



PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

## **Program of the Activities of the AII Permanent Secretariat**

(Under the responsibility of the Chairmanship-in-Office and the Secretary General – art. 13, Guidelines and Rules of Procedure of the AII-PS)

**June 2018 – May 2019**

***Committee of Senior Officials, 3 October 2018***  
**Podgorica**

On the basis of art. 13 of the Guidelines of the AII Permanent Secretariat, the AII-PS “shall produce a yearly Program of activities and a Report of the results under the joint responsibility of the Chairmanship-in-Office and the Secretary General”.

The Report of the results 2017-2018 was submitted in Catania on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018 and approved by the CSO.

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The Program of the **Permanent Secretariat future activities** (2018-2019) will be strictly connected with the program of activities of the newly established Montenegrin AII Chairmanship, to be presented and approved by the CSO of 3 October in Podgorica.

The program properly takes in due account the role of civil society and its contribution to the action of AII and EUSAIR. The AII-PS has traditionally been very close to civil society and will continue doing so under the guidance of the Montenegrin Chairmanship, particularly assisting it through the overhauled AII Round Tables. Particular focus has been reserved to the connections and the integration with the “EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region”, by completing Round Tables progressive alignment to EUSAIR Thematic Steering Groups, by enhancing policy dialogue and cooperation among AII/EUSAIR Member States.

At the same time, Montenegro will put special attention to the promotion of European standards and values, supporting the EU perspective of the non-EU Member States, thus representing an impetus to the enlargement and integration process.

In this endeavour, the AII-PS will be on the side of the Chairmanship supporting it in the implementation of its program and priorities.

The AII-PS will also be on the side of the **rotating advisory group** (previous, current, future Chair of the AII / EUSAIR), which is a new body aimed at guaranteeing continuity and effectiveness of the work of subsequent chairmanship.

The **main task** of the AII-PS is to give support to the Presidency in the organization of AII meetings (Adriatic and Ionian Council, Committees of Senior Officials and Round Tables) by providing precedents, preparing documents and technically assisting the Presidency in the location of the meetings in the capital or elsewhere.

Should the Presidency include in its calendar one or more meetings in Ancona, the AII-PS will manage all its organizational aspects in cooperation with local authorities, as foreseen by the Guidelines (art. 6).

As for the **secretarial role**, the AII-PS will give support to the Presidency and its competent authorities (Ministries of Foreign Affairs, line ministries, etc.) in the preparation of the meetings; providing partners with all useful AII documents; helping the Presidency in drafting programs and agendas; circulating invitations to the representatives of Participating States; contacting speakers and participants when needed and assisting in drafting the final reports.

The AII PS will also give support to the Montenegrin Parliament for the organization of **the XVI Conference of the Speakers of the AII**.

As decided in the Conference of the Speakers in Neum on 23 April 2015 under the Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina, National Parliaments appointed “*a High Official from each National Parliament, in charge of liaising with the national Senior Official and the AII Permanent Secretariat on intergovernmental and EUSAIR issues*”. Later on, the network of high officials was officially established in May 2016 at the XIV Conference of Speakers in Split (*Dubrovnik Declaration, par. 16*). The AII-PS gives support to the network of High Officials of the AII National Parliaments keeping them up to date about events and activities within the AII and EUSAIR.

Since 2010 when the idea of the **EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)** was launched on the occasion of the Adriatic and Ionian Council of Ancona (5 May 2010), the AII-PS has played an active role, following the whole process towards its establishment. Once the EUSAIR was endorsed by the EU Council in October 2014, the AII-PS has been included as a full member of the Governing Board in order to give support to the co-chairmanship of the GB represented by the Country holding the annual AII Presidency.

During the period of the Montenegrin Chairmanship, the AII-PS will continue to give support to the AII Chairmanship in office and to ensure the follow up to the “Declaration of the Adriatic Ionian Council on the support to the EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region” (5 May 2010, Ancona) and the following declarations from 2011 to 2018.

The AII-PS will make sure that the **AII role of “intergovernmental anchorage”** of the EUSAIR (*Dubrovnik declaration, par 18*) is implemented and that AII activities are directed towards supporting the implementation and the accomplishment of the objectives of the EUSAIR.

With this in mind, the AII-PS will support the Presidency for the organization of the “Adriatic and Ionian Council / EUSAIR Ministerial Meeting” that will be held for the fourth time in this format in May 2019.

In line with the approval of the “overhaul” of the AII Round Tables by the AIC (Brussels, 12 May 2015), the AII-PS will try to ensure that the new “Rules of Procedure” are applied and that RTs actually become a further instrument at disposal of the EUSAIR and its Thematic Steering Groups. In order to attain this goal, the AII-PS will **act as a link** between the EUSAIR and the AII intergovernmental activities and will try to involve Adriatic and Ionian civil society and Fora as much as possible in its RTs and meetings.

Another important goal of the AII-PS activity will consist in developing and **strengthening the relations** (in a “project oriented” approach) **with local, regional authorities and with networks, fora** and associations operating in the Adriatic Ionian basin as requested in many occasions by AII Ministers in their Declaration.

Special attention will be reserved to the three Adriatic Ionian Fora (Forum of the Chambers of Commerce, Forum of Cities and UniAdrion), with which cooperation has been very active and fruitful since the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat.

In order to give boost and to strictly connect the activities of civil society to the Adriatic Ionian Initiative, the “Integrated Secretariat”, established in May 2013, will continue to be kept active through regular meetings, exchange of documents and experiences and common activities. Starting from this year, the AII-PS will put at disposal its seat for officials of the fora represented in the Integrated Secretariat at least once a week, in order to have a constant and fruitful exchange of information on their activities connected with the implementation of the EUSAIR and with their participation in AII meetings and activities.

In this context, the AII-PS will attend the **1<sup>st</sup> Joint Conference of the Fora of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, Cities and Universities** “Roots and Paths: Past, Present and Future for the Adriatic-Ionian Region” (Split, 16-18 October 2018) in the framework of the **AI-**

**NURECC initiative**, having as main objective to facilitate the activities of Adriatic Ionian Universities, Chambers of Commerce and Cities towards the implementation of the EUSAIR with a project-oriented / bottom up approach, ensuring wide and indepth territorial coverage, at regional and local level.

With regards to the AII Round Tables, the AII-PS will foster the participation of representatives of the Fora to the AII meetings (*Dubrovnik Declaration, par. 11*) in order to share their best practices and lay the foundation for new common initiatives. According to the new Rules of Procedure, their participation and contribution should be fostered as much as possible in order to promote an exchange between the civil society and the governmental level represented in the EUSAIR Thematic Steering Groups.

Upon approval of the Chairmanship in office, the AII-PS (as well as the representatives of all AII participating countries) will involve Associations, Fora, Organizations working in the area, every time this will be deemed beneficial for the success of the meeting (*AII RT Rules of Procedure, art. 5*).

The AII-PS is constantly invited to the annual **Regional Cooperation Meetings** gathering the Secretary Generals of the most important European Regional Initiative and Organizations. As always, the AII-PS will assure its participation keeping the Committee of Senior Officials fully informed also during the Montenegrin Presidency (*Dubrovnik Declaration 2016, par.17*).

In the context of cooperation with other Regional Initiatives and Organizations, the AII-PS is invited and participates (when possible according to the EUSAIR and AII engagements) to the Ministerial Meetings of CEI, BSEC, RCC and BSCC.

In conclusion, the AII-PS will continue executing all its functions in close and constant cooperation with the Chairmanship-in-Office and in line with the decisions taken by the relevant bodies of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative during the year.