatia through the evolution of the CYROS project in the MoU phase. The proposals aim to complete the Abruzzo cycling network, improve bicycle accessibility in port areas, synchronize timetables between trains, buses, and maritime services, reduce seasonal imbalances, and promote consistent fare and infrastructure standards across borders. Where relevant, the recommendations indicate possible implementation paths, including institutional coordination mechanisms (Agency for Abruzzo Mobility), upgrades to pedestrian and cycle-port infrastructure, digital integration via a single MaaS platform, pilot testing replicating the One Ticket SUMMA model, and EU funding instruments (Interreg, Connecting Europe Facility). The table below organizes the recommendations according to the thematic areas addressed during the consultation, highlighting cross-cutting priorities





related to deseasonalization, financial sustainability, and international cycle tourism competitiveness.

### **Main challenges for integrated coastal-hinterland cycling mobility**

The main challenges that emerged from the discussion concern the construction of a cycling mobility system that transcends the isolated coastal route and is structured as an interconnected network between the coast, ports, valleys, and inland areas. Connecting Abruzzo's inland areas—areas at high risk of depopulation, often far from essential services—to the port system was identified not only as an economic opportunity, with a potential annual increase in financial flow from €510 million to €910 million, but also as a strategic choice for territorial and social cohesion. The deseasonalization of tourist flows through the development of thematic itineraries active throughout the year—nature, culture, food and wine, historical heritage—was identified as a priority objective for increasing the average visitor stay and the system's overall profitability. The proliferation of uncoordinated cycling projects on the same routes initiated by ports, in the absence of a regional planning framework, was identified as a concrete risk of wasting public resources and inconsistent tourist experiences.

### **Proposed Measures and Operational Proposals for Cross-Border Maritime Transport**

A coherent set of operational measures has been identified to transform Abruzzo from a fragmented destination to a key player in the Adriatic-Ionian corridor. These measures, encompassing physical infrastructure, digital services, regional governance, and cross-border integration, require a unified strategic vision expressed in a Regional Plan that coordinates resources, standards, and implementation timelines.

At the cross-border level, bilateral agreements between Italy and Croatia must be catalyzed on maritime bike carriage standards (minimum capacity, fares, procedures), port infrastructure (parking design, charging, services), and digital integration (common APIs for booking platforms). Without these agreements, dependence on Ancona (150 km to the north) remains structural, and direct routes between Abruzzo and Croatia will not take off. Furthermore, the launch of concrete pilot routes—e.g., Pescara-Rovinj with standardized bike carriages, integrated fares, and coordinated timetables—must be supported to test economic models and validate demand before scaling. These routes represent the proof-of-concept for the integrated Adriatic corridor.





All the measures described (cycle paths, services, fares, digital platform, thematic packages) remain fragmented and ineffective without a unified strategic vision.

N°	Key recommendations (and indication of possible ways to address them)
1	<p><b>Maritime passenger transport andmultimodality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standardize Abruzzo's maritime passenger transport system as an integrated intermodal infrastructure, eliminating the operational fragmentation that currently impedes integration with cycling tourism and sustainable mobility. CYROS must coordinate the signing of unified operating protocols among the four ports of Abruzzo (Giulianova, Pescara, Ortona, San Salvo-Vasto) that establish:</li> <li>Minimum bicycle capacity standards.</li> <li>Simplified embarkation/disembarkation procedures: standardized booking forms, guaranteed boarding times (e.g., 15 minutes), common safety procedures.</li> <li>Dedicated equipment: installation of specific bicycle racks on ships and catamarans; segregated spaces for bicycles and e-bikes; integrated charging stations.</li> <li>Seasonal continuity: maritime carriers (supported by public subsidies if necessary) must maintain at least 2-3 trips per week, even during the shoulder seasons (April-May, September-October).</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Integrated coastal transport and green cycling system</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mediation of bilateral negotiations between Abruzzo carriers and Jadrolinija (the main Croatian maritime operator) for:</li> <li>Signing agreements to extend standard bike carriages to direct Abruzzo-Croatia routes (e.g., Pescara-Rovinj, Ancona-Split).</li> <li>Definition of integrated bilateral fares: a cyclist can book a single Abruzzo-Croatia ticket including a bike carriage, without the complications of changing carriers.</li> <li>Alignment of safety and liability insurance procedures between IT and HR operators.</li> <li>Transforming Abruzzo ports from isolated logistics infrastructures into integrated sustainable mobility hubs, where cyclists can find comprehensive</li> </ul>





	services (parking, charging, repairs, information) and safe routes to coastal and inland cycle paths.
3	<p><b>CYROS Pilot actions and Adriatic maritime connections</b></p> <p>Cross-border operational standardization through concrete pilot projects testing bike-ferry integration models on an Adriatic scale, with a focus on replicability and scaling.</p> <p>Establishment of quarterly co-design roundtables bringing together:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal municipalities in Abruzzo.</li> <li>• Maritime operators.</li> <li>• Hoteliers, bicycle rental companies, tour operators.</li> <li>• Residents, cycle tourism associations.</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Cross-border perspectives</b></p> <p>Build stable cross-border governance between Italy and Croatia that standardizes infrastructure, services, and tariffs and promotes joint branding of the Adriatic-Ionian corridor as a single destination, eliminating dependence on Ancona and creating direct routes between Abruzzo and Croatia. Alternatively, build a system whereby Ancona becomes a port within a system of which Abruzzo is a part, hypothesizing a shared thematic management system along the Marche-Abruzzo axis.</p> <p><b>Permanent bilateral task force (Italy-Croatia) responsible for developing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unified standards for maritime bike carriages: minimum capacity, fares, boarding procedures, insurance liability.</li> <li>• Port infrastructure standards: bike parking design, charging, complementary services; common quality certification.</li> <li>• Digital interoperability protocols: timetable synchronization between IT-HR carriers; common APIs for booking platforms.</li> <li>• Cross-border safety regulations: accident prevention procedures, sea rescue, operator liability.</li> <li>• Launch of a cross-border collective brand positioning the Adriatic corridor as a unified destination.</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>Deseasonalisation and inland integration – cross-cutting</b></p> <p>Address extreme seasonality (June-August) as a structural obstacle to sustainable development by implementing multi-level deseasonalization strategies that attract</p>





	seasonal cycle tourists, distribute pressure on infrastructure, and generate year-round economic spending. Addressing Extreme Seasonality with Year-Round Services (2027-2030)
7	<p><b>Financial and operational sustainability – cross-cutting</b></p> <p>Build a multiannual and diversified financial architecture that ensures post-2027 sustainability, integrating EU funds (CYROS, CEF, PNRR), national financing (PNMC, ordinary), and private involvement through PPPs and co-investments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand analysis: survey of potential cycle tourists (Italy, EU); willingness to pay.</li> <li>• Cost analysis: ferry operating costs (fuel, crew, maintenance); bike carriage cost allocation.</li> <li>• Scenario analysis: break-even at different occupancy levels (40%, 60%, 80%).</li> <li>• Sensitivity: price variations, frequency, seasonality.</li> </ul>

## 8. Conclusions

The forward-looking recommendations reflect an integrated and realistic vision of the evolution of the Adriatic maritime transport system. The key to success lies in:

1. Concrete operational standardization (not just declarative) on bike carriages, fares, and infrastructure.
2. Stable cross-border governance that mediates between Italy and Croatia.
3. Limited and measurable pilot projects that test economic models before scaling.
4. Diversified financing that does not depend exclusively on expiring EU funds.
5. Involvement of the private sector as co-financier and manager.

If implemented with determination and adaptability, these recommendations can transform Adriatic maritime transport from a marginal infrastructure to a driver of development and integration, generating an economic impact on Abruzzo and positioning the IT-HR corridor as a European destination of excellence for integrated cycle tourism.





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## 9. Signature sheet, online form answers and press release

In accordance with the reporting requirements, the following documentation is provided as evidence of the stakeholder consultation process:

- A **scanned signature sheet** listing all participants who attended the consultation event;
- A **screenshot of the responses collected during the online consultation process**, demonstrating additional stakeholder engagement beyond the in-person session;
- A **photograph of the panel discussion participants**, documenting the stakeholder event (in-person format);
- A **link to the official press release**, confirming public communication and transparency of the consultation process.

These materials collectively confirm the implementation of the stakeholder consultation in line with the project communication and participation principles.





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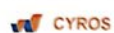


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Panel discussion participants, maritime passenger transport

<https://www.regione.abruzzo.it/notizie/progetto-cyros-nuovi-scenari-la-mobilita-integrata>



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## Summary of the conference at which the “maritime mobility round table” was launched

**“Ports at the core of an Adriatic–Ionian region: cooperation and competitiveness for a sustainable transition”**

Ancona, 27 February 2026

# SAVE THE DATE

**Ports at the core of a Adriatic-Ionian Region:  
cooperation and competitiveness towards the sustainable transition**

One-day event to deepen the themes of sustainable transition and financial viability of ports, including port operations, and to launch a constructive dialogue for a common path among stakeholders.

**09:30 - 01:00**  
am pm

For a more sustainable Adriatic Sea:  
collaboration between ports and concrete  
actions

**02:00 - 04:30**  
pm pm

Commercial ports as development hubs:  
between geopolitics, logistics, and the  
green transition

**Ancona, Italy, Friday**  
**27th February 2026**  
**09:00 – 04:30**  
am pm

Marconi room, towards the  
Central Adriatic Ports Authority

**REGISTER** at the following  
**LINK** or through the **QR Code**



<https://forms.office.com/e/14FfN9tdLP>



Figure 1 “save the date” flyer for the event (announced via news published on the page <https://www.regione.marche.it/Regione-Utile/Digitalizzazione/Progetti-nuovo-decennio-digitale/CYROS>)



Figure 2 presentation by the President of the Marche Region, Francesco Acquaroli

The conference took place on 27 February 2026 in Ancona, at the headquarters of the Central Adriatic Sea Port System Authority.

It was organised by the Marche Region within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic–Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and brought together:

- European, national and regional institutional representatives
- port authorities
- navy authorities
- local administrators
- maritime transport operators
- shipowners
- tourism representatives
- other local stakeholders

The conference represented an important opportunity for multi-level dialogue among institutions, port authorities, operators and local stakeholders.

The event included two sessions:

#### **Morning session – Environmental regulation and the ECA area**

Dedicated to the recognition of the Mediterranean Sea as an “Emission Control Area – ECA” and the implications for ports and shipowners (emissions reduction, fleet upgrades, sustainable fuels).

#### **Afternoon session – Ports as development hubs**

Focused on the role of ports in the new Mediterranean geopolitical and logistics scenario.

The full programme is available at:  
[https://www.regione.marche.it/portals/0/Agenda\\_Digitale/Progetti\\_Europei/Cyros/Programma%2027%20febbraio%20Ancona.pdf](https://www.regione.marche.it/portals/0/Agenda_Digitale/Progetti_Europei/Cyros/Programma%2027%20febbraio%20Ancona.pdf)

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## **1. Summary of the main speeches**

### **1.1 Giacomo Bugaro – Regional Councillor for ports and economic development**

The Councillor highlighted:

- the centrality of the sustainability–competitiveness pairing for economic growth;
- the historic importance of the Mediterranean’s entry into the Sulphur Emission Control Area (SECA), and the Port of Ancona’s early adoption of European obligations through the Ancona Blue Agreement and strengthened environmental controls;
- the importance of the Port of Ancona as a central node for sustainable mobility in the Adriatic–Ionian corridor and of the Region’s leadership in the Mediterranean thanks to the value of its geographic position and available infrastructure;
- ongoing investments to anticipate ECA regulations, including the 2024 Blue Agreement aimed at immediately reducing sulphur emissions;
- actions underway to improve urban air quality and establish Ancona as a low-emission port model integrated with the city;
- the vision of a resilient, innovative logistics system that is close to communities and serves the entire Macro-Region;
- the strategic role of active mobility (Adriatic–Ionian cycle route, inland itineraries, multimodal integration) as a driver of sustainable economic and tourism development, de-seasonalisation of flows, and enhancement of both coastal and inland areas;

- the need to integrate maritime, rail and cycling transport through advanced digital tools such as the CYROS app.

Taking advantage of the conference—which brought together stakeholders from the maritime, tourism and institutional sectors—the CYROS questionnaire <https://www.regione.marche.it/questionario-CYROS-roundtable> was launched, dedicated to maritime transport for passengers and cyclists, in order to:

- collect qualified input from shipowners, administrators, operators and associations;
- understand critical issues and opportunities of current services;
- propose initiatives to improve bike–ferry–land intermodality;
- identify governance models consistent with the objectives of promoting the Adriatic–Ionian Cycle Route.

### **1.2 Francesco Acquaroli – President of the Marche Region**

He emphasised the role of the Adriatic as a strategic space for competitiveness, logistics and development, and the urgency of infrastructure investments—particularly in the Port of Ancona—stating:

- the Region’s commitment to restoring the competitiveness of the Port of Ancona and relaunching the Adriatic’s centrality in the Mediterranean;
- continued focus on the Adriatic–Ionian Macro-Region, identified as a strategic lever for growth and development and based on collaboration among all institutional actors;
- the need for a major infrastructure redesign of the port, including significant structural investments such as the expansion of the peninsula;
- the intention to enhance the Port of Ancona as an economic engine—not only for freight traffic and passenger transport, but also to grow industry, employment and strengthen local manufacturing excellence.

### **1.3 Daniele Silvetti – Mayor of Ancona**

He drew attention to the port–city–citizens relationship, stressing:

- the long-standing, strongly felt need to integrate the port into the urban fabric as part of social life;
- the importance of accessible, sustainable services that are perceived as valuable by residents;
- the role of the port as a tourism gateway to the city, not only as a transit point.

### **1.4 Vincenzo Garofalo – President of the Central Adriatic Sea Port System Authority**

He described the active role of the port system in the Adriatic–Ionian Macro-Region, with Ancona at the centre of the Motorways of the Sea and TEN-T corridors, and the new investment initiatives currently underway:

- completion of quay electrification by June 2026 thanks to the NRRP (PNRR);
- development of the new Port Master Plan;
- growth opportunities in freight and passenger traffic;
- the need to pay attention to the balance between competitiveness and a structured environmental transition toward decarbonisation, and the criticalities of the ETS, which risks penalising maritime transport in favour of road transport.

### **1.5 Marco Ansaldo – Geopolitics expert, President of the Sea Museums of Genoa, and moderator of the conference**

He outlined a complex global geopolitical landscape:

- the opening of Arctic routes reducing the Mediterranean's economic centrality;
- the risk of marginalisation if investments are not made in efficient, fast and competitive services;
- the need to strengthen the role of Italian ports as industrial, energy and logistics hubs.

### **1.6 Giuseppe Spera – Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the International Maritime Organization (IMO)**

He addressed:

- a positive assessment of the establishment of the SECA area in the Mediterranean as a decisive step towards decarbonising the maritime sector;
- the prospect of a future NECA area to complete the environmental sustainability pathway;
- expected benefits for both the environment and the maritime industry;
- possible positive impacts on shipbuilding, with higher demand for environmentally friendly vessels.

### **1.7 Pier Paolo Settembri – Deputy Head of Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Transport**

He announced the European Commission's adoption of a European ports strategy and a maritime industry strategy, aimed at:

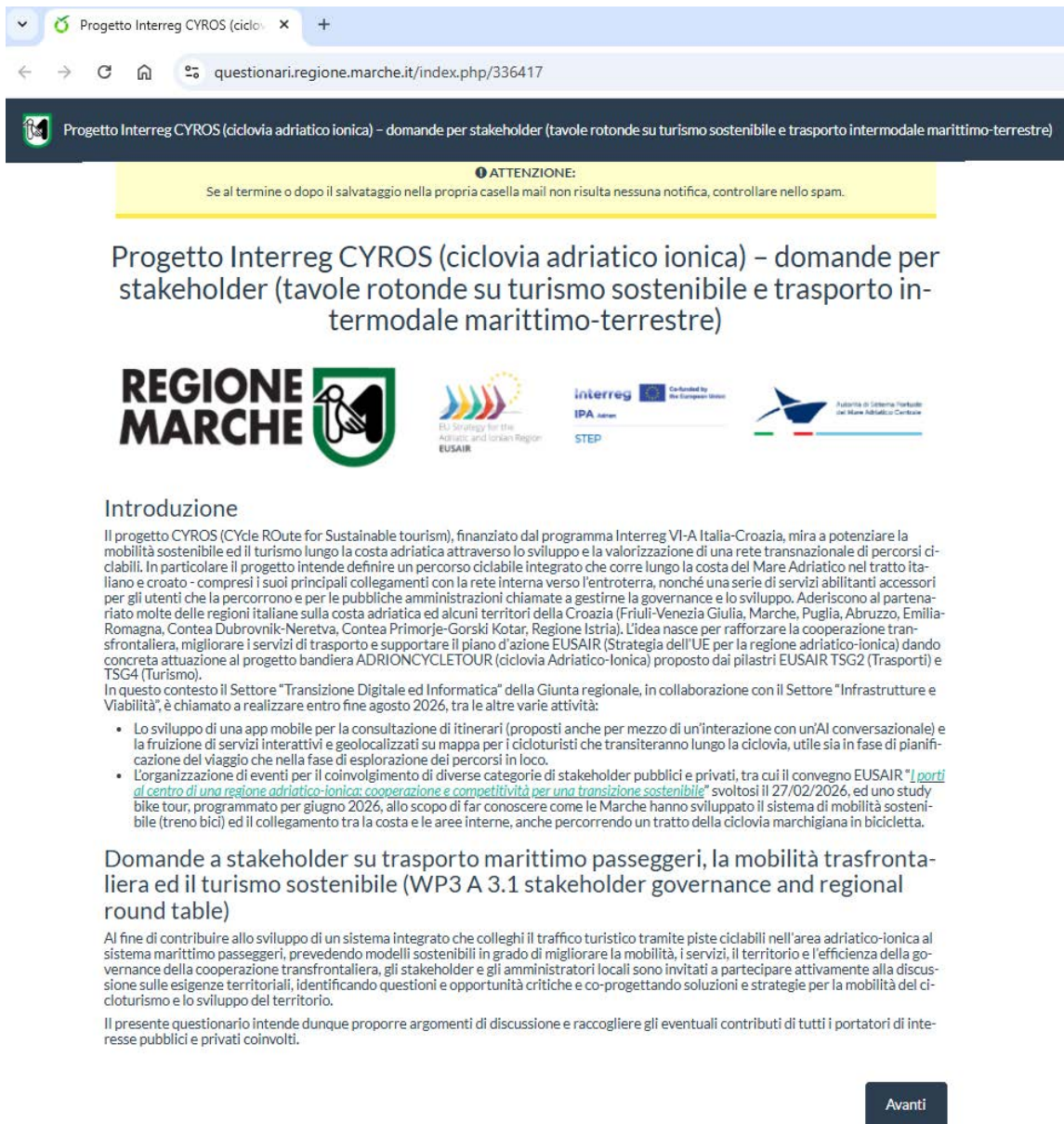
- recognising the role of ports in the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) as strategic entry points and strongholds of international trade;
- combining competitiveness, innovation, security and environmental sustainability.

