



ADRIATIC-IONIAN INITIATIVE

**ITALIAN PRESIDENCY
May 2002 - May 2003**

I. Programme of the Italian Presidency

The programme of the Italian Presidency is intended to relaunch and reinforce the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII) and to ensure greater visibility and a more authoritative voice for the Initiative, not just within the countries involved but also at the international level. The programme will be based on the following key elements:

- **Reflection on the future of the Initiative**, in the light of current developments in the region, as an instrument that continues to have a specific and valuable role to play as a forum for dialogue and cooperation on issues of common interest to member countries by virtue of their position as coastal states bordering the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. In encouraging member countries, two of which are members of the European Union while the others are possible future members, to identify areas of common interest, the AII contributes undoubtedly to the stability of the area and its democratic, economic and social growth.

This reflection will serve as a background to the various occasions for political dialogue within the AII, especially in the meetings of the Senior Officials, of the Ministers with responsibility for the different sectors involved, and above all in the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers and in the Summit of the Heads of Governments.

- **The reinforcement of the Initiative** will have to be based essentially on a more effective role for the 6 Round Tables, which should have specific programmes reflecting the results to be achieved within the year of the Italian Presidency. A greater involvement in the activities of the AII by the local authorities and the business communities and especially by the Chambers of Commerce and SMEs, will also be encouraged.

There will be a particular focus on seeking out the necessary financial resources for

the implementation of specific projects approved by the Round Tables. In this respect, opportunities for dialogue will be pursued with the Commission of the European Union, other European bodies, the Stability Pact and the Central-European Initiative.

- The Italian Presidency will encourage **cooperation with other regional initiatives in South-Eastern Europe**, in the conviction that every possible synergy must be encouraged with other multilateral initiatives already operating in the region. Where feasible, some form of division of tasks and effort between these initiatives would lead to a greater degree of specialisation in their respective activities and, overall, to a more effective action by the International Community in South-Eastern Europe.
- **The priority issues for the Italian Presidency include a reinforcement and expansion of common initiatives in the following areas:**
 - **The fight against organised crime**, with particular reference to clandestine immigration and the trafficking connected with this. The intention here is to promote an effective and rapid resumption of the “Alert and Reaction Plan” and to set up training and re-qualification projects for members of police forces; and measures **to combat international terrorism**, following the guide-lines of the Joint Declaration signed by the Ministers of Interior and Public Order in Corfu on 10 May 2002.
 - **A detailed programme on the environment**, including a monitoring and research programme for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, the implementation of a plan to tackle accidental marine pollution incidents and the study of a plan for the management of the river basins of the Adriatic region.
 - Issues concerning the **economy, tourism and cooperation between SMEs**, with the signing and application of the Protocol of Cooperation between SMEs; a specific event on SMEs, focusing on industrial clusters; the enhancement and promotion of the so-called “culture economy” or “economy of culture”; and inter-regional initiatives on tourism, energy and public services.
 - **Transport**, with a particular focus on the pan-European inter-modal transport Corridors (relaunch of the V and signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the VIII) and on the so-called “Adriatic and Ionian Motorway”.
 - **Cooperation on maritime issues**, especially short sea shipping
 - **Culture**, with particular reference to entertainment events held in archaeological sites, the application of Information Technology to archives, and the restoration of the cultural heritage.
 - In the area of **inter-university cooperation**:
 - development of UNIADRION activities (Adriatic and Ionian University Network, with the aim of establishing a permanent link between Universities and Research and Development Centres of excellence in the countries of the Adriatic and Ionian basin).
 - alongside University education, activities will also focus on the enhancement

of **advanced professional training**, for which special initiatives are already under study.

- **Cooperation between the Parliaments of the member countries of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative** has thus far been limited to two meetings of their respective Presidents: the first in 2001 in Split under the Croatian Presidency and the second in May 2002 in Athens under the Greek Presidency. The Italian Government has taken careful note of the conclusions of the Second Conference of Presidents of our respective Parliaments and is in full agreement with the affirmation of the importance of the role that national Parliaments can play in strengthening cooperation between the seven countries of the Initiative. In this spirit, the Italian Presidency will encourage all those initiatives aimed to establish a more stable and systematic framework for the participation of the parliamentary dimension in the activities of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, on which we intend to submit proposals.