



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



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

Meeting of the AII Committee of Senior Officials

Athens, 13 May 2009

Agreed Minutes

The meeting of the AII Committee of Senior Officials was convened in Athens, on the 13th of May, 2009. It was chaired by the Director of the B2 Directorate of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Dimitrios Tsoungas. The List of Participants is attached.

The Hellenic AII Chairmanship pointed out that a productive momentum has been created in the context of the AII, promoted by the establishment of the project-oriented Permanent Secretariat, by the decision to combine the high-level expertise gathered in all AII Round Tables in the agreed goal of promoting regional tourism, further enhanced by the cooperation of all AII Participating States in the effort to work in synergy with private sector, local administrations and civil society, as well as by the prompt response of other initiatives and organizations active in the region to take part not only in the Adriatic Ionian Council, but also in the work of the Committee of Senior Officials too. The Chairmanship thanked the AII Participating States and declared its readiness to cooperate with all future Chairmanships, in order to achieve concrete results out of the developed momentum.

The representative of the European Commission stressed that regional cooperation is a central element of the Commission's policy towards the Western Balkan countries and that their future lies within the Union, once the established conditions are met. He also pointed out that enhanced cooperation among the various initiatives will ensure that duplication is avoided and the use of limited resources is maximized. Concluding, he reaffirmed that the Commission looks forward to continuing its cooperation with the AII.

The Secretary General of the Central European Initiative (CEI) mentioned that the origin of the CEI lies in the agreement signed in 1989 and that it took its present form in 2006, when Montenegro became the 18th member state. He clarified that the CEI main objectives are to bring the countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern

Europe closer together and assist them in their transition to stable democracies and market economies, as well as their preparation process for EU membership. He underlined that the CEI focuses on climate, environment, sustainable energy, enterprise development including tourism, human resources development, information society and media, intercultural cooperation including minorities, multimodal transport, science and technology, as well as sustainable agriculture. He pointed to the CEI Summit Economic Forum as the main CEI business event, which gathers government officials, industry leaders, businessmen, entrepreneurs, investors, financial institutions, international organizations, investment and trade promotion agencies, representatives of local authorities, bankers, fund managers, business service providers etc. both within and beyond the CEI region.

The representative of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) gave an overview of the work of the Organisation and its involvement in the region. She also mentioned RCC projects, among them the realization of a South-Eastern Europe Fire-Fighting Regional Centre. She concluded by wishing the strengthening of the cooperation among the two institutions, on a project-oriented level.

After having stressed the prolific cooperation between the AII Hellenic Chairmanship and the AII Permanent Secretariat, the Secretary General of the AII-PS Ambassador Alessandro Grafini, under joint responsibility with the Chairmanship-in-Office, presented the annual report of the activities of the AII-PS. The report highlights the role of the PS as the institutional memory of the AII and underscores the importance of having gathered AII documents produced before and after its establishment. The documents are at the disposal of all Participating States. The cooperation with Adriatic-Ionian Fora has been an important and very fruitful aspect of the first year of existence of the AII-PS, that has contributed to the project-oriented philosophy of the AII, particularly on regional tourism with the support to the Project ADRION of the Forum of Adriatic-Ionian Chambers of Commerce. The annual report was approved by the CSO as foreseen by Article 13 of the Guidelines and Rules of Procedure of the AII-PS. Concluding, Ambassador Grafini brought the experience of the last AII parliamentary meeting held in Athens on the 4th of May 2009, that confirmed the strong interest of all Participating States on AII activities, particularly those related to regional tourism and environment.

Finally, the Committee approved proposals for the Report of the AII Committee of Senior Officials to the Adriatic-Ionian Council on the ways to promote tourism in the AII region, for the Athens 2009 Declaration and for Decisions by the AII Council on Regional Tourism in the AII Region, as well as on entrusting the Italian Republic with the next AII Chairmanship. The text of the proposed Report, Declaration and Decisions are also attached.