### **1.8 Other institutional and technical contributions**

The conference also featured contributions from logistics and transport experts, EU officials, representatives of shipowners' associations and sector operators, who discussed:

- less polluting fleets and emissions reductions (ECA);
- more resilient logistics services;
- harmonisation of data and services internationally with the opposite shore of the Adriatic;
- support for tourism competitiveness;
- stable interregional working tables for coordinated governance and shared planning at Adriatic level;
- cooperation between the public and private sectors.





## Minutes of the Round Table D.3.1.2 – Maritime Passenger Transport



Progetto Interreg CYROS (ciclovia adriatico ionica) – domande per stakeholder (tavole rotonde su turismo sostenibile e trasporto intermodale marittimo-terrestre)

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### Progetto Interreg CYROS (ciclovia adriatico ionica) – domande per stakeholder (tavole rotonde su turismo sostenibile e trasporto intermodale marittimo-terrestre)

#### Introduzione

Il progetto CYROS (CYcle Route for Sustainable tourism), finanziato dal programma Interreg VI-A Italia-Croazia, mira a potenziare la mobilità sostenibile ed il turismo lungo la costa adriatica attraverso lo sviluppo e la valorizzazione di una rete transnazionale di percorsi ciclabili. In particolare il progetto intende definire un percorso ciclabile integrato che corre lungo la costa del Mare Adriatico nel tratto italiano e croato - compresi i suoi principali collegamenti con la rete interna verso l'entroterra, nonché una serie di servizi abilitanti accessori per gli utenti che la percorrono e per le pubbliche amministrazioni chiamate a gestirne la governance e lo sviluppo. Aderiscono al partenariato molte delle regioni italiane sulla costa adriatica ed alcuni territori della Croazia (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Marche, Puglia, Abruzzo, Emilia-Romagna, Contea Dubrovnik-Neretva, Contea Primorje-Gorski Kotar, Regione Istria). L'idea nasce per rafforzare la cooperazione transfrontaliera, migliorare i servizi di trasporto e supportare il piano d'azione EUSAIR (Strategia dell'UE per la regione adriatico-ionica) dando concreta attuazione al progetto bandiera ADRIONCYCLETOUR (ciclovia Adriatico-Ionica) proposto dai pilastri EUSAIR TSG2 (Trasporti) e TSG4 (Turismo).

In questo contesto il Settore "Transizione Digitale ed Informatica" della Giunta regionale, in collaborazione con il Settore "Infrastrutture e Viabilità", è chiamato a realizzare entro fine agosto 2026, tra le altre varie attività:

- Lo sviluppo di una app mobile per la consultazione di itinerari (proposti anche per mezzo di un'interazione con un'AI conversazionale) e la fruizione di servizi interattivi e geolocalizzati su mappa per i cicloturisti che transiteranno lungo la ciclovia, utile sia in fase di pianificazione del viaggio che nella fase di esplorazione dei percorsi in loco.
- L'organizzazione di eventi per il coinvolgimento di diverse categorie di stakeholder pubblici e privati, tra cui il convegno EUSAIR "[I porti al centro di una regione adriatico-ionica: cooperazione e competitività per una transizione sostenibile](#)" svoltosi il 27/02/2026, ed uno study bike tour, programmato per giugno 2026, allo scopo di far conoscere come le Marche hanno sviluppato il sistema di mobilità sostenibile (treno bici) ed il collegamento tra la costa e le aree interne, anche percorrendo un tratto della ciclovia marchigiana in bicicletta.

#### Domande a stakeholder su trasporto marittimo passeggeri, la mobilità transfrontaliera ed il turismo sostenibile (WP3 A 3.1 stakeholder governance and regional round table)

Al fine di contribuire allo sviluppo di un sistema integrato che colleghi il traffico turistico tramite piste ciclabili nell'area adriatico-ionica al sistema marittimo passeggeri, prevedendo modelli sostenibili in grado di migliorare la mobilità, i servizi, il territorio e l'efficienza della governance della cooperazione transfrontaliera, gli stakeholder e gli amministratori locali sono invitati a partecipare attivamente alla discussione sulle esigenze territoriali, identificando questioni e opportunità critiche e co-progettando soluzioni e strategie per la mobilità del cicloturismo e lo sviluppo del territorio.

Il presente questionario intende dunque proporre argomenti di discussione e raccogliere gli eventuali contributi di tutti i portatori di interesse pubblici e privati coinvolti.

Avanti

Figure 3 the stakeholder questionnaire on maritime mobility for cycle tourists

The round table, held within the Interreg Italy–Croatia CYROS project, involved 10 local stakeholders (who are intended to remain anonymous, in compliance with the privacy notice published with the

questionnaire accessible from the web pages <https://www.regione.marche.it/questionario-CYROS-roundtable> or <https://questionari.regione.marche.it/index.php/336417>).

The discussion took place through completion of a questionnaire and addressed strategic issues for passenger maritime transport, integration with cycle tourism, and the development of sustainable services in the Marche area. Participants included residents of the Marche Region; officials and managers of the Marche Region administration; employees and mayors of municipalities and other local authorities in the Marche Region; and private representatives from the tourism and mobility sectors. As of today, the results received so far have been processed; however, it should be noted that additional contributions are still being submitted and could be incorporated into an updated version of these minutes.

Below is a summary of the main topics that emerged. In any case, these refer not to observations directly attributable to the Marche Region, but rather to opinions, voluntary contributions and personal experiences of the participants (albeit interesting and worthy of attention within the results of the CYROS Project and further regional political, strategic and programming initiatives):

### **1) Current status of maritime services for passenger and bicycle transport (Italy–Croatia)**

The current state of regional maritime services for passenger transport—at least as regards the Port of Ancona—shows well-established service offerings but also room for improvement, especially in terms of integration between the port system and regional mobility for travellers carrying bicycles. There is significant traffic of vehicles and people through the Port of Ancona, but the Marche Region and Ancona are seen almost exclusively as a place to embark—and disembark—seaside tourism passengers, rather than as a destination for cycle tourists. The many tourism opportunities offered by our region are not usually fully exploited. Several international ferries depart from the Port of Ancona (especially to Greece and Croatia), and almost all companies allow bicycles as a “light vehicle” or accessory luggage: in this regard, the bicycle is typically booked as an additional vehicle or as sports equipment (free of charge on some routes, or at a cost of about €10–€20). For example, the companies departing from Ancona (Superfast Ferries, ANEK Lines, Grimaldi Lines and Jadrolinija) allow bicycle transport. Passenger maritime services in the Marche Region mainly revolve around the Port of Ancona, which remains the region’s main reference point. The other ports in the Marche Region are less involved in passenger transport and still operate in a rather fragmented way, mainly as hubs for leisure boating (sailing or motor boats). Despite regional coordination—and beyond the established routes between different shores and countries—there is still no truly stable network of maritime connections along the Marche coast, and integration with public or private land transport should be improved and strengthened. For this reason, it would be useful to work towards better governance and a more coordinated system, managed with careful attention to the needs of individual ports and territories.

### **2) Proposals to improve services for cycle tourists embarking, and sea–land intermodality**

Passenger maritime transport, in itself, remains a reliable and available service, but intermodality needs to be redesigned and built.

It would certainly be useful to establish a dedicated public transport service to connect inland areas with the Port of Ancona.

To make a cycle tourist's journey on arrival more efficient, comfortable and attractive, it would be useful to provide specialised services aimed at them, including on board maritime transport vessels (bike shop with accessories and sportswear; workshop with tools for bicycle repairs; the possibility to bring one's bike into the cabin; massage packages and wellness centre; etc.). In addition to offering useful information to tourists and cycle tourists already on ferries and vessels docking in Ancona, work should be done to equip—or make available—along the routes and nearby land legs:

- Dedicated areas and essential services, such as priority ferry access for bicycles
- Priority boarding lanes for cycle tourists
- Secure, covered bike racks in the port area
- E-bike charging points
- Light self-service repair stations (pump, basic tools)
- Temporary luggage storage
- Simplified accessibility
- Signposted cycle routes from the city centre to the port
- Unified CYROS signage in terminals
- Removal of architectural barriers for those travelling with a loaded bike
- Priority access for cycle tourists during boarding

Ferries equipped to carry bicycles should be increased, with guaranteed spaces and facilitated loading and unloading. Timetables should be coordinated between arrivals and departures to/from ports and land transport, so that trains and buses can accommodate cycle tourists more easily. It is also important to clearly signpost the cycle routes connected to ports and provide updated maps or digital information tools (apps, websites, dedicated social channels). Bike + sea tourism packages could be created, promoting loop itineraries along the coast. Lastly, a single digital platform for timetables, bookings and bicycle information would make everything simpler and more accessible.

### **3) Transport and tourism services – current situation, opportunities, trends and new ideas**

Coordination among all local public administrations affected—also potentially—by the cycle-tourism phenomenon should be activated in order to raise funds and develop the infrastructure needed to attract this kind of tourism, which is significant and currently growing.

Slow tourism is based on foundational elements that are almost always present together (and should be considered when building attractive public-private tourism ecosystems), such as:

- Travel on foot, by bicycle, by train: choosing less impactful means of transport.
- Environmental responsibility.
- Interest in certified “green” accommodation facilities.

- Reduced environmental impact.
- Outdoor activities.
- Nature and landscape as central elements.
- Connection with landscape and community.
- Search for authenticity.
- Tailor-made experiences.
- Local contexts, communities and traditions.
- Short supply chains, local products and territorial identity.
- Less crowded destinations.
- Longer stays, thanks to slower travel speeds and lower costs for land transport.
- Wellbeing and quality time.
- Slow pace.
- Simple digital bookings.

In fact, the tourism market is seeking authentic and sustainable experiences. Slow cycle tourism makes it possible to discover villages, landscapes and local traditions, enhancing the territory without overloading it. Tourists require accessible services, safe infrastructure and efficient connections that make it easy to travel without a car. Interest is also growing in thematic routes, cultural and food-and-wine packages, as well as digital solutions to plan trips. In this context, the Marche Region has great potential: its coast, hills and villages lend themselves to slow, sustainable and integrated tourism, capable of attracting conscious visitors who respect the environment.

Following the COVID experience, a new strong demand seems to have emerged for slow and sustainable tourism, with great interest and participation, for example, in walking trails and cycle paths. The number of magazines, books, and radio, TV or media features is also very high.

The concept of slow and sustainable tourism along routes should be applied by expanding and promoting inland itineraries, or those connecting inland areas to the sea, avoiding concentrating economic efforts exclusively on cycle paths along the coast.

#### **4) Role of public administrations and governance of maritime transport and environmental protection**

Local authorities play a key role in defining an organised governance framework for public-private contributions in this field: by working on regulation or incentives they can, for example, help finance investments in low-emission ferries, ensure guaranteed bicycle spaces on board, simplify loading and unloading procedures, etc.

It is also important to coordinate timetables and maritime connections with trains and buses, creating an integrated system for those travelling by bicycle at sea and on land. National and local authorities can promote sustainable infrastructure in ports—such as secure bike racks and rest areas—and collaborate

with private operators to expand the range of innovative services. Lastly, information campaigns and service digitalisation encourage and help cycle tourists plan greener and more convenient trips along the Adriatic coasts.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

The contributions that emerged from the round table highlighted strong alignment among stakeholders in recognising: the strategic role of the Port of Ancona in the Marche Region and for the entire Adriatic area; the need to integrate maritime services with cycle tourism; and the urgency of steering the development of infrastructure and coordinated governance.

In summary, there is convergence towards proposals to:

- Strengthen bike–train–ferry intermodality, with integrated information and safe routes.
- Standardise services for cycle tourists in ports, expanding dedicated spaces and facilitating bicycle boarding.
- Integrate regional digital platforms into a single information ecosystem (CYROS digital solutions, the Marche Outdoor portal, Digital Hub Marche, and the Distributed Digital Village project).
- Establish a permanent technical working group among the Marche Region, municipalities, the Port Authority and private operators.
- Support environmental commitments through investments in low-emission fleets and green port infrastructure.

Ancona, 12/03/2026

### **Minutes drafted by:**

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**Interreg**



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# INTERREG ITALY-CROATIA Programme 2021-2027

D.3.1.2.  
Round tables on  
Maritime Passenger Transport

**Interreg**



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## CYROS

Implementation, in the Programme area, of the EUSAIR flagship and crosspillar project idea Adriatic Ionian CYcle ROute for Sustainable tourism

<b>WP number</b>	<b>WP3</b>
<b>Activity number</b>	<b>Activity 3.1</b>
<b>Deliverable number</b>	<b>D.3.1.2. Round tables on maritime passenger transport</b>
<b>PP in charge</b>	<b>PP5-ITL</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>3/2026</b>
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>PP contributors</b>	<b>PP5-ITL</b>





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## 1. Overview

This deliverable summarises the key contributions collected from the key stakeholders during the Cyros WP3 round tables. One round table is held in each project’s partner region/county.

## 2. Involved stakeholders

During the scheduled round tables, the general objective of the CYROS project will be illustrated, which consists in the development of an integrated system that connects tourist traffic via cycle paths within the Adriatic-Ionian area to the maritime passenger system. The CYROS project, which invites consideration of the cross-border program as a widespread port system, envisages highly sustainable models capable of improving mobility, services, the territory, and the efficiency of cross-border cooperation governance. Local stakeholders will be asked to actively participate by contributing to the discussion on territorial needs, identifying critical issues and opportunities, and co-designing solutions and strategies for cycle tourism mobility based on new models that will be developed over the coming months.

**Date(s) of the consultation and place:** 16/01/2026. The meeting was conducted online.

In the following box, all the stakeholders involved in the consultation round should be listed. Ideally, the relevant stakeholders, at least one regional and one cross-border stakeholder, should be invited.

Name and Surname	Institution	Role in the institution	Territorial level
Paolo Gorini	Gomo Viaggi di Goro Tours srl	Owner of the Company	Cross-border
Tommaso Simeoni	Emilia-Romagna Region	Transport planning department	Regional
Denis Grasso	ITL Foundation	Project Manager	Regional
Giacomo Nonino	ITL Foundation	Transport Engineer	Regional

## 3. Input information provided to the stakeholders

### 3.1. General presentation

The maritime passenger link between the Emilia-Romagna Region and Croatia remains a niche but important seasonal corridor, primarily catering to summer tourism. Unlike the year-round, large-scale



ferry operations found in Ancona or Bari, the connections from Emilia-Romagna are characterised by high-speed catamarans and passenger-only services.

According to the latest Adriatic Sea Tourism Report by Risposte Turismo, the Adriatic maritime tourism sector is experiencing a steady recovery and growth. For 2025 and 2026, passenger movements (including ferries, hydrofoils, and catamarans) across the Adriatic are projected to exceed 21 million, maintaining a growth trend of approximately 2% annually. While the "big players" like Jadrolinija and SNAV dominate the central and southern Adriatic, the northern sector (Venice, Trieste, and Cesenatico) remains the primary gateway for fast-craft tourism to Istria and the Kvarner islands.

Currently, Gomo Viaggi stands as the sole specialised operator providing direct maritime passenger services departing from the Emilia-Romagna coast, specifically through the Port of Cesenatico. They connect Cesenatico to key Croatian destinations, including Rovinj, Mali Lošinj, Rab, and Novalja. Based on the information available online, GomoViaggi operates the high-speed catamaran Nautilus.

While companies like Liberty Lines or Kompas (Venezia Lines) operate in the Northern Adriatic, they focus on departures from Trieste and Venice, respectively. There are currently no other active passenger lines operating out of Ravenna or Rimini for the 2026 season, leaving Gomo Viaggi as the only operators for departures originating strictly within the Emilia-Romagna regional borders.

## 3.2 Thematic presentation

The presentation delivered to local stakeholders by PP5-ITL provided a comprehensive "As-is" analysis of the maritime passenger sector in the Emilia-Romagna region, with a specific focus on the cross-border connections to Croatia. The thematic information was structured into four key pillars:

### 1) Analysis of the mixed port system connected to maritime passenger transport

The presentation highlighted that the maritime link between Emilia-Romagna and Croatia is a specialized, seasonal niche. Unlike the large-scale ferry hubs of Ancona or Bari, the regional system relies on high-speed catamarans (specifically the Nautilus operated by GomoViaggi) operating primarily out of the Port of Cesenatico by GomoViaggi. Quantitative data from the Adriatic Sea Tourism Report (Risposte Turismo) was shared, showing a projected growth of 2% annually in Adriatic passenger movements, surpassing 21 million total passengers for the 2025-2026 period. Locally, data confirmed that GomoViaggi serves as the sole operator in the Region.

### 2) Cross-border Italy-Croatia cycle tourism: The Adriatic connections for cycle tourists

The cross-border cycle tourism market between Italy and Croatia is currently experiencing a transformative phase, driven by the increasing popularity of the EuroVelo 8 (Mediterranean Route) and



the Adriatic Cycleway. Online data and sector reports indicate that cycle tourism in the Adriatic area is no longer a niche but a strategic pillar for sustainable economic growth, with a high average spending potential per tourist compared to traditional sun-and-sand visitors. The maritime "bridge" between the two shores serves as a critical link for travelers seeking to combine the coastal landscapes of the Italian Adriatic with the diverse topography of the Istrian peninsula and the Kvarner islands. However, the current connection landscape remains predominantly seasonal and focused on high-speed passenger transport rather than specialized cycling logistics.

