



10 YEARS
ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
ITALIAN CHAIRMANSHIP
2009-2010

Illustrative Note

Framework

- The Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (AII) was established at the Summit on Development and Security in the Adriatic and Ionian, held in Ancona (Italy) on 19th/20th May 2000 and attended by the Heads of States and Governments of Italy, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece and Slovenia. At the end of the Conference, the Foreign Ministers of the participating Countries signed the “Ancona Declaration” in the presence of the European Commission. In 2002 the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) entered the Adriatic Ionian Initiative. Later on, in 2007, after its dissolution, Serbia and Montenegro appeared in the AII “Sarajevo Declaration” as independent states.
As the Declaration states, strengthening regional cooperation helps to promote political and economic stability, thus creating a solid base for the process of European integration. Across time, all the Adriatic and Ionian Countries have joined the AII, and we are moving to celebrate our first ten years of regional cooperation.
The Italian Republic is very proud to assume the Chairmanship of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative for the period 1st June 2009 – 31st May 2010, and to have also the opportunity, at the end of this period, to host the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of the Initiative.
- The Adriatic and Ionian Initiative, created under the auspices of the European Union, should rescue this original feature and for this reason the Italian Chairmanship intends to reinforce diplomatic relations between the AII and the European Commission. This programmatic priority is linked with the will to strengthen the “project oriented approach” of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative, developing its potential to implement regional projects coherently with the European Union priorities in the region and its programs.
- Strengthening the relations between the AII and the European Union means also to support the perspective of the European integration for all the AII – non EU member Countries. The Italian Republic supported the signature of the Stabilization and Association Agreements between the AII – non EU



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Countries with the European Commission, last year, and greeted with satisfaction further steps made by Croatia in its march of approach towards full EU membership. In this sense, the Italian Chairmanship of the AII intends to foster the European Perspective of all its members, besides the divulgation of European standards and values not only in all the Adriatic and Ionian region but also within its neighborhood.

- Indeed, besides strengthening the relations between the AII and the European Commission, the Italian Chairmanship of the AII intends to support also the establishment and the reinforcement of a closer relationship between the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative and other regional organizations working in Central and South East Europe, especially those interested in issues similar to those concerning the Adriatic and Ionian Region. In this sense, the Italian Chairmanship intends looking also for establishing concrete contacts with the Union for the Mediterranean, given the belonging of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas to this broader dimension.
- The Italian Chairmanship of the AII intends to underline the role of local authorities in the development of a more concrete “project oriented” cooperation in the Adriatic and Ionian Region. Their expertise in terms of bilateral and multilateral project, especially in the framework of the trans-border cooperation programs funded by the EU, has to be valorized within the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative, in order to grant a “project oriented” approach to the Initiative.
- Coherently with this assumption, the events foreseen under the Italian Chairmanship of the AII will be - almost always - hosted by the Region Marche, and they will take place especially in Ancona, the city which gave birth to the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative almost ten years ago and which already hosts the AII Permanent Secretariat.
- The regional cooperation must pay attention to the civil society and, in order to achieve this goal, the Italian Chairmanship of the AII intends to strengthen not only the involvement of local subjects, but also the participation of National Parliaments to regional cooperation. Enhancing the AII Parliamentary Dimension means to promote the visibility of the AII regional cooperation at the National level.



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- The year of the Italian Chairmanship of the AII will be concluded with a relevant event in Ancona, intended to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the AII and to reflect about the perspective of the AII regional cooperation, given recent developments and goals achieved during the last Presidencies.



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Aims

- Implementing the Adriatic and Ionian Council decisions about the “project-oriented approach” the AII should develop in areas of common interests, such as Environment, Tourism, Culture and Inter-university cooperation, Transports and Maritime Cooperation, Small and Medium Enterprises;
- Strengthening the cooperation and good neighbor relations among the participating states, as auspicated since the „Ancona Declaration”, according to which strengthening regional cooperation helps to promote political and economic stability, thus creating a solid base for the process of European integration;
- Development of the AII - EU dialogue and consolidation of the European perspective of the AII non-EU member states;
- Strengthening relations between the AII and other regional organizations operating in Central and South East Europe, especially with the Central European Initiative and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, and establishing closer links with the Union for the Mediterranean
- Enhancing the AII Parliamentary Dimension, in order to promote the visibility of the AII regional cooperation at the Parliamentary level and to foster a feed-back assessment of the AII potential fields of action from the democratic bases of the member Countries;
- Coordination of the AII activities agenda with the participating states, taking into account the political priorities of the region, and imprinting a “project oriented” approach to the work of the Round Tables.



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Programme of the Activities of the AII Permanent Secretariat

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On the basis of art. 13 of the Guidelines of the AII Permanent Secretariat, the AII-PS shall produce a yearly programme 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 2008-2009 was submitted to the CSO in Athens on the 13th of May 2009 and was approved by the Committee.

The programme for the future activities is obviously connected with the programme of the activities of the newly established AII Italian Chairmanship and will be examined during the CSO of the 16th of June in Ancona.

The tasks of the AII PS include the organisation of all AII meetings which will take place in Ancona (art. 6 of the Guidelines). This will take also account of the neighbouring localities.

We will also support the competent authorities of the different Italian Ministries in the organisation and the logistical support for the Round Tables. This will include the circulation of invitation and final reports to the participating countries. Furthermore, we will assist the competent administrations in the drafting of the final reports.

In addition, we will play a direct role in the organisation of some collateral events like the “Seminar on the Balkans: 20 years after the fall of the Berlin wall” to be held at the Faculty of Economy of the University of Ancona in April 2010.

It remains one of the main goal of the AII PS to develop and strengthen the relation, with a project oriented approach, with local and regional authorities, as well as with the three Adriatic Ionian Fora located in Ancona (Forum of the Chambers of Commerce, Forum of Cities and Towns and UniAdrion). We take as an example of the function of the Permanent



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Secretariat the project ADRION supported and illustrated by the PS in many occasions during the Greek Presidency.

It goes without saying that, as during the previous Hellenic Chairmanship, we are ready to react to any request or suggestion coming from the participating countries.