



**HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**



**ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC
JUNE 2008 – MAY 2009**

**MEETING
OF THE COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS**

Athens, 28.1.2009

AGREED MINUTES

The second meeting of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (AII) Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) under the Hellenic Chairmanship was held on January 28th 2009 in Athens. The meeting was chaired by Counsellor Dimitris Macrynikolas, B2 Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic. The list of participants in the meeting is attached.

The meeting adopted the draft agenda, a copy of which is attached. Then, the Committee adopted unanimously the draft minutes of the CSO meeting of June 20th 2008.

The Hellenic Chairmanship reviewed the last six – months activity, pointing out the importance of the AII Permanent Secretariat established in Ancona and the excellent cooperation between the PS and the Chairmanship. It referred to the decision to promote regional tourism in AII Participating States combining the expertise of all AII Round Tables in serving this goal. The Chairmanship highlighted the comprehensive AII Conference on February 13th in Corfu and stressed the importance of co-operating with other Initiatives in the Adriatic Ionian region.

The European Commission stressed the importance of regional co-operation in promoting development and prosperity and paid special attention to cross-border issues like environmental protection. Moreover, it confirmed its willingness to co-operate with the AII and urged the Initiative to be in contact with relevant European Commission sectors.

The Italian press agency ANSA presented the attached project idea on organizing an Adriatic-Ionian Communication Platform. The aim of the project is to connect all the press agencies of the AII Participating States, in order to facilitate dialogue and co-operation through communication. The Committee initially approved

the project idea and urged the Permanent Secretariat to explore possibilities for convening a technical meeting of national press agencies, with the aim to initiate the pilot phase of the project.

The Hellenic Civil Aviation Authority presented the attached project idea on organizing an AI Air Transport Network (ADAT-NET). It proposed a network of air links as a major contribution to regional tourism and asked for further proposals from the Participating States Civil Aviation Authorities, in order to identify ways for funding, especially as transport is considered as a priority sector by the relevant European Commission authority. The Committee approved the project idea in general and agreed to wait for an answer by national authorities on whether they are interested in the project. In an affirmative case the issue will be examined during the competent Round Table in March.

The representative of the UNDP Athens Office presented a project idea on cross-border tourism. The project aims to facilitate cross-border tourism with a bottom-up approach, which would contribute to enhance relations among the business communities. The Committee approved in principle the idea of the project and asked for further details regarding next steps and ways of funding.

The Forum of AI Chambers of Commerce presented the attached cross-border co-operation project regarding a common brand for the Adriatic and Ionian tourism. The project comprises integrated tourist actions with environmental implications; it has already experienced a start-up phase and intends to expand its activities in a broader range through applying to IPA funds. The PS proposed to study in depth this project and transform it in a AII project during the next Round Table in order to be submitted for European support (IPA).

The AII Permanent Secretariat informed the Committee about its co-operation with the Forum of Adriatic – Ionian Cities and Towns. The representative of this Forum, Mr. D'Alessio, could not attend the meeting due to transport difficulties. This Forum works in a project-oriented way at the level of municipalities, giving priority to technical co-operation and environmental protection.

The Network of Universities in Adriatic-Ionian region (UniAdrion) highlighted itself as a virtual university with the participation of thirty six universities of the region. The didactic structure of its Master programmes alternate into face-to-face and online teaching mode. It works on education, training and capacity building and can award Master titles on tourism management.

The Secretary General of the AII-PS presented an Intermediate Report of the AII-PS activities for the period June 2008 – January 2009. The presentation was appreciated by the Senior Officials. The report focuses on co-operation with the Hellenic AII Chairmanship, the Region Marche, the three Fora of the Adriatic-Ionian region and the Italian Foreign Ministry. This report represents an anticipation of the annual report (art.13 of the PS guidelines) which will be presented for approval to the

next CSO meeting. The paper will be circulated in advance. It is necessary also to involve local authorities and private organizations with the ultimate goal to present a joint project relating a brand of the Adriatic Ionian area for European funding (IPA). The PS organized already two meetings to coordinate Adriatic-Ionian Fora and Italian regions to pursue the same goal.

The Committee took note of the proposal by the representative of Serbia that country presentations be organized within the framework of the AII in Ancona or in the capitals of the AII Participating States.

The Committee took a decision on approving CSO draft minutes by silence procedure fifteen days after the circulation of the text by the AII-PS.

The Committee also decided on convening open-ended technical meetings in Ancona when a tentative period of thirty days has elapsed after the initial announcement by the AII-PS without any comment to the contrary, leaving the judgment for adequate quorum to the AII-PS.

The Committee agreed that Senior Officials will ask representatives of their Embassies to take part in Round Tables when participation of relevant experts is not possible.

Concerning the comprehensive AII Conference in Corfu, on February 13th, four Participating States expressed their intention to take part at the level of Deputy Ministers, whereas the other four are expecting their Ministers reaction.

The representative of Italy announced that the first meeting of the incoming Italian Chairmanship-in-Office will take place in Ancona, on June 12th (CSO plus presence of personalities of Greece, Italy and Montenegro as incoming presidency – cultural events will also be organized for the occasion). The full programme of the Italian Chairmanship will be distributed at the beginning of June.