### **3) Governance schemes for better local/regional cooperation on sustainable mobility**

Improving governance for sustainable cycle tourism in the Adriatic area requires a transition from isolated private efforts to structured public-private partnerships across the Adriatic. Current maritime connections lack institutional coordination, leaving commercial operators to manage cross-border logistics and business risks independently. To address this, a Permanent Interregional Table involving Italian Regions and Croatian Counties is essential to harmonize transport schedules with the needs of cycle tourists. This is one of the ambitious goals of the CYROS project. By bridging the gap between public policy and private operations, a unified governance scheme creates a more resilient and efficient cross-border tourism ecosystem.

### **4) Cross-border prospects for integrated port services and greater efficiency**

Finally, the general introductory presentation looked toward 2026 and beyond, focusing on deseasonalization (returning to the May–September window) and multimodal efficiency. The CYROS pilot action's role was presented as a catalyst for integrating "last-mile" services, such as secure bike storage at the maritime station. The goal is to transition the port of Cesenatico from a simple transit point to a multimodal hub capable of supporting the "green" tourism objectives of the Italy-Croatia Programme.

## **4. Conceptual foreword for feedback from the key stakeholders**

In this paragraph, the stakeholders' key feedbacks from the Emilia-Romagna case study are reported. The different feedback are divided into strengths and weaknesses for each topic of the consultation. The strengths refer to the aspects that stakeholders appreciated and found valuable for each topic of the consultation. The weaknesses regard the aspects that have raised concerns or critics among the stakeholders.

### **1. Maritime passenger transport system and sustainable mobility and multimodality along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route**





The goal of this section is to collect information on the maritime passenger transport system and sustainable mobility and multimodality along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route section in the Emilia-Romagna Region.

<p><b>1. <u>Maritime passenger transport system and sustainable mobility and multimodality along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route (GomoViaggi answers).</u></b></p>	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant and proven market demand for Emilia-Romagna to Croatia sea connections: <b>24,000 tickets</b> issued in only two months of activity in 2025 by GomoViaggi.</li> <li>• High efficiency in vessel utilization with an average load of <b>300 passengers per trip</b> (nearly 80% of the 370-person maximum capacity)</li> <li>• Long-standing operational experience of GomoViaggi (<b>23 years</b>) and a successful recovery to pre-COVID (2019) passenger volumes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Shortened operational season</b> (currently 2 months) compared to the pre-COVID May–September window.</li> <li>• <b>Technical limitations for cyclists:</b> a maximum of <b>30 bikes</b> can be carried, stored uncovered at the ferry stern.</li> <li>• The <b>multimodal shuttle bus</b> service between Cesenatico and Pesaro is currently unable to transport bicycles.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What are the main challenges in terms of integrated mobility that currently affect cycle tourism and maritime transport in your region?</b></p>	
<p>The primary challenge is the lack of "bike-friendly" infrastructure in the multimodal chain. While the ship can carry a limited number of bikes, the land-based connection (shuttle bus) used to consolidate departures from different ports creates a bottleneck for cyclists who cannot bring their equipment along the entire route. Additionally, the high risk of the business is borne entirely by the private operator without public safety nets.</p>	
<p><b>What are port multimodalities and the main experiences of integration with local/regional practices currently underway?</b></p>	
<p>Based on GomoViaggi commercial offer, current multimodality consists of a <b>bus + ship</b> combination. For certain routes (e.g., Lošinj), passengers are transported by bus from Cesenatico to Pesaro for embarkation. On the Croatian side, interest from local authorities in Mali Lošinj suggests a potential for future integration with local bike rental and cycling paths.</p> <p>From a more general point of view, at the national and regional levels, remain many problems in promoting multi-modality, mainly related to the limitations defined by the National rules on charging a bike in a public bus. At the moment, there are very few buses equipped for bike transport.</p>	



## 2. Integrated transport system and related services along the coast, in relation to the green cycling system in port areas

The goal of this section is to collect information on integrated transport system and related services along the Emilia-Romagna coast, in relation to the green cycling system in port areas.

<b>2. Integrated transport system and related services along the coast, in relation to the green cycling system</b>	
<b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>maritime station in Cesenatico</b> is deemed adequate for current fast-craft passenger services and has benefited from past EU-funded improvements.</li> <li>• Proximity of the ports to established coastal cycling routes in the Romagna and Marche regions.</li> </ul>	<b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete absence of integrated "Bike &amp; Boat" tourist packages.</li> <li>• Lack of secure, weather-protected storage for bicycles at both departure and arrival points.</li> </ul>
<b>In the port area, what measures could encourage tourists to use bicycles, e-bikes, or walking routes instead of cars?</b>	
<p>Key measures identified include the installation of secure, enclosed bike lockers at departure points to allow tourists to leave their bikes safely. Furthermore, establishing bike rental services directly within the arrival ports would encourage "fly-and-ride" (or sail-and-ride) tourism without the logistical burden of transporting personal bikes on the catamaran.</p>	
<b>How can cycle paths be better connected to port areas?</b>	
<p>By designing specific one-day cross-border itineraries. A proposed model involves cycling through the Romagna/Marche territory to the port, boarding the fast craft, touring the Croatian islands (like Lošinj) by bike, and returning the same evening. This requires better signage and dedicated "cycle-lane corridors" leading directly to the boarding ramps.</p>	

## 3. Cyros Pilot Actions and Adriatic maritime connections

The goal of this section is to collect information for the improvement of the Cyros pilot actions in terms of Adriatic maritime connections.





**3. CYROS Pilot Action and Adriatic maritime connections**

<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive marketing initiatives: Gomo Viaggi will have a dedicated stand at the Cycle Tourism Fair in Padua (March 2026) to promote cross-border maritime links to the cycling community.</li> <li>• Synergy with Croatian local authorities who have expressed specific interest in sustainable mobility projects.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The operator currently receives <b>no public funding</b> (national or regional), limiting the ability to invest in more advanced green ship technology or bike-specific infrastructure.</li> </ul>
<p><b>According to the stakeholders, can the proposed Cyros pilot action properly address the challenges of better bike solutions in the Adriatic port areas?</b></p>	
<p>Yes, provided it focuses on the "last mile" and "waiting area" infrastructure. Stakeholders believe the pilot action should advocate for the transition of these maritime links from purely commercial tourism to "services of public interest," which would allow for more consistent funding and better integration with regional cycle routes.</p>	
<p><b>Is any pilot action adjustment needed?</b></p>	
<p>The pilot action should specifically address the multimodal bus-link gap. Adjusting the pilot to include the testing of bike-trailers for shuttle buses would solve the current inability to move cyclists between Cesenatico and Pesaro.</p>	

**4. Governance schemes for a better local/regional cooperation on integrated mobility for maritime passenger transport**

The goal of this section is to gather information on stakeholders' experiences in managing and governing better solutions at the local and regional levels.

<p><b>4. Governance schemes for improved local/regional cooperation on integrated mobility for maritime passenger transport</b></p>	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficient private-sector coordination: A functional "three-pillar" model is in place involving the <b>ship owner</b> (Righetti Navi), the <b>charterer</b> (Gomo Viaggi), and the <b>Harbor Master</b> for safety certifications.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total lack of involvement from regional and municipal public bodies in the operational governance of these lines.</li> </ul>





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional "disinterest" in creating cross-border tourism solutions that bridge Italy and Croatia.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Based on the experience of the stakeholders, what are the main governance challenges that have to be addressed in terms of improving bike accessibility to the port passenger areas?</b></p>	
<p>The main challenge is the administrative gap between the two shores. Currently, an operator must use a Croatian Maritime Agent to petition the Croatian Ministry for lines, with no regional coordination to streamline this process or align it with sustainable transport goals.</p>	
<p><b>Main governance challenges experienced by the stakeholders:</b></p>	
<p>The absence of a Permanent Interregional Table that includes private operators. Without this, maritime transport remains a private risk rather than a coordinated public-private strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian corridor.</p>	

GomoViaggi governance structure. It involves a tripartite scheme: the ship owner (Righetti Navi), the charterer (GomoViaggi), and the Harbor Master for safety certifications, with Croatian maritime agents handling cross-border authorisations. Stakeholders were alerted to the complete absence of public financial or strategic intervention from Regional or Municipal authorities, emphasizing the need for a shift toward "Services of Public Interest" to ensure the sustainability of these routes.

**5. Cross-border perspectives to increase the efficiency of the maritime passenger transport system for better cross-border cycle tourism services.**

The aim of this section is to collect data and experiences on potential cross-border cooperation programs (if any). The focus is primarily on comparison with experiences from other European regions.

<p><b>5. Cross-border perspectives to increase the efficiency of the maritime passenger transport system for better cross-border cycle tourism services.</b></p>	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of specialized fast-passenger operators (Gomo Viaggi, SNAV, Liberty Lines) that maintain the cross-border link despite market volatility.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very few players in the market, leading to limited choice and redundancy for passengers.</li> </ul>





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many ferry services are activated only during the summer period.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What could be the immediate and medium-term solutions, both infrastructural and organizational, to resolve the problem of integration of the cycle tourism with the port systems, and address the deseasonalization through integration with inland areas?</b></p>	
<p>Immediate: Public subsidies to extend the sailing season back to the May–September period, targeting "shoulder season" cycle tourists.                  Medium-term: Upgrading the fleet or retrofitting existing vessels to increase bike capacity and provide better protection for the embarked bikes</p>	
<p><b>Which are the existing cross-border key experiences in terms of cycle mobility/ cycle tourism promotion in Italy and Croatia (If any)?</b></p>	
<p>Current experiences are limited to individual commercial efforts, such as Gomo Viaggi’s participation in the Fiera del Cicloturismo to promote the Adriatic as a single, bikeable destination.</p>	

## 5. Future-oriented recommendations

Based on the feedback described above, summarize the key recommendations given by the stakeholders during the consultation.

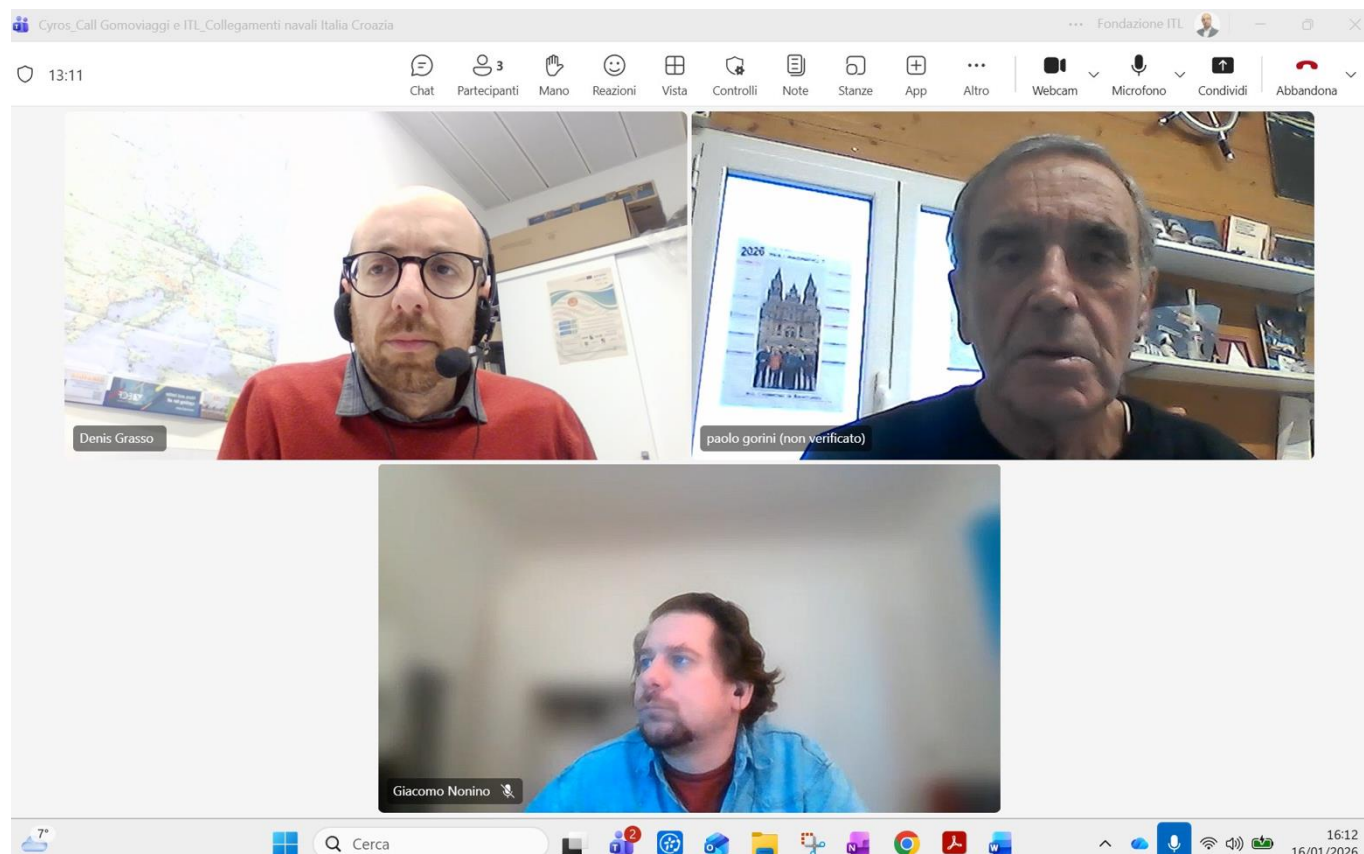
N°	Key recommendations (and indication of possible ways to address them)
1	<p><b>Public Recognition &amp; Incentives:</b> Recognise cross-border maritime operators as providers of "public interest services." This could be addressed by providing regional grants to offset the high business risk of seasonal lines.</p>
2	<p><b>Multimodal Hardware Upgrades:</b> Upgrade shuttle bus services to include bike-carrying trailers and install secure, weather-proof bike lockers in the Port of Cesenatico.</p>
3	<p><b>Integrated Tourism Product Development:</b> Local tourism boards should work with operators to create and market "Cross-Border Bike Packages" (one-day or multi-day) to reduce the current lack of integrated offers.</p>
4	<p><b>Cross-Border Governance Table:</b> Establish a formal memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Emilia-Romagna Region and the Istria/Primorje-Gorski Kotar counties to coordinate ferry schedules with regional cycling events.</p>





## 6. Signature sheet and consultation pictures

Provide below a scanned version of the signature sheet listing all the participants of the stakeholder consultation. Additionally, provide some pictures showing the event of the stakeholder consultation.



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2027

# INTERREG ITALY-CROATIA PROGRAMME 2021–

D.3.1.2.  
Round tables on  
maritime passenger transport



## CYROS

Implementation, in the Programme area, of the EUSAIR flagship and crosspillar project idea Adriatic Ionian CYcle ROute for Sustainable tourism

<b>WP number</b>	<b>WP3</b>
<b>Activity number</b>	<b>Activity 3.1</b>
<b>Deliverable number</b>	<b>D.3.1.2. Round tables on maritime passenger transport</b>
<b>PP in charge</b>	<b>PP3-Abruzzo Region</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>12/2025</b>
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>PP contributors</b>	<b>PP6</b>



## 1. Overview

On 17.12.25. a round table entitled "Intermodality of maritime transport in the Dubrovnik-Neretva County" was held as part of the implementation of the CYROS Project.

## 2. Involved stakeholders

**Date(s) of the consultation (day/month/year) and place: 17.12.2025. online**

On 17.12.25. a round table entitled "Intermodality of maritime transport in the Dubrovnik-Neretva County" was held as part of the implementation of the CYROS Project. During the meeting, the possibilities of improving the intermodality of transport systems were discussed, with special emphasis on better connecting different forms of transport and on safer and more efficient ways of transporting cyclists, including their integration into public and maritime transport.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the tourist boards, Ruđer Bošković Airport, the Dubrovnik Port Authority, the Libertas Dubrovnik company (public city transport) and representatives of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County.

As part of the round table, project dissemination was also carried out. On this occasion, Ruđer Bošković Airport presented the CROSSCONNECT project, while the Dubrovnik-Neretva County presented the CYROS project, with an emphasis on the goals, previous activities and possibilities for further cooperation between relevant stakeholders.

Name and Surname	Institution	Role in the institution	Territorial level
Ivo Mujo	Dubrovnik neretva county		Regional
Ivna Šuljak	Dubrovnik neretva county		Regional
Dora Pavlović	Dubrovnik neretva county		Regional
Matea Mihatović	Dubrovnik neretva county		Regional
Zoran Čosić	External Expertise		Local
Milijana Borojević	Tourist board Korčula		Local
Tomislav Macan	Dubrovnik Airport		Local
Kristina Laptalo	Port Dubrovnik		Local





Andrea Anelić	Tourist board Mljet		Local
Hrvoje Spremić	Dubrovnik Airport		Local
Magdalena Medar Ujdur	Tourist board Metković		Local
Sanja Milić	Port Dubrovnik		Local
Antonio Mitrović	Libertas		Local
Hana Turudić	Tourist Board Korčula		Local

### 3. Input information provided to the stakeholders

#### 3.1. General presentation

The CYROS project was submitted and approved under the first call for Standard Projects within the INTERREG VI-A Italy–Croatia Cross-border Cooperation Programme for the 2021–2027 programming period, under Specific Objective 3.1: Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate-resilient, intelligent, and intermodal mobility at national, regional, and local levels, including improved access to the TEN-T network and cross-border mobility.

The main objective of CYROS is to develop joint cross-border cycling routes and integrate them with intermodal transport, while addressing common challenges in maritime mobility through strategic coordination. The project supports the green transition by promoting sustainability and multimodality across local, regional, and cross-border levels. One of the key outputs will be the mapping of the Adriatic-Ionian cycling route along the Adriatic coast in Italy and Croatia, including inland connections. CYROS aims to promote sustainable mobility and tourism, and to enhance cross-border and maritime mobility solutions.

