

# THE SPLIT DECLARATION

Adopted at the 3rd Adriatic and Ionian Council

Split, 25 May 2001

**We**, the Members of the Adriatic and Ionian Council:

**Albania**, represented by the Vice Minister Pellumb Xhufi;

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**, represented by the Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija;

**Croatia**, represented by the Minister Tonino Picula; Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, represented by the Minister Goran Svilanović

**Greece**, represented by the Deputy Minister Grigoris Niotis;

**Italy**, represented by the Deputy Minister Umberto Ranieri;

**Slovenia**, represented by the State Secretary Magdalena Tovornik;

with participation of the **European Commission** represented by Per Vinther, Head of Delegation of the European Commission to the Republic of Croatia,

**Guided** by the Ancona Declaration of May 19/20, 2000 and its basic principles:

## I

**emphasise** the significance and concrete benefits of the political dialogue within the AII as an incentive for regional co-operation and strengthening of bilateral relations between the AII participating States;

**recommend** the continued consultations among the participating States on all issues pertaining to the AII co-operative framework in the spirit of good neighbourly relations, international law, the UN decisions and the decisions of other relevant international fora;

**express** their openness to and interest in establishing co-operation with the States and regional fora in Europe and in the Mediterranean;

**underline** the importance of the Stability Pact for South-eastern Europe, the

Zagreb Summit and the EU's Stabilisation and Association Process as well as individual efforts undertaken by AII participating States aimed at their gradual integration into the EU and strengthening of stability in this part of Europe;

**express** their satisfaction with the initialing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between Croatia and the European Union, and encourage other States in the Adriatic and Ionian area involved in the Stabilisation and Association Process to persevere in their efforts to conclude agreements;

**express** interest of AII participating States undergoing the process of stabilisation and association to negotiate in the foreseeable future the associated status with European Union;

**underline** that a new opportunity for strengthening their co-operation can be offered through co-ordination between the coming EU initiative "Interreg III Adriatic Cross-border" and "CARDS".

## II

**Welcome** the progress made in developing the organisation of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, especially the adoption of the AII Rules of Procedure and the Joint Statement from the Extraordinary AIC Meeting in Zagreb, 24 November 2000, as well as the implementation of the working programme of the Croatian chairmanship;

**reiterate** their determination to improve co-operation among the local and regional level authorities within the AII, and in this context welcome the Conclusions of the meeting of mayors in Split, 22 September, 2000;

**in particular, give credit to:**

- Memorandum of Understanding from the Rome meeting devoted to illegal border crossing of December 21, 2000;
- Conclusions of the Ancona Meeting of the ministers of environment of March 16, 2001;
- Ravenna Declaration on establishment of the Interuniversity Network

UNIADRION of December 16, 2000;

- Conclusions of the 1st Meeting of the Presidents/Speakers of Parliaments of the Countries Participating in the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative held in Zadar, 27 April 2001

**are pleased** with the reports of Round Tables discussing small and medium-sized entrepreneurship, economic co-operation and tourism, environmental protection and sustainable development, maritime economy and traffic, inter-university, scientific, cultural and educational co-operation, security and combating all forms of organised crime, and, with the help of experts, defining possibilities and proposing initiatives for the development of concrete co-operation in specific areas;

**strongly condemn** illegal trafficking in human beings and reconfirm that the AII participating States are fully prepared to intensify their co-operation in combating all forms of organised crime, money laundering and illicit trade, as well as international terrorism.

### III

**Welcome** the results of the Ancona Declaration conclusions of May 20, 2000 and the Memorandum of Understanding from Rome adopted on December 21, 2000, related to the fight against illegal migrations across and into the countries of the Adriatic and Ionian region, as well as the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime signed in Palermo on December 15, 2000, and fully support the following projects:

- those suggested for financing to the European Commission through the CARDS programme and which at the same time make an integral part of the V. Round Table Joint Statement
- the operationalisation of all the efforts regarding the State Contact Points with the aim of conducting prevention activities in combating the illegal migrations;

**stress** the importance of small and medium-sized businesses, tourism, economic and rural development as key elements for the stability and economic development in the entire region and support direct co-operation of corporate entities, giving particular preference to the priority projects chosen among those projects mentioned in the lists attached to the II Round Table Statement.

