



REPUBLIC OF ITALY
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



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

**Declaration of the Adriatic Ionian Council
on the support to the EU Strategy
for the Adriatic Ionian Region**
The 12th Adriatic Ionian Council
Ancona, 5 May 2010

We, the representatives of the Governments of Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia

Reaffirming that the future of the South-East Europe lies within the European Union in line with the EU Declaration on enlargement signed in Thessaloniki in 2003;

Persuaded that strengthening regional cooperation is an essential instrument for accelerating the integration of the SEE within the EU;

Convinced that the Adriatic-Ionian Region, with its area of approx. 610.000 square kilometers and a population of more than 96 million people, it is to be developed into a European macro-region of security, stability and prosperity;

Bearing in mind the outstanding significance of the Adriatic Ionian region for its cultural, social and economic heritage for the whole continent, for the European Union, particularly for the Union's territorial cohesion;

Convinced that homogeneity, interconnection and the maritime character of a macro-region are primary issues of cohesion and that the Adriatic and Ionian seas are becoming a true internal basin of the EU;

Taking into account the experience of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the ongoing activities for the presentation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region;

Determined to enhance the equality, good neighborhood relations, cooperation and understanding among countries and peoples of the Adriatic and Ionian region as well as the integration of markets and the free circulation in the context of the EU policies, legal framework and principles for a more homogeneous, balanced and sustainable development aimed at reducing economic and social differences;

Recognizing the importance of the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the leading role of the European Union, especially of the Commission, in facilitating the process of cooperation in the Adriatic Ionian region;

Confident that enhanced targeted cooperation under the future EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian region is of paramount importance for all countries and citizens in the region by providing new additional benefit in political, economic and cultural domains;

Acknowledging the importance of an integrated approach to the identification of common needs, solutions, challenges and opportunities and matching them to available territorial resources without prejudice to the negotiation of the future cohesion policy;

Considering the crucial role of the existing solid set of regional and sub-regional cooperation already active both at intergovernmental and grassroots level such as regions, cities, chambers of commerce, universities, civil society organizations, etc.

Emphasizing that a future EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region will serve the goal of increasing prosperity, security and peace for the peoples living there, especially through enhancing cross-border, trans-regional cooperation and coordination;

Convinced that the Strategy, through its features of inclusiveness and comprehensiveness, will also be highly beneficial for non EU member States especially for candidates and EU potential candidates;

Considering the strategic policy areas of environment, protection against fire, energy, transport, sea highways, accessibility, fishing, port security, coastal management, rural development, tourism, culture, university cooperation, civil protection, SME cooperation as elements for the future EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian region;

Taking into account that the future Strategy has to be in line with and serve the values of the European Union, the main scopes, principles and policies as enshrined in the Treaties;

Being aware that no new institutions, nor legislations, nor funds will be required for the Strategy, which will rather rely on better co-ordination of our resources;

Welcoming the efforts already made and the work done in the framework of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative and other fora, institutions, organizations, networks;

Affirm our readiness to

- Foster an attractive, secure and prosperous Adriatic Ionian region along our common values, principles and fundamental objectives;
- Play an active role, engage public and private sectors and encourage stakeholders, especially regional authorities, companies, universities and civil society for the successful preparation of a future EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region;
- Strengthen a regular dialogue at political and expert level to discuss the implications of different fields of cooperation in the Adriatic and Ionian seas;
- Work in cooperation to find solutions to the challenges the region is facing in the above mentioned fields of common interest;
- Use sustainably, carefully and rationally the natural resources of the Adriatic and the Ionian seas in order to protect environment and human health;
- Activate a process aimed at placing the region into a European regional policy perspective taking advantage from the intergovernmental experiences;

Task

- The AII participating States, through the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), to examine the possibilities and the conditions for promoting on the EU level a future EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region;
- In particular, the EU Member States of the AII, in close coordination with the other AII participating States, to take all contacts at EU level to promote an EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian region with the EU institutions, such as the European Commission, the European Council, the European Parliament and the EU Committee of Regions.

Ancona, 5th May 2010