### 4. Conceptual foreword for feedback from the key stakeholders

#### 1. Maritime passenger transport system and sustainable mobility and multimodality along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route

Intermodality / possibilities for connecting islands with an emphasis on cycling



Intermodal connecting islands, with a special emphasis on cycling, represents one of the key challenges, but also development potentials of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County. According to information collected from the field, it was determined that most means of transport (ships, catamarans, etc.) do not have fixed and standardized racks for transporting bicycles. Such a lack of infrastructure makes organized and safe bicycle transport difficult, especially during periods of increased tourist traffic.

Although most carriers generally have no problem with transporting bicycles, practice shows that an additional ticket is required for bicycles, which represents an additional financial and organizational burden for users. This puts cycling, as a sustainable and environmentally friendly form of mobility, at a disadvantage compared to other forms of transport.

Despite several attempts, we were unable to get in touch with an authorized person at Jadrolinija to join a joint meeting and discussion on this topic. According to information received from partners from CYROS, who have already made contact with representatives of Jadrolinija, in the near future there is a possibility of introducing and installing fixed bicycle racks on the vessels of this company. Such a step forward would represent an important positive example and it is expected and hoped that other, especially smaller, line and excursion carriers will follow suit.

The above issue is of exceptional importance for the Dubrovnik-Neretva County, since it is precisely the islands that have a developed and attractive network of bicycle paths, which are a significant tourist resource, but also an important element of local population mobility.

Given that the largest number of visitors to the county arrive by air, air transport of bicycles also represents a special obstacle. Airport representatives informed us that bicycles cannot be part of standard luggage and the passenger is forced to disassemble the bicycle and pack it additionally. According to them, similar restrictions are present at other airports, but due to the relatively small number of inquiries and requests, there is currently no commercially or operationally justified solution.

An additional challenge is the transportation of batteries for electric bicycles and electric scooters. In air transport, batteries must be stored in checked (bottom) luggage, while sea transport generally has a complete ban on the transportation of batteries, which further complicates the use of electric forms of micromobility and creates uneven conditions between different transport systems.

In a conversation with representatives of JP Libertas, information was obtained that local transport operators are currently not technically or organizationally ready to provide systematic transport of bicycles to different locations, especially to the suburban areas of Dubrovnik-Neretva County. This further limits the possibility of combining public transport and cycling, especially in rural and less connected parts of the county.

It is particularly important to point out that the Pelješac Bridge, as the main transport link between the two parts of the county, has a ban on bicycle traffic. This solution significantly affects the continuity of cycling routes and represents a serious obstacle to the development of cyclotourism at the level of the entire county. Consequently, representatives of travel and tourism agencies face additional logistical problems, as they are forced to transport bicycles in vans or buses, which increases costs and reduces the attractiveness of cycling programs. All of the above points to the need for a more systematic approach to





the development of intermodal solutions, better coordination of different forms of transport and strengthening cooperation between public institutions, transport operators and the tourism sector, with the aim of creating a sustainable and cyclist-friendly transport system in Dubrovnik-Neretva County.

<p><b>1. <u>Maritime passenger transport system and sustainable mobility and multimodality along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route</u></b></p>	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A well-developed and attractive network of cycling routes, especially on the islands, representing strong potential for cycle tourism development.</li> <li>✓ Maritime operators generally allow the transport of bicycles, indicating a certain openness towards cyclists.</li> <li>✓ Interest and initial initiatives by major operators (e.g. Jadrolinija) to introduce fixed bicycle racks on vessels.</li> <li>✓ A developed tourism sector and interest from travel agencies in cycle tourism programmes.</li> <li>✓ Existing transport infrastructure (ports, terminals, airports) that offers potential for better integration of different transport modes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Absence of fixed and standardised bicycle racks on ferries and catamarans.</li> <li>✓ Mandatory additional ticket fees for bicycle transport, which discourages cycling as a sustainable mode of travel.</li> <li>✓ Limited coordination and communication with key maritime transport operators.</li> <li>✓ Constraints in air transport related to bicycles (mandatory dismantling and special packaging).</li> <li>✓ Full or partial bans on the transport of batteries for electric bicycles in maritime transport.</li> <li>✓ Local land transport operators are not prepared to provide systematic bicycle transport services, particularly in non-urban areas.</li> <li>✓ Prohibition of bicycle traffic on the Pelješac Bridge, disrupting the continuity of cycling routes.</li> <li>✓ Lack of integrated ticketing systems and coordinated multimodal solutions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What are the main challenges in terms of integrated mobility that currently affect cycle tourism and maritime transport in your region?</b></p>	



The main challenges relate to insufficient integration between maritime, air and land transport systems and cycling infrastructure. Non-harmonised rules for bicycle transport, technical unpreparedness of vessels and vehicles, restrictions related to electric bicycles, and the absence of multimodal hubs significantly complicate travel for cycle tourists. Additionally, infrastructural limitations such as the ban on cycling across the Pelješac Bridge interrupt route continuity and increase logistical costs for both travellers and tourism operators.

**What are port multimodalities and the main experiences of integration with local/regional practices currently underway?**

Port multimodality refers to the functional and seamless connection between maritime transport and other modes of mobility, primarily cycling and public land transport. Current experiences in the region indicate that such integration is still underdeveloped. Ports and terminals generally lack cyclist-friendly infrastructure (bicycle parking, signage, information points), and coordination between maritime operators and local transport providers is limited. Nevertheless, individual initiatives and announced improvements represent a valuable foundation for the future development of functional multimodal port hubs.

**2. Integrated transport system and related services along the coast, in relation to the green cycling system in port areas**

The goal of this section is to collect information on the following topics:

- What makes your city/region attractive (or unattractive) for cycle tourists arriving in your port areas?

Indented coastline and attractive islands (e.g. Korčula, Mljet, Lastovo, Elafiti).

- Existing network of scenic and thematic cycling routes.
- Developed tourist identity and international recognition of the area.
- Mild climate that allows for a long cycle tourism season

**Unattractive element::**

- Lack of standardized infrastructure for bicycle transportation on ships and catamarans (including Jadrolinija lines).
- Additional bicycle transportation charges.
- Air transport restrictions (especially disassembly and packaging of bicycles).
- Complete ban on bicycle traffic across the Pelješac Bridge.
- Insufficient integration of cycling with public transport (information from Libertas Dubrovnik).
- Restrictions on the transportation of e-bike batteries.
- **If you were a passenger arriving here in a port, what would be the first thing you would expect to find?**





- Clearly marked and safe bicycle access to the port.
- Fixed and secure bicycle racks on vessels.
- Transparent information on the price and conditions of bicycle transport.
- Secure bicycle parking in the port area.
- Service point (pump, basic tools).
- Information boards or QR codes with routes and maps.
- Possibility to combine boat/bus and bicycle without complicated logistics.
- **How can we improve the safety and comfort of the routes to the boarding point for cyclists?**

**Infrastructure measures:**

- Marking and physical separation of bicycle lanes towards ports.
- Establishment of “bike priority” corridors in urban areas.
- Safe signaling and traffic calming in port access zones.
- Arrangement of illuminated and covered bicycle parking lots.
- Organizational measures:
- Introduction of standards for bicycle transportation on ships.
- Integration of bicycles into the public transport system (pilot lines with racks).
- Subsidizing or eliminating additional bicycle charges.
- Strategic measure:
- Long-term solution for cyclists crossing between two parts of the county (alternative line or shuttle solution related to the ban on the Pelješac Bridge).

**3. Governance schemes for a better local/regional cooperation on integrated mobility for maritime passenger transport**

Dubrovnik Neretva county actively participates in the implementation of projects aimed at developing cycling tourism within its territory, in cooperation with local stakeholders such as local self-government units (LSGs) and tourist boards. The common objective of this cooperation is to increase both the quantity and, in particular, the quality of the tourism offer through the development of selective forms of tourism, with a special emphasis on cycling tourism as a sustainable and fast-growing market segment.

This cooperation is primarily reflected in joint promotional activities and coordinated investments in the development and improvement of cycling infrastructure, including the marking, upgrading, and development of cycling routes and trails. Good practice examples include the projects MIMOSA and the ongoing CYROS, both of which contribute to the systematic strengthening of the cycling tourism offer and intermodal connectivity in the area.



In addition to implementing concrete projects, the County adopts strategic and development documents aimed at improving the overall tourism offer and guiding long-term development towards sustainable and competitive tourism models.

However, one of the key challenges in planning regional and local development of selective tourism lies in the fact that a significant share of stakeholders are private companies and small businesses. Their primary focus is often directed toward developing their own products and services, while interest in the coordinated development of the destination as a whole is sometimes limited. Therefore, additional efforts should be directed toward strengthening partnerships, encouraging joint planning, and creating cooperation models that align individual business interests with the long-term development goals of the entire county.

#### **4. Cross-border perspectives to increase the efficiency of the maritime passenger transport system for better cross-border cycle tourism services.**

Dubrovnik Neretva county faces significant challenges when attempting to compare itself with other regions that have a much higher level of cycling tourism development, primarily due to its specific geographical characteristics. The County covers an elongated coastal area bordered by hilly and mountainous hinterland, which represents one of the main constraints to the systematic development of cycling infrastructure.

The existing transport infrastructure, particularly the road network, is largely narrow and spatially constrained, with limited possibilities for significant expansion across most of the territory. Investments in widening the current roads would be financially demanding and, in the long term, difficult to justify as sustainable.

Similar challenges are present in the island part of the County, where all traffic — including cyclists — takes place on county and state roads. Such conditions reduce safety and comfort for cyclists and limit the development of dedicated cycling corridors.

Despite these constraints, there is ongoing interest in exploring and developing new cycling and hiking routes. Enthusiasts and adventure-oriented visitors continue to recognize the natural potential of the area and actively seek opportunities to establish alternative routes with lower traffic intensity, thereby creating space for sustainable and innovative cycling tourism development adapted to the County's specific spatial conditions.





## 5. Future-oriented recommendations

N°	Key recommendations (and indication of possible ways to address them)
1	<p><b>Strong Natural Potential, but Structural Constraints</b></p> <p>Dubrovnik neretva county has exceptional natural assets, including an indented coastline, attractive islands, and an existing network of scenic routes, which provide a solid foundation for cycling tourism development. However, geographical constraints — a narrow coastal strip, mountainous hinterland, and dispersed islands — significantly limit the systematic development of safe and dedicated cycling infrastructure</p>
2	<p><b>Lack of Intermodal Integration is a Key Barrier</b></p> <p>The absence of standardized bicycle transport solutions in maritime, air, and public road transport represents one of the main operational challenges. Bicycles are not yet fully integrated as an equal mode of transport within the regional mobility system, which reduces the destination’s competitiveness compared to more developed cycling regions.</p>
3	<p><b>Financial and Spatial Limitations Require Alternative Approaches</b></p> <p>Expanding the existing road infrastructure is, in most cases, neither financially viable nor spatially feasible. Future development should therefore rely on innovative and adaptive “soft” solutions — such as alternative low-traffic routes, improved signage, traffic management measures, and better transport coordination — rather than large-scale infrastructure expansion.</p>
4	<p><b>Institutional Willingness and Project Framework Exist</b></p> <p>The County actively participates in international and regional projects, cooperates with local authorities and tourist boards, and adopts strategic development documents. This demonstrates political and institutional commitment, as well as experience in implementing structured development initiatives.</p>
5	<p><b>Coordination of the Private Sector is a Challenge</b></p> <p>A significant portion of the tourism offer is provided by private companies and small businesses, which are primarily focused on developing their own products and services rather than the destination as a whole. The long-term success of cycling tourism will depend on stronger partnerships, the establishment of shared standards, and better alignment between private initiatives and regional development goals.</p>
6	<p><b>Market Interest Exists Despite the Constraints</b></p>





	<p>Adventure-oriented and active tourists continue to recognize the area’s potential, indicating real market demand. With a more systematic approach, improved coordination, and stronger intermodal solutions, the County could significantly enhance the quality and competitiveness of its cycling tourism offer.</p>
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### Overall Conclusion

The development of cycling tourism in Dubrovnik-Neretva County is not primarily limited by a lack of attractiveness or demand, but by spatial constraints, transport integration challenges, and stakeholder coordination. Future progress will depend on a strategic, integrated, and partnership-based approach that transforms geographical limitations into a distinctive advantage rather than a development barrier.



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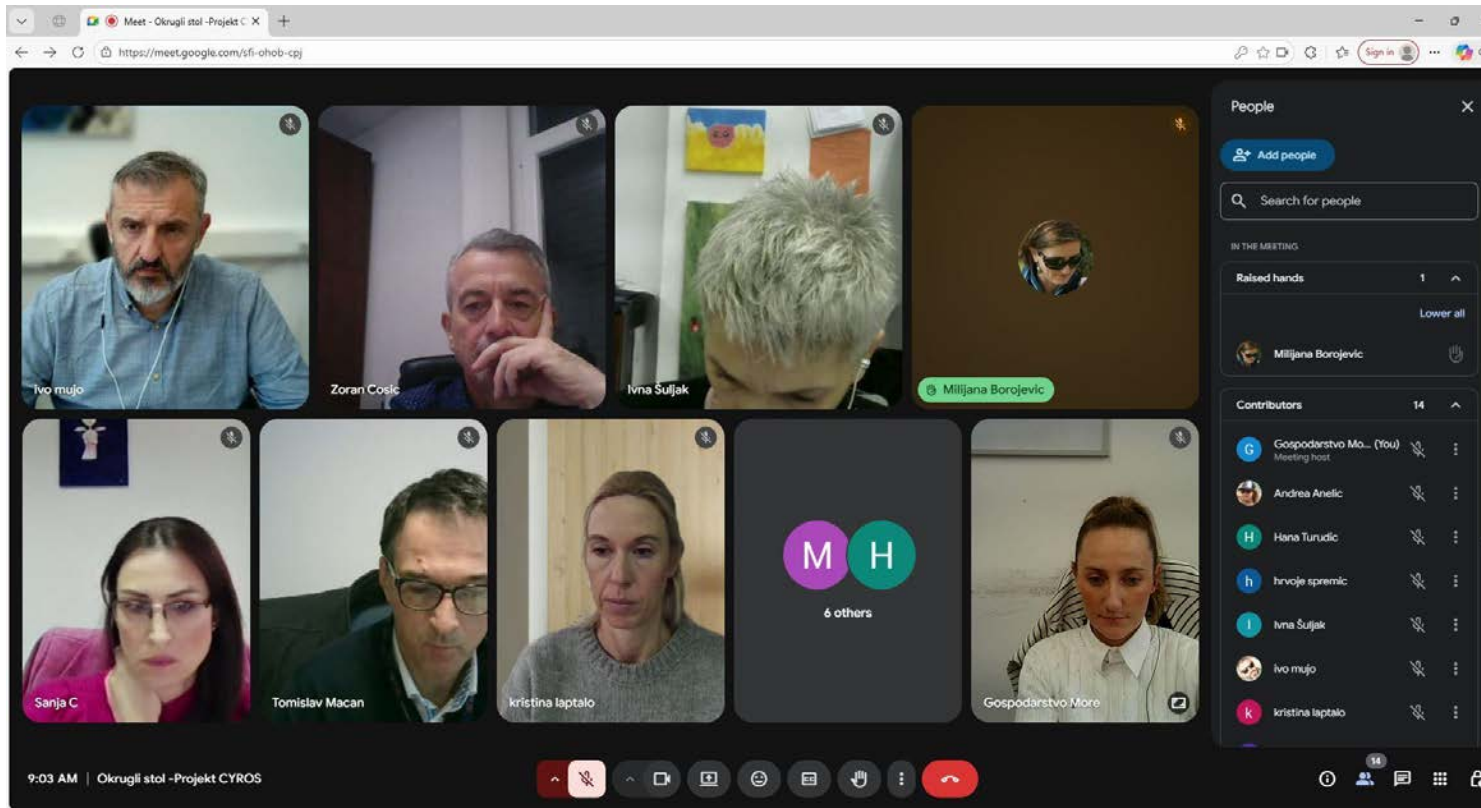


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## 6. Signature sheet and consultation pictures



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Meet - Okrugli stol - Projekt C... X

https://meet.google.com/5fi-ohob-tpj

9:02 AM | Okrugli stol - Projekt CYROS

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IN THE MEETING

Contributors 13

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- Hana Turudic
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# INTERREG ITALY-CROATIA PROGRAMME 2021–2027

## **D.3.1.2. Round tables on maritime passenger transport**



## CYROS

Implementation, in the Programme area, of the EUSAIR flagship and crosspillar project idea Adriatic Ionian CYcle ROute for Sustainable tourism

<b>WP number</b>	<b>WP3</b>
<b>Activity number</b>	<b>Activity 3.1</b>
<b>Deliverable number</b>	<b>D.3.1.2. Round tables on maritime passenger transport</b>
<b>PP in charge</b>	<b>PP3-Abruzzo Region</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>09/2025</b>
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>PP contributors</b>	<b>PP7</b>





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## 1. Overview

This deliverable summarises the key contributions collected from the key stakeholders during the CYROS WP3 round tables. One round table per topic is held in each project partner region/county.

In Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (PP7), the round table on **maritime passenger transport** and its role in supporting cycle tourism and intermodal travel was held within the framework of the local event [“Mobility and Tourism”](#), organised by Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. The event provided an appropriate institutional and thematic setting to address how passenger ports and maritime services can contribute to integrated mobility and tourism development at regional level.

The round table was conducted in the form of a moderated panel discussion, enabling a structured exchange with key stakeholders on the main challenges, needs and development opportunities related to maritime passenger transport services, port areas and the integration of bicycles within passenger transport chains. The panel included representatives of public authorities, maritime operators, academic institutions and port management bodies, namely:

1. Isabella Linčić Mužić, Head of department for maritime domain transport and communications, Primorje–Gorski Kotar County
2. Marija Zaputović Mavrinac, member of the board, Jadrolinija
3. Dražen Žgaljić, professor, Faculty of Maritime Studies, University of Rijeka
4. Alfred Franković, Director, Krk Port authority
5. Robert Josip Manestar, director, Tramonto d.o.o.

