



REPUBLIC OF ITALY
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE REPUBLIC OF ITALY
JUNE 2009 – MAY 2010

The Ancona Declaration

Adopted at the 12th Adriatic and Ionian Council
Ancona, 5 May 2010

We, the Members of the Adriatic and Ionian Council: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia,

Guided by the Ancona Declaration of May 20th 2000, the principles and statements expressed and confirmed by the Declarations of the Adriatic Ionian Councils from 2001 to 2009, as well as the principles and guidelines of the European Union.

In the occasion of the **X anniversary of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative**, remarking the progress made since its foundation by six states and its enlargement to Serbia and Montenegro later, the intensification of its work and the expansion of its areas of cooperation, considering that the AII has always been directed to the aim of the enlargement of the European Union to all its participating States;

1. Acknowledge the role of the AII has played so far in strengthening cooperation and exploring ways for enhancing prosperity in the whole AII region, good neighbourly relations among the Participating States, and their bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and in fostering regional economic development;

2. Reaffirm that the future of the South Eastern Europe lies within the European Union as stated in the Thessaloniki Declaration in 2003, thus welcoming the relevant progress achieved by AII Participating States in their European integration process and underlining the need to accelerate it by concrete steps forward such as visa liberalisation for Albania and Bosnia- Herzegovina;

3. Welcome the forthcoming EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Meeting to be held in Sarajevo on June 2nd 2010 as an unique opportunity to reaffirm the EU perspective of the region;

4. Underline that enhanced regional cooperation is an effective incentive, instrumental to foster political and economic stability, thereby making it the most solid basis for progress in the European integration process;

5. Emphasize the importance of intergovernmental cooperation in the Adriatic-Ionian basin as a tool for fostering balanced and sustainable development in the region, and

reaffirm their commitment to the AII as an important platform for achieving that scope;

6. Underline the importance of territorial cooperation in all its forms – regional, cross-border, trans-national – for achieving significant targets of cohesion in the region, and renew the commitment to further develop the regional cooperation within the AII with the perspective of improve cohesion and socio-economical development in the Adriatic-Ionian region;

7. Welcome the EU commitment to support regional cooperation also through specific EU strategies addressed to the development of EU macro-regions, such as the Baltic macro-region and, more recently, the Danube region. In this sense, it is a common auspice that also the Adriatic-Ionian area might develop and benefit from similar policies, in the future, through the establishment of an EU strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian region. For this purpose, a separate declaration is adopted by the Council;

8. Confirm the need to strengthen the capacity of the AII to act on a project-oriented manner based on a continued active and strong commitment of each Participating State, thus welcoming the finalisation of the protocols on small and medium enterprises cooperation, on archaeological underwater cultural heritage, on tourism development in the Adriatic Ionian basin, as well as on the strengthening cooperation in rural development;

9. Welcome the results of the 8th meeting of the Presidents of the Parliaments of the AII, held in Bari 29th of April 2010 and consider the Declaration adopted at the meeting as a significant contribution to the AII activities, in particular regarding the relations with the European Union in the light of developing an EU strategy for the Adriatic and the Ionian region;

10. Take note of the discussions and the opinions expressed in the meetings of the Committee of Senior Officials during the Italian Chairmanship concerning further improvements of the AII activities, including the use of appropriate mechanisms of cooperation, designed to accomplish our priorities in the fields of common interest;

11. Acknowledge as priorities of the AII, small and medium enterprises; transport and maritime cooperation; tourism; culture and university cooperation; environment and protection against fire; agriculture and rural development, in line with the reports of the Round Tables organised in these fields during the Italian AII Chairmanship and welcome the X Meeting of the Forum of the Adriatic Ionian Chambers of Commerce (Ancona, 28th May 2010).

12. Recall the agreement reached in Ancona in 2000 on the need for deeper involvement of the EU in the Adriatic and Ionian area and our invitation to the European Commission to continue the cooperation already undertaken within the AII through complementary EU programmes;

13. Underline the significance of regular contacts with other organizations and initiatives active in our broader region, such as the Central European Initiative, the Regional Cooperation Council, the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the Council of the Baltic Sea States in order to exchange information on activities and best practices, explore possible common grounds for concerted action and avoid duplication;

14. Welcome the participation of the CBSS to the XII AII Council as a concrete step forward in strengthening the mutual cooperation on the basis of the proposals made by the experts on April 29th-30th 2010 in the fields of institutional cooperation, and encourage the incoming Montenegro Chairmanship to elaborate further the proposals in the fields of sustainable development, university cooperation and civil society;

15. Reiterate our determination to improve cooperation among the local and regional level of authorities within the AII;

16. Take note of activities of other fora of the Adriatic and Ionian area (the AIC - Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, Forum of the Adriatic–Ionian Cities and Towns and UniAdrion) and urge the Committee of Senior Officials and the AII-PS to support the strengthening of cooperation with these bodies;

17. Acknowledge the achievements and the experience of the Trilateral Commission for the Protection of the Adriatic Sea and encourage the application of the criteria foreseen by the “Sub-Regional Contingency Plan for Prevention of, Preparedness for and Response to Major Marine Pollution Incidents in the Adriatic Sea” by all AII Participating States;

18. Observe with satisfaction the approval by the CSO of the annual report of activities of the Permanent Secretariat of the AII, seated in Ancona, under the guidance of the Secretary General of the AII-PS;

19. Reiterate the need to explore possibilities for mobilizing adequate financial resources in order to ensure significant progress in projects of common interest;

20. Express our appreciation to Italy and the Region Marche for their support in providing the necessary facilities and financial means for the AII-PS to be functional;

21. Thank the Italian Republic for its contribution to the Initiative over the period of its Chairmanship and the organization of the 12th Adriatic and Ionian Council;

22. Entrust Montenegro with the next AII Chairmanship from 1st June 2010 until 31st May 2011.