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Summary of presentation titled:

STARNETregio- Transnational network of regional research-driven marine clusters

made by

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The competitive advantage of the EU in the maritime industry sector has to be sustained and depends mainly on the sector's performance, its flexibility and continuation of competitiveness. In this regard, shipbuilding is an important and strategic industry in a number of EU member states and for the European Community as a whole.

The STARNETregio project was conceived to increase the overall capacity of regional players in the Slovenija, Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy) and the County of Rijeka (Croatia) to invest in RTD and carry out research activities concerning the marine industry, in specific shipbuilding, intended to strengthen and develop the sector's scientific and technological basis and ultimately the economic growth of the regions.

The project was implemented during over a 30 month period in four main consecutive and complementary phases:

- 1) Establishment of the institutional cluster framework and thorough mapping of regional development plans and RTD key actors;
- 2) Cross-regional analysis of regional development plans and RTD actors, aiming at establishing the basis for a future trans-national collaborative research environment;
- 3) Knowledge transfer through mutual learning processes and mentoring activities;
- 4) Development of a joint Action Plan for improving the integration process.

Significantly, the project bore practical economic fruit even in these early stages, as companies were brought together to attain mutual objectives. Even more importantly, the findings of the researchers were implemented in Slovenia's national development program, establishing the need for advanced education in order to meet the needs of industry in the maritime sector.