Following the panel discussion, all stakeholders were actively involved in the debate, providing further inputs and practical perspectives based on their professional experience.

The second phase of the stakeholder consultation was carried out through the collection of structured feedback via questionnaires. The survey addressed the key topics and questions defined in the WP3 methodology relevant to maritime passenger transport and port-related services, including operational and governance aspects, bike accessibility in passenger port areas, and cross-border perspectives for more consistent and efficient services.



## 2. Involved stakeholders

The event *Mobility and Tourism* was held on November 25<sup>th</sup> in Rijeka. Within the framework of the event, two round tables were organised. The round table focused on maritime passenger transport was conducted in a participatory format, enabling discussion with key stakeholders on topics related to maritime passenger transport and ports development potential relevant for sustainable and cycling mobility development. Following the round table, a link to an online questionnaire was distributed to all participants, as well as to stakeholders who were unable to attend the event in person. This approach ensured broader participation and enabled all relevant stakeholders to actively contribute to the consultation process. Agenda is below:

PROGRAM	
9:30	REGISTRACIJA SUDIONIKA
10:00	Pozdravni govori: - predstavnik Primorsko – goranske Županije
10:10	Predstavljanje CYROS projekta
10:15	Okrugli stol I – Pomorski putnički prijevoz <i>Panelisti:</i> - Dražen Žgaljić, Pomorski fakultet Rijeka, profesor - Alfred Franković, Županijska lučka uprava Krk, ravnatelj - Marija Zaputović Mavrinac, Jadrolinija, članica uprave - Robert Josip Manestar, Tramonto d.o.o., direktor - Stipe Štokić, Rapska plovidba, voditelj odjela financija - Izabela Linčić Mužić, pročelnica upravnog odjela za pomorsko dobro, promet i veze Primorsko – goranske županije  <i>Moderatorica:</i> Claudia Pučić Lerotić
11:10	Pauza za kavu
11:40	Okrugli stol II - Održiva mobilnost i turizam <i>Panelisti:</i> - Vedran Tomičić, Arriva Hrvatska, član uprave - Tomislav Prpić, HŽ putnički prijevoz d.o.o., prodaja i marketing - Vlasta Mastrović, Turistička zajednica Kvarnera, voditeljica projekata - Bojan Šenkinc, Promotiv travel outdoor, direktor - Martin Čotar, IRTA d.o.o., voditelj outdoor odjela  <i>Moderatorica:</i> Claudia Pučić Lerotić
12:30	Ručak i umrežavanje sudionika



<b>Name and Surname</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Role in the institution</b>	<b>Territorial level</b>
Toni Štimac	Primorsko goranska county	Vice president of the Primorsko – goranska region	Regional
Tomislav Prpić	HŽ Passenger Transport Limited Liability Company	Sales and marketing	National
Marija Zaputović Mavrinac	Jadrolinija	Board member	National
Vlasta Mastrović	Kvarner tourist board	Project manager	Regional
Robert Josip Manestar	Tramonto d.o.o.	Director	Local
Vedran Tomičić	Arriva	Board member	national
Izabela Linčić Mužić	Primorsko goranska county	Head of department for maritime affairs, transport and communications	regional
Alessandra Ban	Primorsko goranska county	Head of department for tourism, entrepreneurship and rural development	regional
Martin Čotar	Istrian development tourist agency	Outdoor department manager	regional
Antonia Svetina	Jadrolinija	New media and public relations specialist	national
Renata Lesica	Jadrolinija	Communication and marketing manager	national



Iris Bruketa	Primorsko goranska county	Tourism advisor	regional
Tina Štefan Kontuš	Primorsko goranska county	Expert associate	regional
Bojan Šenkinc	Promotiv Travel agency Ltd.	director	regional
Mirela Srkoč Šenkinc	Promotiv Travel agency Ltd.	Operations manager	regional
Danijela Perković	Primorsko goranska county	Tourism advisor	regional
Vesna Bartolović	HBOR	Rijeka regional office manager	Regional / national
Luka Perčinić	Rab tourist board	Marketing manager	Local
Andrej Matacin	Opatija tourist board	Congress and other forms of tourism manager	Local
Hrvoje Bilen	Stancija Kavali – bike guide	owner	Local
Nada Prodan Mraković	Istria region – department for tourism	Head	regional
Marin Mušćo	Lopar tourist board	director	Local
Petar Hrg	Gorski kotar tourist board	director	Regional
Antonija Kardum	Rijeka tourist board	Head of information and market research	Local
Branko Karabaić	Punat tourist board	direktor	Local
Marko Mikašinović	Villa SIN	Accommodation manager	Local
Jakov Karmelić	CMA CMG Croatia maritime agency	director	National
Robert Mohorić	Faculty of Maritime studies Rijeka	professor	National



Karlo Schneider	Perun consulting	Consultant, tourist guide	Local
Jelena Mateševac Skočilić	Kraljevica tourist board	direktor	Local
Ivana Matušan	Rab tourist board	director	Local
Marijana Kalčić	Matulji tourist board	director	Local
Renato Vincent	Bike guide	guide	Local
Dražen Žgaljić	Faculty of Maritime studies Rijeka	Professor	national
Alfred Franković	Port authority Krk	director	Regional
Majda Šale	Krk tourist board	director	Local
Gordana Jelenović	Crikvenica tourist board	Marketing manager	Local
Zvezdana Klobučar Filčić	Lovran tourist board	director	Local
Goranka Tuhtan	Mrkopalj tourist info center	manager	Local
Andrej Pejnović	Rijeka tourist board	Expert associate for informing	Local

### 3. Input information provided to the stakeholders

#### 3.1. General presentation

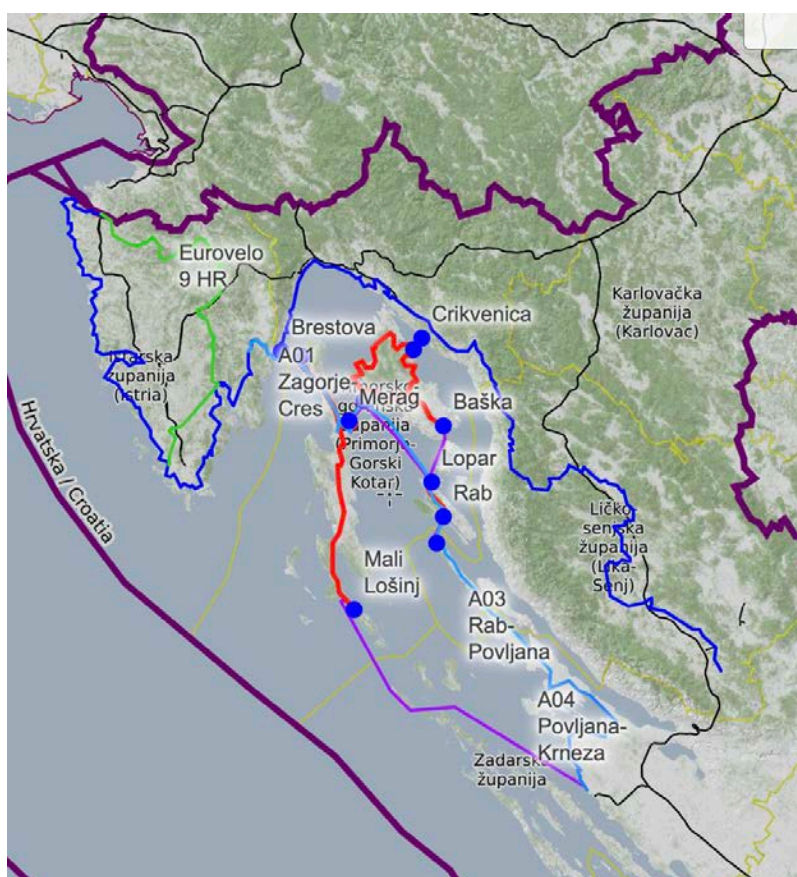
At the beginning of event, PP7 - Primorje-Gorski Kotar County provided stakeholders with an overview of the CYROS project, its objectives and its relevance for the development of sustainable mobility and tourism and maritime passenger transport in the Adriatic-Ionian area. The presentation introduced CYROS as an valuable project supporting the implementation of the EUSAIR Adriatic-Ionian cycle route, with a focus on improving multimodal mobility solutions, strengthening cycle tourism services and enhancing cross-border cooperation.

Stakeholders were informed about the role of WP3 in establishing cross-border strategies and governance frameworks, as well as about the importance of their contribution in



identifying key challenges, opportunities and policy-relevant inputs at local and regional level. Particular emphasis was placed on the role of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County as a region characterised by a strong interaction between tourism, transport systems and complex territorial features, including coastal, island and mountainous areas.

In addition, stakeholders were presented with the working version of the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route within the territory of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. The presented route connects Brestova ferry port with Kvarner islands, highlighting the role of maritime connections and island accessibility as key elements of multimodal and sustainable cycle tourism development in the region. Current route visualisation served as a practical basis for discussion on infrastructure needs, service integration and governance challenges.



Adriatic – Ionian cycling route in Primorje – gorski kotar county



### 3.2 Thematic presentation

Before panel discussion, the as-it situation was shortly presented to participants, covering the following thematic areas:

**Mixed port system and maritime passenger transport:** Port system in the region is characterised by active passenger connections between the mainland and islands, with peak-season pressure and varying conditions for accommodating bicycles. In the spring of 1999, the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County established eight County Port Authorities.

The aim of establishing the regional port authorities was to form independent institutions that manage their area at sea and on land, i.e. to deal with the management, maintenance, use and construction of ports open to public traffic.

In accordance with the program guidelines based on the Law on Maritime Property and Sea Ports, in the area of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, the Order on the Classification of Ports Open to Public Traffic in the Area of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (“Official Gazette” No. 41/15, 38/15, 98/19, 47/20) classified 101 ports open to public traffic of county and local importance, of which 27 ports of county importance and 74 ports of local importance.

**Italy-Croatia cross-border cycle tourism and Adriatic connections:** Adriatic maritime links in region function as key access points for cycle tourists travelling along the coast and towards the islands, with seasonality strongly shaping demand and service use. EU project MOSES was presented as a good practice example of cross – border relevance.

**Governance schemes for local/regional cooperation:** Cooperation exists between the county, port authorities and operators, but coordination and standardisation of bike-related rules and passenger information remain key topics to be discussed.

**Cross-border prospects for integrated port services:** Future efficiency improvements depend on better-aligned port services and passenger information (including digitalisation) and on leveraging EU/co-financed investments to support consistent, bike-friendly solutions.



## 4. Conceptual foreword for feedback from the key stakeholders

In this paragraph, the stakeholders’ key feedbacks are reported. The different feedback are divided into strengths and weaknesses for each topic of the consultation. The strengths refer to the aspects that stakeholders appreciated and found valuable for each topic of the consultation. The weaknesses regard the aspects that have raised identified gaps among the stakeholders.

### 1. Maritime passenger transport system and sustainable mobility and multimodality along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route

The goal of this section is to collect information on the following topics:

- How can the maritime passenger transport system be made more efficient, convenient, and integrated for cycle tourists?
- What role should local authorities play in promoting greener maritime transport options for cyclists?
- How much of the regional territory should be associated with the maritime passenger transport system?
- What are the main strengths of your area in terms of cycle mobility promotion in the port areas?
- What weaknesses or barriers currently affect integration between bike, train, bus, and maritime transport?
- Which multimodal solutions and good practices are already in place (projects, services, digital tools, etc.)?
- What operational proposals would you suggest for improving intermodal ports?

1. Maritime passenger transport system and sustainable mobility and multimodality along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A well-developed maritime passenger transport system, including ferry and passenger maritime lines, enabling connectivity between islands and the mainland.</li> <li>2. Integration potential between maritime transport, bus and rail services, supporting intermodal travel along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Limited capacity for bicycle transport on ferries and maritime lines, particularly during the high tourist season.</li> <li>2. Seasonality of services and lower frequency outside the main season, reducing flexibility and accessibility for cyclists.</li> </ol>



<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Regular maritime services during the tourist season, ensuring wider destination coverage and improved accessibility of coastal and island destinations.</li> <li>4. Contribution of maritime transport to reducing car dependency and supporting environmentally friendly travel behaviour.</li> <li>5. Strong tradition of maritime passenger transport in the region.</li> <li>6. Promotion of destinations and active tourism through maritime connections, enabling access to cultural, natural and tourism attractions along the coast and islands.</li> <li>7. Acknowledgement that, although maritime connectivity was stronger in the past, the current system represents a solid basis for further development of intermodal solutions.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Weak integration and coordination between maritime transport and other transport modes (bus and rail).</li> <li>4. Infrastructural shortcomings in ports, including insufficient bicycle parking, storage areas and cyclist-oriented facilities.</li> <li>5. Partial and non-harmonised regulation related to bicycle transport, resulting in uncertainty for users.</li> <li>6. Lack of incentives, such as free or discounted ferry transport for cyclists, reducing motivation to travel to islands by bicycle.</li> <li>7. Increasingly weaker connectivity between islands and the mainland from a user perspective.</li> <li>8. Poor coordination and lack of alignment between transport services, timetables and stakeholders.</li> <li>9. Insufficiently clear and accessible information on bicycle transport options across maritime services.</li> </ol>
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**What are the main challenges in terms of integrated mobility that currently affect cycle tourism and maritime transport in your region?**

Cycling routes are often not connected with bus lines, rail services and ferry ports.

Lack of bicycle parking, racks, e-bike charging stations and repair services at ports, stations and terminals.

Maritime transport increases capacity during the summer season, while off-season services are less frequent, limiting flexibility and accessibility for cyclists.

Demanding route sections reduce accessibility for recreational cyclists and families.

Lack of integrated applications or digital maps with real-time information complicates route and itinerary planning.

Absence of joint strategies and coordinated promotional activities for cycle tourism and integrated mobility.



Cycling infrastructure, route signage and hubs require regular maintenance, which is not always financially secured.

Fragmentation of planning documents and competences at local and regional levels.

Lack of unified digital solutions for travel planning and service purchasing.

**What are port multimodalities and the main experiences of integration with local/regional practices currently underway?**

Šilo–Crikvenica maritime line as a concrete example of a user-friendly maritime connection and good practice.

Integrated transport solutions combining bike + ferry/bus + e-bike, providing flexibility, reducing car dependency and increasing visitation of attractions along the coast and islands.

Existing initiatives such as bike and boat concepts (Krk, Rab, Lošinj), e-bike sharing systems (Rijeka – RiCikleta), and ports in Rijeka, Zadar and Split equipped with bicycle parking facilities.

Most ferry and maritime lines (except catamarans) allow bicycle transport, enabling intermodal travel.

Practical intermodal travel chains, e.g. train to Rijeka, cycling via Krk to Valbiska, ferry to Lopar, cycling to Rab, maritime connection to Lun, and continuation via Pag to Zadar.

Ongoing efforts by regional and local stakeholders to improve maritime passenger transport, digitalisation of services, port infrastructure and the integration of cycling within maritime mobility systems.

## 2. Integrated transport system and related services along the coast, in relation to the green cycling system in port areas

The goal of this section is to collect information on the following topics:

- What makes your city/region attractive (or unattractive) for cycle tourists arriving in your port areas?
- If you were a passenger arriving here in a port, what would be the first thing you would expect to find?
- How can we improve the safety and comfort of the routes to the boarding point for cyclists?
- What obstacles discourage tourists from choosing bicycles as their main means of exploring the area?
- How can we involve local businesses (hotels, restaurants, shops) in supporting better cycle solutions for cycle tourists arriving in a port area?
- What role can digital tools (apps, GPS maps, route planners) play in overall management?



<p><b>2. Integrated transport system and related services along the coast, in relation to the green cycling system</b></p>	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing coastal and island maritime transport system provides a basis for integrating cycling, walking and public transport along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route.</li> <li>Certain ports and destinations already offer cycling-related infrastructure and services (e.g. bicycle parking, bike and boat concepts, e-bike sharing systems).</li> <li>Integration potential between ports, cycling routes and local attractions supports the promotion of active tourism and sustainable mobility.</li> <li>The location of many ports along existing cycling routes enables the integration of maritime transport with cycling tourism.</li> <li>Stakeholder awareness of sustainable mobility is increasing, including the role of ports as multimodal hubs with high potential of promoting destination</li> </ol>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cycling routes are often not physically or functionally connected to port areas.</li> <li>Lack of dedicated cycling infrastructure in port areas (safe access routes, parking facilities, service points).</li> <li>Insufficient bicycle parking, racks, e-bike charging stations and repair services at ports, stations and terminals.</li> <li>On-road cycling lanes are often the only option; in many locations such lanes do not exist.</li> <li>Limited and unclear information on cycling access to ports and available services.</li> <li>Fragmented planning and weak coordination between port authorities, transport operators and local governments.</li> <li>Uneven development of infrastructure and services across ports and destinations.</li> </ol>
<p><b>In the port area, what measures could encourage tourists to use bicycles, e-bikes, or walking routes instead of cars?</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cycling and walking routes</li> <li>Measures in ports should combine safe infrastructure, integrated services, digital support and motivational incentives. When arrival and movement by bicycle or on foot are simple, safe and attractive, tourists automatically choose sustainable modes of mobility instead of cars.</li> <li>Clearly marked exits from ports towards the nearest cycling routes.</li> <li>High-quality bicycle racks (including surveillance cameras).</li> <li>Mini service stations (pump, tools, container for bicycle service waste).</li> <li>Installation of charging stations in ports encourages the use of e-mobility, including by older users or those with lower physical readiness.</li> <li>Bike-sharing systems or traditional bicycle rental available immediately upon arrival.</li> <li>Lower ticket prices for those travelling by bicycle or on foot.</li> </ol>	



9. Package tickets: “ferry + bicycle rental”.
10. Information boards with instructions in multiple languages and promotional materials (bike maps, etc.) at ticket sales points.
11. Development of safe and clearly marked cycling access routes to ports; connecting ports with local walking and cycling networks; informative and promotional activities focused on sustainable modes of access to ports.