As concerns individual sectors, the objectives to be attained are as follows:

- promoting the setting up and expansion of SMEs with a view to creating the most favorable conditions for enterprises by providing both services to businesses and technical assistance to central and peripheral institutions;
- developing the industrial co-operation, notably in sectors such as agro-industry and fishery, textile, construction, woodwork industrial equipment and machinery;
- exchange of tourist information within the AII countries, especially concerning legislation in tourism (adjustment), quality standards in tourism, investment possibilities, training of staff;
- strengthening the co-operation in the energy sector in order to enhance local infrastructure and improving management;

**support** a closer co-operation in the field of maritime economy and transport, giving preference to the following projects:

- safety of navigation;
- intensifying port links in the region;
- co-operation in the area of seamen's education, including application of international standards, and promotion of seamen's education;
- Adriatic-Ionian traffic corridor which participating states will submit as the common proposal to the European Commission and to ECMT in order to include it in the Pan European Transport Network, namely the Adriatic-Ionian PETrA;
- implementation of the bilateral and trilateral agreements signed by the Participating States of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative in order to

increase the level of safety of navigation, particularly regarding navigation of ships carrying dangerous or polluting substances;

**emphasise** the importance of encouraging inter-university, scientific, cultural and educational co-operation to improve mutual understanding and confidence and to preserve shared cultural and natural heritage, undertaking initiatives in the following areas:

- supporting the development of the inter-university network UNIADRION, including also the establishment of the virtual university UNIADRION, sharing the knowledge and experience of all member countries and improving their cooperation in the higher education and research area;
- promoting networks of Centres of Excellence in the fields of environmental sciences, medical and biomedical sciences, molecular biology, marine ecology, information technology, etc.;
- improving the development of information society in the Adriatic and Ionian region;
- encouraging research in field relating to the historical and cultural heritage of the region, including in the first phase specific areas like those of archives, ancient theatres, and of abandoned schools along the coast and islands accompanied by the revival of old crafts, artistic youth centres, eco-centres etc.;
- establishing networks that shall develop and implement ecological research and environmental education;
- examining the possibility to promote primary and secondary school-level Centres of Excellence with special regards to vocational education, e.g.: standards, certification and evaluation indicators;

**aware** of the need to ensure sustainable growth and environmental protection, attach exceptional importance to greater ecological awareness and co-operation in the prevention of ecological disasters, and lend their support to the following projects in particular:

- sub-regional contingency plan in case of accidental marine pollution of the Adriatic Sea;

- programme on monitoring and research of the Adriatic Sea Quality with emphasis on the CAOS (Co-ordinated Adriatic Observing System) and ADRICOSM projects, contained in the Conclusions of the Ancona meeting of the ministers of environment;
- preparation of the RBMP (River Basin Management Plan) for the Adriatic region in line with EU/WFD and Coastal Area Management Plan (CAMP), taking into consideration the ADRICOSM project as well;

**reiterate** trust in EU approval to the LIFE-Third Countries project proposal called Strengthening Croatian Capacity in Environmental Data Gathering presented jointly by Italy and Croatia, aimed also to disseminate its outcomes to all AII Third-Countries;

**urge** the expert groups to continue their valuable work and report at the following session of the Council on the implementation of the accepted projects and, in co-operation with the EU institutions and member states, propose new ideas for co-operation of similar scale.

#### **IV**

**Stress** their readiness to co-ordinate the AII activities with other initiatives in Central and South-eastern Europe;

**express** their interest in exchanging information with the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Višegrad Group or the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC) and Central European Initiative (CEI);

**welcome** the interest shown by the European Union in an improved co-operation in the Adriatic and Ionian area and express their conviction that the AII will continue to provide significant contribution to the EU's integration and stabilisation policy in this part of Europe;

**welcome** the European Commission's intentions to take due account of AII priorities in the programming and project identification exercises for CARDS.

**invite** the EU to continue the co-operation already undertaken within the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative;

**express** their gratitude for the participation of the experts from the participating states in the work of the round tables and support the implementation of common projects included in the Joint Statement of the Round Tables;

**express** their gratitude to the Republic of Croatia for its contribution to the Initiative over the period of its presidency and for the successful organisation of this meeting of the Council, and entrust Greece with the next AII Chairmanship until May 2002.