



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
Ministry Of Foreign Affairs
Herzegovina



ADRIATIC – IONIAN INITIATIVE
Chairmanship of Bosnia and

Platform of Cooperation of the Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Adriatic Ionian Initiative is an initiative established by the Ancona Declaration, during the Summit on Development and Security on the Adriatic and Ionian seas, held in Ancona on May 19 and 20, 2000. The member states are: Albania, Italy, Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia and Montenegro as a union before the referendum. The main objective of the establishment of this Initiative was strengthening and promotion of the cooperation among the member states to make sure that the entire AI region becomes an area by creating a solid base for the process of European integration.

The Ancona Declaration established the main body of the Initiative, the Council of the Foreign Ministers of Adriatic Ionian Initiative, which is the highest body of the AI. This body is assisted by the Senior Officials Committee, which is convened in a non - institutionalized way, twice or three times a year. This is decided by the Presidency in Office*, which independently sets the agenda of activities.

Meantime, this Declaration decided on the establishment of four Round Tables, which became six, in the course of the coming years and coincide with the priorities of the Initiative. These Round Tables meet usually once or twice a year, in compliance with the intensity of the Presidency work and are as follows:

- Fight against organized crime
- Economy, tourism and cooperation among SME-s
- Environmental Protection and sustainable development
- Transport and Shipping cooperation
- Culture
- Education and inter-university cooperation

The main priorities of the cooperation are decided by the Presidency in Office. Each Table assigns its most specific priorities.

According to the Rules of procedure, Croatia was the first country to assume the Presidency, while Greece assumed the Presidency from May 2001 to May 2002. Slovenia from May 2003 to May 2004, Serbia and Montenegro from May 2004 to May 2005 and Albania for the period of May 2005 to May 2006.

Taking into account direction of activities defined in previous period and results achieved especially during the last year, at the time of very substantial Albanian chairmanship over the Adriatic Ionian Initiative, and considering our attempts and objective possibilities within the program of Bosnia and Herzegovina chairmanship for this year, we have been trying to focus in particular to the following fields:

1. Deepening the cooperation in the framework of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative,

The priority fields where Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina will aim at a more intense and effective cooperation are:

Cooperation on the field of tourism - Starting from the character of the Initiative and geographical particularities of the countries that belong to it, as well as depending on the natural exceptional qualities of the whole region, in each of these countries, tourism represents one of the most important branches of economy. Therefore, this field is classified among our priorities. Because of the natural resources, it should be additionally valued and improved. In doing this, we believe that it is very important to dedicate oneself to development of common standards and criterions for further development of tourism, in terms of all elements that make the European Community. In a certain way, Adriatic Ionian Initiative is a natural spot where knowledge, experiences as well as good intentions in that process, are exchanged. This is particularly important in terms of the fact that some of the countries, being the most powerful in terms of tourism, participate in our Initiative, too. Their experiences are very important and useful for other countries in transition.

Transport and maritime infrastructure - Development of transport, communication and maritime infrastructure remains amongst the highest priorities of countries in the Adriatic Ionian Initiative. Situation in this field has direct influence on ecology, environmental protection, valuation of economic, cultural, tourist and many other assets. Special attention has to be further paid to Adriatic Ionian motor road and its inclusion into Pan European corridors. This is especially because a lot has been done at one route of the corridor. Reconciliation of all required standards for corridor construction is important field of All activities.

Cooperation in the field of education - Bologna Process remains a priority within this field. For many countries in transition, declarative support to this process is still disproportional to practical steps required for realization of the mentioned process. Due to many unclear issues, even insufficient preparedness to realize the essence and purpose of this process, experiences shared by the countries in the European Union that participate in the Adriatic Ionian Initiative, are of particular importance. In that context,

it is very important to strengthen inter-university regional network, which is an issue in this year of chairmanship that deserve the special attention.

Cooperation in the field of environmental protection - Reasons for being even more active in this field can easily be found at both global and specific level, in the very region. Global situation in the World is determined more and more by problems difficult to control, such as global warming and destruction of the environmental resources due to the human behavior. At regional level, special and additional problem is related to maritime transportation and its influence on the ecological system. Based on previous initiatives, and for these reasons, activities on making the *Sub-regional Contingency Plan for prevention* should be further supported, especially in the countries that do not have it. It has to be an answer to new dangerous situations, such as pollution of sea, as a result of bad infrastructure located next to sea, marinas and ships. Full regional coordination in this field represents priority for all of us. Adriatic Ionian Initiative in this field of activities is even broader than any other initiative.

2. Strengthening the relations with the EU structures

We are aware that our region is going through the continuous, positive changes. Already, three countries that are members of the Initiative are also members of the EU and all other countries are at different stages of the EU integration process. Thus, All has contributed and is still contributing in a positive way towards the enhancement of the cooperation, exchange of experiences and know-how in the main fields of common interests of the countries that are part of the Adriatic and Ionian region, bringing them closer to the required European standards.

Considering the fact that EU Member states deal with the same issues as countries which are in the EU integration process, and that they share experiences and help each other to establish common standards of action, is seen as a positive experience. In this context, it is necessary to develop all forms of common action, and to make contacts between All and the EU institutions, to contribute to rising of awareness within EU structures of the necessity of active cooperation with the entire region, and particularly of the necessity of supporting the countries which are yet to become member states.

In this context, once again we want to reaffirm already mentioned objective of advancement of specific and practical cooperation between the EU and All, based on the Ancona Declaration. Organization of consultative meetings between representatives of mentioned structure still remains a part of our program and efforts.

3. Follow - up of the discussions on structural issues

In past period, proposals determined by Platform of Albanian Chairmanship over All, and at the same time initiated by its members, have been discussed within the Initiative. It is our opinion that during BIH Chairmanship over All it is necessary to continue these discussions, and to make a right decision on acceptance or refusal of a proposal.

Above all, it includes the following:

Establishment of a liaison office

In previous discussions on this subject, two groups of different views have been emphasized. On the one hand, it has been assumed that the establishment of a small, operative office with one or maximum two persons will considerably strengthen this regional Initiative, support faster and better communication between the members and, with the "permanent address" will finally legitimize the Initiative as equally important among others European initiatives.

On the other hand, a reservation was expressed towards "further institutionalization of new forums and initiatives", "strengthening of administration", as well as towards capabilities of ensuring required funds for such an office. Obviously, there are enough arguments for both sides, which encourage us to continue this discussion until we reach joint position about the proposals.

Permanent chair of each Round Table

Given the difficulties related with the maintenance of the Initiative's memory from one Presidency to another, especially concerning the concrete issues dealt by each of the Tables. This obstacle will increase the inefficiency of each of the Tables and will consequently hinder the continuity of the cooperation among our countries. A solution to this problem, which would have been more immediate than the establishment of a Liaison Office, is the creation of the Permanent Chairmen of the six Round Tables. In order to achieve this, it should be attained the establishment of a new Table or, as it has been already discussed, the division of the sub-table of Tourism from the table of Economy.