**How can cycle paths be better connected to port areas?**

1. Separated or clearly marked cycling lanes leading directly to port entrances.
2. Better management of areas where cars, pedestrians and cyclists interact.
3. Inclusion of routes in official town maps and port plans.
4. Only along on-road cycling lanes, which mostly do not exist.

### 3. Cyros Pilot Actions and Adriatic maritime connections

The goal of this section is to collect information for the improvement of the Cyros pilot actions in terms of Adriatic maritime connections. In particular:

- How can the different stakeholders support the integration of the pilot actions in the Adriatic maritime connections?
- Which synergies are possible (other initiatives, other EU projects, etc.)?
- What systems need to be properly observed to improve the efficiency of maritime passenger transport in the valorization of the cycle tourism in the Adriatic area?
- Which elements should be monitored to improve maritime passenger transport efficiency (short/medium/long term)?

**3. CYROS Pilot Action and Adriatic maritime connections**

**Feedback - Identified strengths:**

1. Applications and defined routes were identified as a positive element supporting the CYROS pilot action.
2. Existing maritime and ferry connections between the mainland and the islands provide a basis for integrating cycling with maritime passenger transport.
3. Crikvenica–Šilo maritime line was highlighted as a good practice example of maritime connections

**Feedback - Identified weaknesses:**

1. Road traffic safety and cyclist safety in port access areas require improvement.
2. Limited capacity for bicycle transport on some maritime lines, especially during peak season.
3. Combining bike and ferry can be logistically challenging due to limited capacities, inconsistent rules and a lack of information; the need for a



<p>between mainland and island and contributing to year-round tourism.</p> <p>4. Ports and port authorities expressed openness to enabling bicycle-related equipment and basic tools in line with proposed guidance (e.g. bike holders, basic tools).</p> <p>5. Stakeholders noted that service improvements are underway, including digitalisation initiatives and ongoing port infrastructure investments supported through EU funding.</p>	<p>reservation system for bicycle spaces was mentioned.</p> <p>4. Spatial and traffic constraints in port areas, seasonal congestion and discontinuities in cycling infrastructure limit the feasibility of certain road-based routes (including concerns for island areas where roads are already highly loaded).</p> <p>5. Ports are often primarily oriented towards motor traffic, while cycling and pedestrian infrastructure is not systematically planned.</p> <p>6. In some locations, there are no cycling paths, which limits safe access to port areas.</p>
<p><b>According to the stakeholders, can the proposed Cyros pilot action properly address the challenges of better bike solutions in the Adriatic port areas?</b></p>	
<p>Stakeholders confirmed that improved solutions in ports would require addressing spatial constraints, ferry capacity, safety and coordination with local transport and attractions.</p> <p>Proposed measures were assessed as relevant to improving user experience and supporting cycling tourism, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improving signage and ensuring clearer and safer links between cycling routes and ports (including mapping routes)</li> <li>• providing bike-friendly facilities in ports (bicycle racks, mini service stations, charging points, smart lockers for equipment)</li> <li>• improving links between ports and tourist/cultural attractions through information boards</li> <li>• strengthening informational and digital support, service packages and the promotion of sustainable mobility</li> </ul> <p>It was highlighted importance of involvement of Jadrolinija and maritime transport operators</p>	
<p><b>Is any pilot action adjustment needed?</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of durable, weather- and salt-resistant materials for port signage and equipment due to bora winds; avoid fragile solutions and, where relevant, avoid electronic displays in exposed port environments.</li> <li>2. Installation of basic bike-friendly equipment in ports (e.g. bicycle racks/holders, basic tools/mini service points, charging points where relevant), in line with local spatial constraints and operational conditions.</li> </ol>	



3. Strengthen information provision at passenger terminals, including multilingual information boards and printed/digital materials at ticket sales points, covering: bicycle transport options, rules, capacities and recommended onward routes/itineraries, including CYROS itineraries
4. Clarify maintenance responsibilities and operational capacity for any installed port equipment and signage, given the noted limitations in service/maintenance resources.
5. Improve coordination with ferry operators regarding bicycle transport (capacity, designated spaces, fastening/handling), and explore reservation options where relevant to reduce uncertainty during peak season.
6. Initiate follow-up coordination with key maritime stakeholders (e.g. meeting request to Jadrolinija) to define practical solutions for better bicycle access to islands, potentially jointly with neighbouring regions where shared nodes exist.

#### 4. Governance schemes for a better local/regional cooperation on integrated mobility for maritime passenger transport

The goal of this section is to gather information on stakeholders' experiences in managing and governing better solutions at the local and regional levels. The key questions are:

- Which governance models could be most effective (regional coordination, interregional tables, memoranda of understanding, legal instruments) in terms of better maritime connections for cyclists among Italy and Croatia?
- Which actors should lead the coordination at local, regional, and cross-border levels?
- How can cooperation between public and private stakeholders be strengthened?

<b>4. Governance schemes for improved local/regional cooperation on integrated mobility for maritime passenger transport</b>	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strong tradition of maritime transport.</li> <li>2. Strengths of local and regional cooperation are reflected in experience of joint participation in EU projects (MOSES example), the existence of strategic development documents, and the growing interest</li> </ol>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of a single regional coordinator for integrated mobility.</li> <li>2. Fragmented competences, uneven levels of involvement of individual stakeholders, slower implementation of joint measures, and the lack of</li> </ol>



<p>of stakeholders in sustainable and integrated mobility.</p> <p>3. Expressed interes for stronger cooperation between the county, cities, ports and tourism organisations provides a good basis for the development of intermodal solutions.</p>	<p>operational coordination between transport operators and infrastructure managers.</p> <p>3. As a rule, someone who wants to travel by bicycle along our coast potentially has to violate certain port rules</p> <p>4. On ferries, catamarans and boats, designated areas should be provided for safe bicycle storage.</p>
<p><b>Based on the experience of the stakeholders, what are the main governance challenges that have to be addressed in terms of improving bike accessibility to the port passenger areas?</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of standardised rules and bicycle capacity in passenger ports, limited space, and logistical difficulties during embarkation and disembarkation.</li> <li>2. Not enough developed coordination between port authorities, transport operators and local authorities.</li> <li>3. Seasonal peaks and the lack of digital information, which complicate planning</li> <li>4. The need for harmonisation of rules, investment in infrastructure, clear signage and integrated digital systems so that ports can become truly bike-friendly hubs.</li> <li>5. Planning documents should be updated to include route alignments (e.g., developing an on-road cycling path continuation from Malinska to the mainland).</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Main governance challenges experienced by the stakeholders:</b></p>	
<p>As far as the port area in Punat is concerned, Marina Punat has practically relocated the cycling route outside its area in order to reduce the risk of potential accidents involving cyclists.</p>	

**5. Cross-border perspectives to increase the efficiency of the maritime passenger transport system for better cross-border cycle tourism services.**

The aim of this section is to collect data and experiences on potential cross-border cooperation programs (if any). The focus is primarily on comparison with experiences from other European regions. In particular:

- What opportunities and/or risks are associated with improving the efficiency of the maritime passenger transport system (e.g., regulatory, financial, infrastructural, digital)?





- What immediate (1–3 years) and medium-term (3–7 years) infrastructural and organizational solutions related to bike mobility could help address deseasonalization and integration with inland areas?
- Which cross-border experiences in cycle mobility and cycle tourism promotion are most relevant for your area?
- What added value would EU-integrated solutions bring in terms of infrastructure consistency, safety standards, economic and tourism development, environmental sustainability, funding synergies, and international recognition?

5. Cross-border perspectives to increase the efficiency of the maritime passenger transport system for better cross-border cycle tourism services.	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Potential of maritime passenger services for regional and cross-border connections</li> <li>2. Ongoing service improvements through digitalisation (e.g., Jadrolinija investments in service upgrades, including digital tools such as chatbots; PP7 is currently working on digitalisation of transport services).</li> <li>3. Port infrastructure investments supported through EU funding, improving safety and service conditions and strengthening the maritime passenger transport system.</li> <li>4. Maritime operators' engagement in supporting cycling-related demand through sports events (e.g., Jadrolinija support to events such as Four Islands). Potential for cross – border events development in line with services</li> <li>5. Development direction noted for the sector: planned fleet expansion towards alternative fuels.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Limited bicycle capacity on certain maritime lines, especially in peak season.</li> <li>2. Seasonality of services and lower frequency outside the main season, reducing flexibility for passengers travelling with bicycles.</li> <li>3. Weak coordination/alignment of services (timetables and connections), including issues of coordination among relevant actors.</li> <li>4. Lack of clearly communicated information on bicycle transport options on maritime services.</li> </ol>



**What could be the immediate and medium-term solutions, both infrastructural and organizational, to resolve the problem of integration of the cycle tourism with the port systems, and address the deseasonalization through integration with inland areas?**

## Immediate (1–3 years)

1. Improve passenger information systems on bicycle transport: clear communication on rules, capacities, permitted services/lines and practical guidance (online and at ticket sales points).
2. Strengthen coordination between regional authorities, port authorities and shipping operators to align procedures and reduce inconsistencies.
3. Introduce/standardise designated bicycle storage areas on vessels (ferries/catamarans/boats) and clarify fastening/handling practices where relevant.
4. Explore organisational solutions for peak periods, including reservation approaches for bicycle spaces (need mentioned by stakeholders) to reduce uncertainty and improve planning.
5. Continue and expand digitalisation initiatives in maritime passenger transport services (as already underway).

## Medium-term (3–7 years)

6. Continue EU-supported port and maritime infrastructure upgrades that contribute to safety and service quality within the maritime passenger transport chain.
7. Work towards greater standardisation/harmonisation of bicycle-related procedures across services/lines to reduce fragmentation and improve cross-border user experience.
8. Support sector transition and resilience through the planned fleet development towards alternative fuels, as referenced by stakeholders.
9. Strengthen the role of maritime passenger transport in year-round tourism through service design that supports off-season usability, building on good practice examples.

**Which are the existing cross-border key experiences in terms of cycle mobility/ cycle tourism promotion in Italy and Croatia (if any)?**

1. MOSES project – pilot testing of maritime line between Trieste and Mali Lošinj and Susak

## 8. Future-oriented recommendations

Based on the feedback collected during the round table discussion and the follow-up online consultation, PP7 summarises below the key stakeholder recommendations related to maritime passenger transport and its integration with cycling-related user needs. The recommendations are organised according to the five key topics presented in Section 3 and colour-coded accordingly. Where relevant, PP7 also indicates possible follow-up actions and responsible actors to support future implementation.



N°	Key recommendations (and indication of possible ways to address them)
1	Improve and standardise bicycle carriage on ferries/boats by ensuring designated bicycle storage sectors, clear fastening/handling practices and adequate capacity management, especially during peak season (to be addressed through operator procedures and port-side guidance).
2	Strengthen passenger information and digitalisation on bicycle transport options (rules, capacities, permitted services, practical guidance), using multilingual on-site information at terminals and online tools (e.g., service digitalisation initiatives, chatbots, updated web content).
3	Make port areas bike- and pedestrian-friendly through safe and clearly marked access routes to boarding points, improved signage and inclusion of cycling connections in official town maps and port plans; manage conflict points where cars, pedestrians and cyclists mix.
4	Provide a minimum set of cyclist-oriented facilities and services at ports and terminals (bicycle racks/holders, basic tools/mini service points, e-bike charging points where feasible, smart lockers where relevant), together with info points and promotional materials (bike maps, itineraries) at ticket sales/arrival areas.
5	Use CYROS pilot actions to test practical solutions in port environments: durable bora- and salt-resistant signage/equipment; concise interpretive content via QR codes; and user-oriented information boards linking ports to nearby routes and attractions.
6	Develop and promote intermodal service packages that combine cycling with maritime passenger transport (e.g., bike and boat concepts, themed itineraries, weekend offers), building on good practice examples (e.g., Crikvenica-Šilo line) and link them to accommodation and local attractions to support year-round tourism.
7	Establish a clear coordination mechanism at county level for integrated mobility in maritime passenger transport (a designated coordinator and a regular working table with port authorities, operators, tourism organisations and municipalities), and repeat round tables to ensure follow-up and implementation.



8	Align planning and regulatory frameworks to ensure safe and coherent cyclist access to ports: update planning documents to include route alignments;
9	Leverage EU funding and cross-border cooperation (e.g., Interreg) to accelerate investments in port infrastructure upgrades, safety improvements, digital passenger information systems and (where relevant) alternative-fuel readiness, using shared learning and benchmarking with well-established EU regions.
10	Work towards harmonised Italy–Croatia standards for bicycle-related maritime services (consistent rules, clear capacities, common wayfinding/signage and service information), to improve the cross-border user experience and strengthen international visibility of the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route.

## 6. Signature sheet and consultation pictures

This section includes supporting documentation related to the round tables organisation process organised within WP3.

Signed attendance sheets from the round table event are provided as evidence of stakeholder participation. In addition, screenshot from Microsoft Forms, used for collecting stakeholder feedback through an online questionnaire is included as supporting evidence of the consultation process.

Furthermore, photographs of participant accreditations are attached, showing QR codes linking to the Adriatic-Ionian cycling route and to the online questionnaire, as well as consultation pictures documenting the organisation and implementation of the stakeholder engagement activities.

The signature sheets, screenshots and photographs serve as supporting material for this deliverable and confirm that the consultation process was conducted in line with the WP3 methodology and project requirements.





**MOBILNOST I TURIZAM/MOBILITY AND TOURISM**  
 Okrugli stolovi – Održiva mobilnost i turizam; Pomorski putnički prijevoz  
 Round tables – Sustainable mobility and tourism; Maritime passenger transport  
 (PP7)

November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Rijeka

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\*I declare that I consent to the publication of photos and videos where present and to the processing of personal data in accordance with EU Regulation 2016/679 - GDPR



Attendance sheet, 1





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Italy – Croatia



Italy – Croatia



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Attendance sheet, 3





Italy – Croatia



Italy – Croatia



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33							

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Forms

Primorsko goranska county - consultations with stakeholders - Saved

Back to questions

Responses Overview Active

Responses

**13**

Average Time

**52:49**

Duration

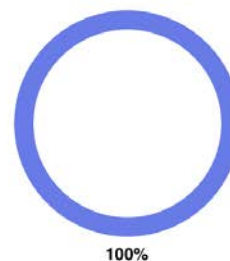
**27** Days

1. Potvrđujem da sam upoznat/a s pravima koja imam prema Općoj uredbi o zaštiti podataka (GDPR), uključujući pravo na pristup, ispravak, brisanje i ograničenje obrade mojih osobnih podataka. Suglasan/a sam da se prikupljeni Podaci koriste za potrebe CYROS projekta.

I confirm that I am aware of the rights I have under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), including the right to access, rectify, delete, and restrict the processing of my personal data. I consent to the collected data being used for the purposes of the CYROS project.

[More details](#)

● DA 13



Online forms, consultations through questionnaire





Mobility and tourism local event (November 25<sup>th</sup>, Rijeka), general presentation





Maritime passenger transport panel discussion with stakeholders





Mobility and tourism local event, November 25<sup>th</sup>, Rijeka, stakeholders group photo





Participants accreditations with QR codes

## 7. Press releases

[https://www.pfri.uniri.hr/web/hr/index.php?id\\_news=2719&pregled](https://www.pfri.uniri.hr/web/hr/index.php?id_news=2719&pregled)

<https://poduckun.net/pgz-info/odrzani-okrugli-stolovi-o-mobilnosti-i-turizmu-u-sklopu-projekta-cyros-u-rijeci>

<https://riportal.net.hr/rijeka/strucni-skup-o-mobilnosti-i-turizmu-cikloturizam-snazni-pokretac-odrzivog-turizma-u-zupaniji/522293/>



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# INTERREG ITALY-CROATIA PROGRAMME 2021–2027

## **D.3.1.2. Round tables on maritime passenger transport**



## CYROS

Implementation, in the Programme area, of the EUSAIR flagship and crosspillar project idea Adriatic Ionian CYcle ROute for Sustainable tourism

<b>WP number</b>	<b>WP3</b>
<b>Activity number</b>	<b>Activity 3.1</b>
<b>Deliverable number</b>	<b>D.3.1.2. Round tables on maritime passenger transport</b>
<b>PP in charge</b>	<b>PP3-Abruzzo Region</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>02/2026</b>
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>PP contributors</b>	<b>PP8</b>





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## 1. Overview

This deliverable summarises the key contributions collected from the stakeholders during the CYROS WP3 round tables. One round table was held in each project partner region/county, ensuring territorial coverage and the inclusion of region-specific perspectives within the consultation process.

In this context, a thematic session dedicated to maritime passenger transport was organised, addressing its role in sustainable mobility, multimodal integration, and tourism flows along the Adriatic-Ionian corridor.

The consultation was structured in two phases:

1. Roundtable panel discussion (in-person format) – gathering key representatives of transport operators and private sector stakeholders;
2. Online consultation phase – collecting additional feedback from identified stakeholders through a structured questionnaire, thereby broadening participation and ensuring a more comprehensive input base.

The panel discussion included the following participants:

1. Srđan Honović / Jadrolinija
2. Luka Mišović / TOP SPORT EVENTS d.o.o.
3. Tomislav Prpić / HŽ Putnički prijevoz d.o.o.
4. Petra Baldaš Beato / SUNNY WAY d.o.o.

The discussion focused on strengthening maritime passenger transport as a key multimodal component, particularly regarding ferry and fast boat services, integration with rail and bus networks, accommodation of bicycles on board, seasonal capacity management, and the enhancement of cross-border connectivity.

The subsequent online consultation complemented the panel discussion by enabling additional stakeholders to provide structured feedback, ensuring that the findings presented in this deliverable reflect a balanced and territorially representative overview of perspectives related to maritime passenger transport within the CYROS framework.



## 2. Involved stakeholders

During the scheduled round table held within the framework of the CYROS WP3 activities, the general objective of the CYROS project was presented, namely the development of an integrated system connecting tourist flows via cycle paths within the Adriatic–Ionian area to the maritime passenger transport system. The project promotes the concept of the cross-border programme as a coordinated and functionally interconnected port system, aimed at implementing highly sustainable mobility models capable of improving transport efficiency, service quality, territorial accessibility, and cross-border governance.

Stakeholders were invited to actively participate by contributing to the discussion on territorial needs, identifying critical issues and development opportunities, and co-designing solutions and strategies for cycle tourism mobility in connection with maritime passenger transport. Particular emphasis was placed on multimodal integration (sea–rail–bus–bike), accessibility for cyclists, seasonal capacity management, and coordinated governance at local, regional, national, and cross-border levels.

The consultation process was structured in two complementary formats:

- In-person round table discussion, organised within the framework of the National Cycling Conference;
- Online consultation, through which additional stakeholders provided structured feedback following the event.

The in-person round table was held on:

**Date: October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Place: Poreč, within the framework of the National cycling conference**

All additional stakeholders listed in the attached participant table were involved through the online consultation process, thereby ensuring broad territorial representation and multi-level participation (EU/international, national, regional, local, private sector, and civil society).



The detailed table listing the names, institutions, roles, and territorial levels of all participants is listed below.

Name and Surname	Institution	Role in the Institution	Territorial Level
<b>Massimiliano Trenul</b>	FVG Region (Italy)	Representative	Regional
<b>Goran Lepen</b>	European Cyclists' Federation (ECF)	Representative	EU / International
<b>Goran Franinović</b>	Tourist Board Pula	Representative	Local
<b>Mihael Idžaković</b>	Tourist Board Medulin	Representative	Local
<b>Ana Žufić</b>	Municipality of Medulin	Representative	Local
<b>Mihael Petrinjak</b>	Ernst & Young d.o.o.	Representative	International
<b>Katarina Jarža</b>	Ernst & Young d.o.o.	Representative	International
<b>Andro Pavuna</b>	Grad Zagreb	Representative	Regional
<b>Marko Velzek</b>	Grad Zagreb	Representative	Regional
<b>Ivan Nemet</b>	Institute of Physical Planning of the City of Zagreb	advisor	Regional
<b>Petra Grgasević</b>	ERKON	Representative	Private Sector
<b>Dražen Dretar</b>	City of Varaždin	Representative	Local
<b>Tibor Lehotkai</b>	Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure (Croatia)	Senior Traffic Engineer / Ministry Representative	National
<b>Vedran Koraca</b>	Valamar Riviera Inc.	Marketing Department Representative	Private Sector





<b>Luka Mišović</b>	Top Sport Events Ltd.	Technical Director	Private Sector
<b>Srdan Honović</b>	Jadrolinija	Representative	National (State-owned company)
<b>Petra Baldaš Beato</b>	Sunny Way Poreč Ltd.	Representative	Local
<b>Jasna Divić</b>	Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure (Croatia)	Director General, Directorate for Railway Infrastructure and Transport	National
<b>Sascha Wiese</b>	Bike Center Poreč	Representative	Local
<b>Bruno Radotić</b>	Outmore Ltd.	Representative	Private Sector
<b>Mia Arsić</b>	IRTA Ltd.	Representative	Regional
<b>Nevenka Lorencin Čutić</b>	IRTA Ltd.	Representative	Private Sector
<b>Davorin Belamarić</b>	Union of Cyclists (Sindikato biciklista)	Programme Coordinator	National (Association)
<b>Martina Klarić</b>	Istria region	Senior Expert Associate for International Projects	Regional
<b>Mario Klisura</b>	Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences (FPZ)	Representative	National
<b>Tihomir Barišić</b>	City of Zagreb	Transport Sector Official	Local (Capital City)
<b>Domagoj Đurkinjak</b>	City of Zagreb	Representative	Local
<b>Darinka Jug</b>	City of Zagreb	Representative	Local
<b>Staša Kraljič</b>	Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy (Slovenia)	Representative	National





<b>Alan Vojvodić</b>	Croatian Automobile Club	Representative	Local
<b>Zoran Klarić</b>	Union of Cyclists Zagreb	Professor / Representative	National (Association)
<b>Vesna Jergović</b>	Ministry of health	Representative	Local
<b>Snježana Vincek Skrbinac</b>	Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure (Croatia)	administrative assistant	National
<b>Laura Mikulić</b>	HŽ Infrastruktura d.o.o.	Project Manager	National
<b>Saša Moharić</b>	City of Vodnjan-Dignano	Advisor	Local
<b>Valentina Buršić</b>	Agency for Rural Development of Istria (AZRRI)	Professional Associate	Regional
<b>Robert Lešić</b>	City of Rovinj-Rovigno	Advisor for Economy and European Funds	Local
<b>Martin Čotar</b>	IRTA d.o.o.	Employee	Regional
<b>Emanuel Bilić</b>	Municipality of Tinjan	Senior Professional Associate for Development Projects	Local
<b>Denis Kontošić</b>	Istria County	Senior Advisor for Roads and Road Transport	Regional
<b>Marino Anjoš</b>	Istria County – Administrative Department for Sustainable Development (Maritime Affairs, Transport and Infrastructure Section)	Senior Professional Associate for Roads and Road Transport	Regional
<b>Cristina Vojić Krajcar</b>	Istria County Tourist Board	Marketing Manager	Regional
<b>Barbara Kalister</b>	Municipality of Svetvinčenat	Senior Professional Associate for	Local



		International Projects	
<b>Dalibor Zupičić</b>	Labin 2000 d.o.o.	Director	Local
<b>Gordana Lalić</b>	Parentium d.o.o. (City Construction, Energy Efficiency and Environmental Protection Company)	Director	Local
<b>Tina Slamar</b>	Municipality of Vrsar	Mayor	Local
<b>Srđan Honović</b>	Jadrolinija	Head of Department	National
<b>Valter Bassanese</b>	Tourist Board of the City of Buje	Director	Local
<b>Astrid Glavičić</b>	Tourist Board of the City of Labin	Director	Local

### 3. Input information provided to the stakeholders

#### 3.1. General presentation

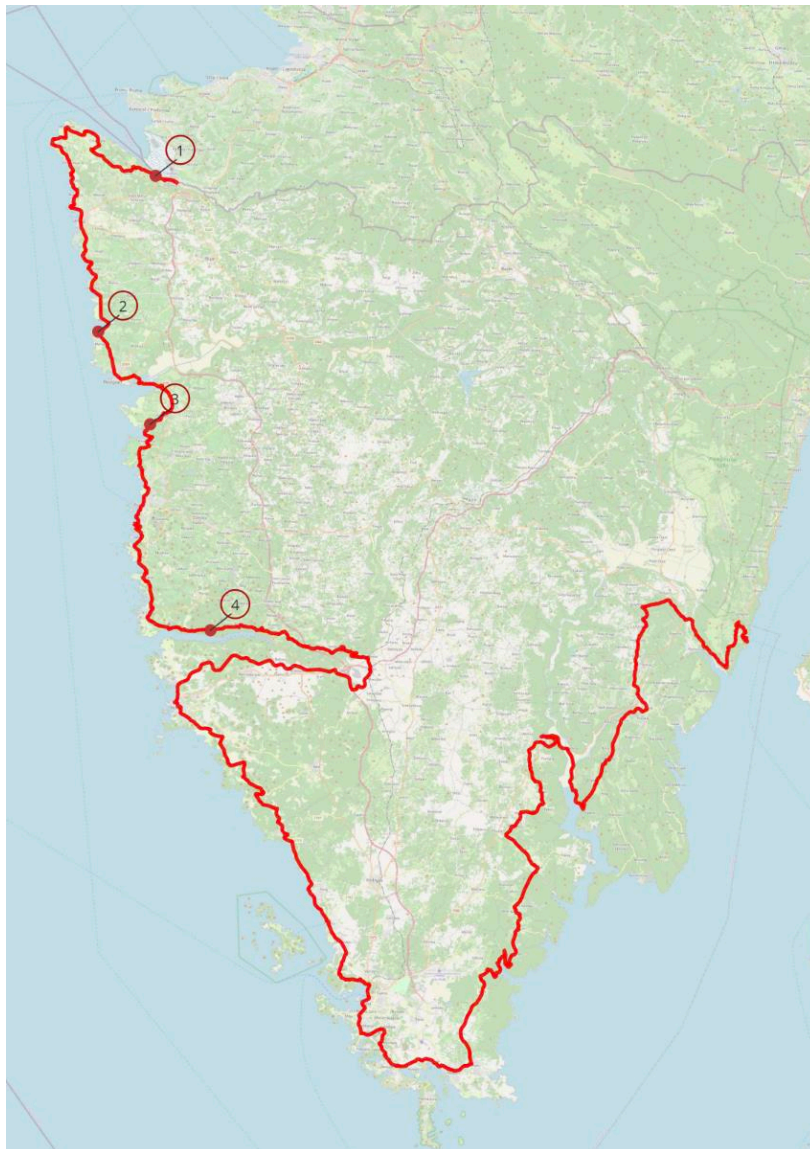
As part of the announcement of the National Cycling Conference, the CYROS project was introduced to stakeholders. Prior to the panel discussions, general information about the project was presented, with particular emphasis on the routing of the Adriatic-Ionian cycling corridor through Istria County. It was highlighted that the proposed route largely overlaps with EuroVelo 8, ensuring alignment with established European cycling corridors and applicable technical and safety standards.

The overall objective of the CYROS project is to enhance sustainable mobility and foster the development of cycling tourism through systematic route planning, mapping, and valorisation, while strengthening cross-border and interinstitutional cooperation. In addition to defining the main route alignment, it was underlined that the project includes the detailed mapping of points of interest (POIs) and the integration of public transport information along the route, thereby increasing accessibility, safety, and user-oriented functionality.





Stakeholders were also informed about their individual role within the project framework. Their responsibilities include participation in route planning and validation processes, provision of relevant data within their respective competences, coordination with competent authorities, and support in the implementation and promotion of project activities. Their active and responsible engagement is essential to ensure the lawful, efficient, and sustainable achievement of the CYROS project objectives.



Adriatic – Ionian cycling route in Istria region



## 3.2 Thematic presentation

The thematic areas were addressed through a structured panel discussion, focusing on the current situation in Istria County and the role of maritime passenger transport within a broader multimodal and cross-border mobility framework.

### Mixed port system and maritime passenger transport

1. Strategic role of Istrian ports within regional and cross-border passenger flows.
2. Need to improve bicycle transport conditions on ferries and fast vessels (dedicated racks, storage solutions, clear operational rules).
3. Importance of railway integration (rail + bike + boat) and better physical and timetable connections between railway stations and ports.
4. Necessity of safe and continuous cycling infrastructure on access roads leading to ports and ferry terminals.

### Cross-border Italy - Croatia connections and Adriatic cycle mobility

1. Istria's position within Northern Adriatic cross-border tourism flows.
2. Brestova as the terminal point of the Adriatic-Ionian route in Istria County and its continuation towards the islands of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County via ferry services operated by Jadrolinija, identified as a key stakeholder in maritime passenger transport.
3. The role of maritime operators in facilitating bicycle mobility and of ports in providing cyclist-friendly services within port areas.

### Governance and local/regional cooperation

1. Establishment of a **coordination body at the level of Istria County** for the development of cycling infrastructure, strengthening inter-institutional cooperation.
2. Need for harmonised bicycle carriage rules and improved coordination between maritime, rail and local transport operators.
3. Presentation by the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region of a good practice example – the cross-border Bike Bus service – illustrating how targeted governance and operational coordination can enhance multimodal accessibility for cyclists.



## Cross-border prospects and integrated port services

1. Strengthening multimodal chains (boat + rail + bus + bike) within the Adriatic-Ionian corridor.
2. Improving cross-border cooperation frameworks and digital integration of passenger information.
3. Long-term investment in safe cycling infrastructure connecting inland routes, railway nodes, and port areas.

These key points provided the framework for further stakeholder input and the development of future-oriented recommendations.

## 4. Conceptual foreword for feedback from the key stakeholders

In this paragraph, the stakeholders' key feedbacks are reported. The different feedback are divided into strengths and weaknesses for each topic of the consultation. The strengths refer to the aspects that stakeholders appreciated and found valuable for each topic of the consultation. The weaknesses regard the aspects that have raised identified gaps among the stakeholders.

### 1. Maritime passenger transport system and sustainable mobility and multimodality along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route

The goal of this section is to collect information on the following topics:

- How can the maritime passenger transport system be made more efficient, convenient, and integrated for cycle tourists?
- What role should local authorities play in promoting greener maritime transport options for cyclists?
- How much of the regional territory should be associated with the maritime passenger transport system?
- What are the main strengths of your area in terms of cycle mobility promotion in the port areas?
- What weaknesses or barriers currently affect integration between bike, train, bus, and maritime transport?
- Which multimodal solutions and good practices are already in place (projects, services, digital tools, etc.)?
- What operational proposals would you suggest for improving intermodal ports?



In this section, the key feedback collected from stakeholders is structured into identified strengths and weaknesses, followed by an overview of the main challenges and current multimodal experiences in the region.

1. Maritime passenger transport system and sustainable mobility and multimodality along the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dense network of ports and piers along the Adriatic coast, enabling physical proximity between maritime services and major tourist and cycling destinations.</li> <li>• Natural multimodality of maritime transport, particularly in connecting mainland and islands, allowing cyclists to bypass geographically demanding or traffic-heavy road sections.</li> <li>• Possibility of bicycle carriage on ferries and selected seasonal lines, expanding the geographical reach of cycling routes.</li> <li>• Cross-border connectivity (HR-IT-SI) enhancing international attractiveness of the Adriatic-Ionian route.</li> <li>• Environmental sustainability, as maritime passenger transport can reduce road congestion and emissions during peak season.</li> <li>• Touristic added value, where boat transport itself forms part of the travel experience.</li> <li>• Existing examples of combined services (bike + ferry, bike + bus, bike + train), including seasonal or pilot solutions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High seasonality of maritime passenger lines, with significantly reduced or non-existent services outside the summer period.</li> <li>• Limited and non-standardised bicycle capacity on vessels, including inconsistent rules, fees, and boarding procedures.</li> <li>• Insufficient integration between ports and cycling infrastructure, particularly lack of safe and clearly marked access routes (“last mile” problem).</li> <li>• Weak coordination of timetables between maritime, rail, and bus operators.</li> <li>• Absence of a unified digital platform integrating schedules, bicycle carriage rules, availability, and booking options.</li> <li>• Inadequate port-side facilities, such as secure bike parking, e-bike charging stations, info-points, and service areas.</li> <li>• Vulnerability to weather-related disruptions, affecting reliability of integrated travel planning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What are the main challenges in terms of integrated mobility that currently affect cycle tourism and maritime transport in your region?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principal challenges currently affecting cycle tourism and maritime transport integration in the region include:</li> <li>• Fragmented governance and insufficient operational coordination among maritime, railway, and bus operators.</li> </ul>	



- Seasonal imbalance between supply and demand (overcapacity pressure in summer, lack of services in pre- and post-season).
- Lack of standardisation in bicycle transport regulations across operators and cross-border routes.
- Incomplete physical integration of ports with safe cycling corridors and urban networks.
- Limited digital integration and real-time information systems for multimodal trip planning.
- A particularly critical issue identified by stakeholders is the “last mile” connection between ports and cycling routes, where cyclists often face unsafe road sections, inadequate signage, or lack of direct infrastructure linking terminals with inland or coastal cycle paths.

### **What are port multimodalities and the main experiences of integration with local/regional practices currently underway?**

Stakeholders referred to several examples of existing or emerging multimodal practices:

- Ferry services allowing bicycle transport, including coastal and island connections.
- Combined systems such as bike + bus (buses equipped with bicycle racks) and bike + train (railway carriage of bicycles to coastal nodes).
- Cross-border ferry connections supporting cycle tourism flows between Croatia and Italy.
- Seasonal shuttle services linking ports with coastal and inland cycling routes.
- Initial examples of port-based facilities (bike services, small repair points, marina-based amenities).

However, these solutions are often seasonal, fragmented, and dependent on local initiatives rather than embedded within a unified regional mobility framework.

## **2. Integrated transport system and related services along the coast, in relation to the green cycling system in port areas**

The goal of this section is to collect information on the following topics:

- What makes your city/region attractive (or unattractive) for cycle tourists arriving in your port areas?
- If you were a passenger arriving here in a port, what would be the first thing you would expect to find?
- How can we improve the safety and comfort of the routes to the boarding point for cyclists?
- What obstacles discourage tourists from choosing bicycles as their main means of exploring the area?
- How can we involve local businesses (hotels, restaurants, shops) in supporting better cycle solutions for cycle tourists arriving in a port area?
- What role can digital tools (apps, GPS maps, route planners) play in overall management?



In this section, the stakeholders' feedback is structured into identified strengths and weaknesses, followed by proposed measures for encouraging sustainable mobility in port areas and improving the connection between cycle paths and ports.

<b>2. Integrated transport system and related services along the coast, in relation to the green cycling system</b>	
<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <p>Stakeholders recognised the following positive elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing cycling routes reaching port areas or located in their immediate vicinity.</li> <li>• Potential for natural integration of cycling and maritime transport, particularly for short coastal and island trips.</li> <li>• Availability (in certain cases) of bicycle carriage on ferries and catamarans.</li> <li>• Opportunity to introduce bike rental services directly in port areas, enabling immediate use upon arrival.</li> <li>• Possibility to create clearly defined starting and ending points of routes near terminals, especially for one-day visitors.</li> <li>• Recognised value of digital tools (apps, GPS navigation, route planners) to support orientation and trip planning.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <p>Stakeholders highlighted several barriers limiting the attractiveness of green mobility in port areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficiently developed or discontinuous cycling infrastructure connecting ports with city centres, beaches, and attractions.</li> <li>• Lack of clearly marked and safe cycling corridors in and around port zones.</li> <li>• Inadequate provision of secure bicycle parking and e-bike charging facilities in port areas.</li> <li>• Limited clarity regarding rules and conditions for bicycle transport on maritime services.</li> <li>• Weak integration of physical infrastructure with digital information systems.</li> <li>• Continued dominance of car-oriented access to ports and insufficient regulation of motorised traffic in port zones.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In the port area, what measures could encourage tourists to use bicycles, e-bikes, or walking routes instead of cars?</b></p>	
<p>According to stakeholder feedback, the following measures could significantly increase the use of sustainable mobility options in port areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of safe, clearly marked cycling and pedestrian corridors directly linking ports with surrounding urban and tourist zones.</li> <li>• Establishment of bike-friendly infrastructure within ports, including secure parking, mini service stations, e-bike charging points, and info-points.</li> <li>• Introduction or expansion of bike rental and e-bike rental services at the port upon arrival.</li> </ul>	



- Clear definition of route length and duration to help day-trip visitors plan return journeys in coordination with ferry schedules.
- Price incentives and integrated offers (e.g. ferry ticket + bike rental packages).
- Regulation of car access in port zones and promotion of Park&Ride concepts.
- Development of thematic and guided routes starting directly from port areas

### How can cycle paths be better connected to port areas?

Stakeholders emphasised that stronger physical and operational integration is required, including:

- Construction of dedicated and segregated cycling lanes leading directly to port terminals.
- Continuous upgrading of transport infrastructure to ensure safe separation of bicycles from motor vehicle traffic.
- Clear signage from the port exit towards main cycling corridors and vice versa.
- Digital navigation tools and mobile applications integrating ferry schedules with cycling routes.
- Formalised operational rules for bicycle carriage on maritime services, ensuring predictability for users.

Overall, stakeholders stressed that improving the integrated coastal transport system requires both physical infrastructure investments and coordinated service planning, combined with user-oriented digital solutions that make sustainable mobility in port areas intuitive, safe, and convenient for cycle tourists.

### 3. Cyros Pilot Actions and Adriatic maritime connections

The goal of this section is to collect information for the improvement of the Cyros pilot actions in terms of Adriatic maritime connections. In particular:

- How can the different stakeholders support the integration of the pilot actions in the Adriatic maritime connections?
- Which synergies are possible (other initiatives, other EU projects, etc.)?
- What systems need to be properly observed to improve the efficiency of maritime passenger transport in the valorization of the cycle tourism in the Adriatic area?
- Which elements should be monitored to improve maritime passenger transport efficiency (short/medium/long term)?

This section summarises stakeholder feedback regarding the improvement of the CYROS pilot actions in relation to Adriatic maritime connections, with particular emphasis on integration in port areas and enhancement of bike-friendly maritime services.



### 3. CYROS Pilot Action and Adriatic maritime connections

<p><b>Feedback - Identified strengths:</b></p> <p>Stakeholders recognised the following positive elements and opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear potential for CYROS pilot actions to position ports as key nodes of sustainable mobility, linking maritime transport with cycling infrastructure.</li> <li>• Opportunity to introduce standardised equipment in ports (secure bike parking, e-bike charging stations, info-points).</li> <li>• Strong potential for digital integration, including the development of an integrated application with real-time information on ferry lines, bicycle capacity, and navigation to the nearest cycling route.</li> <li>• Possibility to develop Bike&amp;Boat services and thematic itineraries starting from ports, enhancing the touristic value of maritime connections.</li> <li>• Recognition that pilot actions can serve as a catalyst for coordination between maritime operators, local authorities, and tourism stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Feedback - Identified weaknesses:</b></p> <p>Stakeholders also highlighted several structural and operational gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of uniform standards of equipment and digital services across Adriatic ports.</li> <li>• Insufficient year-round maintenance and operational continuity of services.</li> <li>• Weak physical integration between ports and cycling infrastructure (unsafe or unclear access routes).</li> <li>• Limited bike-friendly facilities in port areas.</li> <li>• Restricted or inconsistent conditions for bicycle carriage in maritime passenger transport.</li> <li>• Fragmented governance and insufficient cooperation between different levels of administration.</li> </ul>
<p><b>According to the stakeholders, can the proposed Cyros pilot action properly address the challenges of better bike solutions in the Adriatic port areas?</b></p>	
<p>According to stakeholder feedback, the proposed CYROS pilot actions have the potential to significantly address the challenges related to bike solutions in Adriatic port areas, particularly if they focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardisation of bike-friendly equipment and services across ports;</li> <li>• Digital integration of maritime and cycling information systems;</li> <li>• Development of safe and clearly marked cycling access routes to port terminals;</li> <li>• Strengthening cooperation with maritime operators to improve bicycle carriage conditions.</li> </ul>	



Stakeholders consider that, if properly implemented, pilot actions could transform ports into effective intermodal hubs and improve the overall attractiveness of sustainable mobility options.

#### **Is any pilot action adjustment needed?**

Stakeholders emphasised that successful implementation requires:

- Designing pilot solutions in close cooperation with local self-government units, ensuring alignment with territorial planning and infrastructure development.
- Ensuring equal standards and interoperability across different ports along the Adriatic corridor.
- Integrating real-time digital tools for scheduling, booking, and capacity monitoring.
- Guaranteeing maintenance and operational sustainability beyond the pilot phase.

Overall, while stakeholders see strong potential in the CYROS pilot actions, they underline that adjustments are necessary in terms of governance coordination, standardisation, and digital integration to ensure long-term efficiency and scalability of maritime passenger transport in support of cycle tourism in the Adriatic area.

#### **4. Governance schemes for a better local/regional cooperation on integrated mobility for maritime passenger transport**

The goal of this section is to gather information on stakeholders' experiences in managing and governing better solutions at the local and regional levels. The key questions are:

- Which governance models could be most effective (regional coordination, interregional tables, memoranda of understanding, legal instruments) in terms of better maritime connections for cyclists among Italy and Croatia?
- Which actors should lead the coordination at local, regional, and cross-border levels?
- How can cooperation between public and private stakeholders be strengthened?

This section summarises stakeholder feedback regarding governance models and coordination mechanisms for improving integrated mobility and bicycle accessibility in maritime passenger port areas.

#### **4. Governance schemes for improved local/regional cooperation on integrated mobility for maritime passenger transport**

**Feedback - Identified strengths:**

**Feedback - Identified weaknesses:**



<p>Stakeholders identified several positive elements in existing governance structures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-standing cooperation between municipalities and tourist boards in Istria, facilitating joint planning of tourism and mobility solutions.</li> <li>• Institutional readiness and prior experience gained through EU-funded projects, which support cross-sector collaboration.</li> <li>• Geographic proximity between cities and municipalities, enabling easier coordination at local and regional levels.</li> <li>• Complementary roles of public authorities, tourism bodies, and transport operators, particularly in the context of integrated tourism development.</li> <li>• Shared strategic interest in strengthening sustainable and multimodal transport solutions.</li> </ul>	<p>At the same time, stakeholders highlighted governance-related shortcomings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragmented competences and unclear division of responsibilities among ports, transport operators, and local authorities.</li> <li>• Different investment priorities and uneven development of infrastructure across municipalities.</li> <li>• Lack of unified standards for bicycle acceptance in maritime passenger transport.</li> <li>• Limited number of regular maritime lines and inadequate vessels for bicycle transport.</li> <li>• Absence of a common, integrated IT system for real-time information, booking, and capacity monitoring.</li> <li>• Weak coordination between maritime services and railway/bus connections.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Based on the experience of the stakeholders, what are the main governance challenges that have to be addressed in terms of improving bike accessibility to the port passenger areas?</b></p>	
<p>Based on stakeholder experience, the most significant governance challenges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organising port space in a way that integrates bicycles safely into passenger flows without causing congestion or safety risks.</li> <li>• Defining clear and harmonised rules regarding bicycle capacity, boarding procedures, and applicable tariffs across different maritime operators.</li> <li>• Establishing uniform standards for bike-friendly port infrastructure (parking spaces, info-points, charging stations).</li> <li>• Ensuring consistent and timely communication to cyclists regarding transport conditions and regulations.</li> <li>• Coordinating local coastal passenger transport with regional and interregional maritime services, as well as with rail and bus networks.</li> <li>• Addressing fragmentation of authority through clearer institutional mandates and structured inter-institutional cooperation.</li> </ul>	



### Main governance challenges experienced by the stakeholders:

Stakeholders emphasised that the key governance issues requiring attention are:

- Lack of a single coordinating body responsible for integrated bike + boat mobility solutions.
- Non-standardised practices among maritime operators regarding bicycle carriage.
- Inadequate integration between transport planning, port management, and cycling infrastructure development.
- Insufficient digitalisation and absence of interoperable IT platforms across operators and territories.
- Seasonal variability in services, complicating long-term planning and investment decisions.

Overall, stakeholders underline that improving governance for maritime passenger transport and bicycle accessibility requires clearer allocation of responsibilities, harmonised standards, strengthened public-private cooperation, and the establishment of coordinated regional and cross-border frameworks.

## 5. Cross-border perspectives to increase the efficiency of the maritime passenger transport system for better cross-border cycle tourism services.

The aim of this section is to collect data and experiences on potential cross-border cooperation programs (if any). The focus is primarily on comparison with experiences from other European regions. In particular:

- What opportunities and/or risks are associated with improving the efficiency of the maritime passenger transport system (e.g., regulatory, financial, infrastructural, digital)?
- What immediate (1–3 years) and medium-term (3–7 years) infrastructural and organizational solutions related to bike mobility could help address deseasonalization and integration with inland areas?
- Which cross-border experiences in cycle mobility and cycle tourism promotion are most relevant for your area?
- What added value would EU-integrated solutions bring in terms of infrastructure consistency, safety standards, economic and tourism development, environmental sustainability, funding synergies, and international recognition?

This section consolidates stakeholder feedback on cross-border perspectives for improving the efficiency of maritime passenger transport in support of cycle tourism, with a focus on practical solutions (immediate and medium-term) and existing cross-border experiences relevant for Italy–Croatia.



**5. Cross-border perspectives to increase the efficiency of the maritime passenger transport system for better cross-border cycle tourism services.**

**Feedback - Identified strengths:**

Stakeholders highlighted the following strengths and opportunities:

- Dense network of ports and landing points along the Adriatic coast, enabling natural integration of cycling and maritime travel.
- Natural multimodality (bike + boat): maritime links can connect coast–islands–mainland and help cyclists avoid demanding or unsafe coastal road sections.
- Existing seasonal services with bicycle carriage, including examples such as Velo Krilo (Pula–Zadar) and ferry operators that already accept bicycles.
- Cross-border attractiveness of Adriatic routes (Croatia–Slovenia–Italy) and strong tourism value of maritime travel as part of the visitor experience.
- Institutional readiness and EU-project experience, supporting cooperation, knowledge transfer, and access to funding mechanisms.

**Feedback - Identified weaknesses:**

The main gaps and risks identified by stakeholders include:

- Strong seasonality: limited or absent services outside peak season, despite cycle tourism growth in shoulder seasons.
- Limited frequency of lines and inter-city maritime connectivity, especially beyond summer months.
- Non-standardised rules for bicycle carriage between operators (tariffs, capacity limits, boarding conditions), reducing predictability.
- Insufficient port-side bike infrastructure (secure parking, charging, info-points, service points).
- Weak “last mile” connections: lack of safe, direct cycle corridors from ports to urban centres and attractions.
- Fragmented and incomplete digital information, including missing real-time capacity/booking data and lack of a unified platform.
- Governance fragmentation and weak coordination between maritime operators, port authorities, and rail/bus services.

**What could be the immediate and medium-term solutions, both infrastructural and organizational, to resolve the problem of integration of the cycle tourism with the port systems, and address the deseasonalization through integration with inland areas?**



#### Immediate and Medium-term Solutions (Infrastructural and Organisational)

*(to integrate cycle tourism with port systems, support deseasonalisation, and strengthen connections with inland areas)*

##### Immediate solutions (1–3 years)

- Introduce or upgrade bike-friendly equipment in ports: secure bicycle parking, e-bike charging, mini-service points, info-points and clear signage.
- Ensure safe and clearly marked access routes from ports to main cycle paths (dedicated corridors, improved crossings, separation from motor traffic).
- Establish standardised and transparent rules for bicycle carriage (capacity, tariffs, boarding procedures) and communicate them consistently and in advance.
- Develop an integrated digital solution (or interoperable modules) providing real-time schedules, bicycle capacity availability, and navigation from port terminals to cycling routes and services.
- Implement port-based bike rental availability (including e-bikes) and support “day-trip itineraries” with defined route duration aligned with sailing times.
- Encourage short-term Bike&Boat packages and simple combined offers (ticket + bike services), supported by clear information.

##### Medium-term solutions (3–7 years)

- Gradually move towards year-round coastal passenger services, or shoulder-season operational models aligned with cycle tourism demand.
- Develop Bike&Ride port hubs and strengthen integration with inland areas via coordinated connections with rail and bus nodes (ports linked to stations and inland cycling routes).
- Harmonise and scale up equipment and service standards across ports, ensuring comparable user experience along the Adriatic corridor.
- Strengthen institutional coordination frameworks (regional and cross-border) to support consistent planning, monitoring, and service continuity beyond peak tourism periods.

#### **Which are the existing cross-border key experiences in terms of cycle mobility/ cycle tourism promotion in Italy and Croatia (If any)?**

Stakeholders reported limited direct experience in some cases, but identified the following relevant examples and comparable practices:

- Bike&Bus practice (e.g., buses equipped with bicycle racks) as an integration model that can support port-to-inland connectivity.
- Bici+Treno programmes in neighbouring Italian regions (rail-based integration supporting multimodality to coastal nodes).
- EuroVelo/Adriatic corridor logic and cross-border intermodal models that build continuity across multiple countries.
- Reference example for the Adriatic context: MOSES project (pilot maritime line Trieste – Mali Lošinj – Susak), illustrating a cross-border approach to maritime connectivity linked to tourism mobility.



## 5. Future-oriented recommendations

Based on the feedback collected during the round table discussion and the online consultation process, the following future-oriented recommendations summarise the key priorities identified by stakeholders. These recommendations reflect operational, infrastructural, governance, and cross-border aspects necessary to strengthen the integration between maritime passenger transport and cycle tourism, particularly within the Adriatic-Ionian context. The proposals aim to improve multimodal connectivity, enhance bicycle accessibility in port areas, reduce seasonal imbalances, and promote coherent cross-border standards between Italy and Croatia. Where relevant, the recommendations also indicate possible implementation pathways, including institutional coordination mechanisms, infrastructure upgrades, digital integration, and pilot testing supported by EU funding instruments. The table below organises the recommendations according to the five thematic areas addressed during the consultation, while also highlighting cross-cutting priorities related to deseasonalisation and long-term financial sustainability.

N°	Key recommendations (and indication of possible ways to address them)
1	<p><b>Maritime passenger transport and multimodality</b></p> <p>Standardise bicycle carriage rules across maritime operators; strengthen structured communication with ferry companies; encourage installation of dedicated bicycle racks or clearly designated bike spaces on ferries and catamarans; define minimum bicycle capacity standards; increase continuity of coastal passenger lines beyond peak season; ensure safe “last mile” cycling access to ports; implement integrated real-time digital systems (schedules, bicycle capacity, booking).</p>
2	<p><b>Integrated coastal transport and green cycling system</b></p> <p>Upgrade ports into bike-friendly mobility hubs through segregated cycling corridors, secure bike parking, e-bike charging stations, service points and rental hubs; introduce combined ferry + bike packages; regulate car access in port areas and promote Park&amp;Ride solutions; ensure direct physical links between terminals and cycling routes.</p>
3	<p><b>CYROS Pilot actions and Adriatic maritime connections</b></p> <p>Harmonise equipment and service standards across Adriatic ports; scale pilot actions through interoperable IT platforms; ensure year-round maintenance of digital and physical infrastructure; co-design solutions with municipalities and maritime operators; pilot installation of bicycle racks and improved boarding procedures; monitor bicycle flows to optimise seasonal planning.</p>



4	<p><b>Governance schemes</b></p> <p>Establish a regional coordination mechanism for integrated bike + boat mobility; clarify institutional competences; introduce memoranda of understanding among maritime operators; harmonise operational and safety protocols for bicycle handling; formalise cooperation channels with ferry operators to ensure predictable capacity, transparent pricing and service standards.</p>
5	<p><b>Cross-border perspectives</b></p> <p>Develop Italy–Croatia interoperable standards for bicycle carriage and port infrastructure; create cross-border digital mobility platforms; promote joint Adriatic Bike and Boat branding; build on EU programmes (e.g., Interreg-type pilots) to test cross-border maritime lines equipped for bicycles; support deseasonalisation through coordinated coastal and inland connections.</p>
6	<p><b>Deseasonalisation and inland integration – cross-cutting</b></p> <p>Expand shoulder-season services; strengthen port-to-rail and port-to-bus connectivity; develop thematic inland itineraries linked to ports; create integrated tourism packages (ferry + bike + accommodation + guided routes).</p>
7	<p><b>Financial and operational sustainability – cross-cutting</b></p> <p>Combine EU and regional funding; implement pilot testing before scaling; introduce data-driven monitoring (bike counters, digital analytics); assess economic impacts of year-round services; support co-investment schemes for vessel adaptation (installation of bicycle racks and secure storage areas).</p>

## 6. Signature sheet, online form answers and press release

In accordance with the reporting requirements, the following documentation is provided as evidence of the stakeholder consultation process:

- A **scanned signature sheet** listing all participants who attended the consultation event;
- A **screenshot of the responses collected during the online consultation process**, demonstrating additional stakeholder engagement beyond the in-person session;
- A **photograph of the panel discussion participants**, documenting the stakeholder event (in-person format);
- A **link to the official press release**, confirming public communication and transparency of the consultation process.




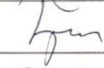
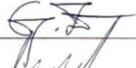
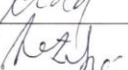
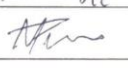

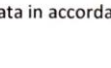


These materials collectively confirm the implementation of the stakeholder consultation in line with the project communication and participation principles.



## NATIONAL CYCLING CONFERENCE

ROUND TABLES - "Sustainable mobility and tourism" and "Maritime passenger transport"  
October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Poreč - Parenzo

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4

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I confirm that I am aware of the rights I have under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), including the right to access, rectify, delete, and restrict the processing of my personal data. I consent to the collected data being used for the purposes of the CYROS project.

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## Online consultation with stakeholders



Panel discussion participants, maritime passenger transport  
([https://nacionalnabiciklistickakonferencija.com.hr/?page\\_id=3204](https://nacionalnabiciklistickakonferencija.com.hr/?page_id=3204))

