



10 YEARS
ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
ITALIAN CHAIRMANSHIP
2009-2010

MEETING
OF THE COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS
Ancona, 27-28 January 2010

Agreed Minutes

The second meeting of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative (AII) Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) under the Italian Chairmanship was held on January 27th and 28th 2010 in Ancona. The meeting, in two sessions (27th and 28th), was chaired by Minister Plenipotentiary Guglielmo Ardizzone of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic. The related Agenda is attached hereby.

First Session.

During the first session of the meeting (27th January afternoon), after the welcoming address by Secretary General amb. Alessandro Grafini and Chairman Min. Ardizzone, a presentation was held by Mr. Gianluca Spinaci from the EU Committee of Regions about the **EU Strategies for Macro-Regions**.

The concept of Macro-Regions is one of the latest development in Europe in terms of fostering regional cooperation. According to Mr. Spinaci the AII has now the opportunity to capitalize its ten years of experience in cooperation by working on the creation of an Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region.

The creation of such Macro-Region would give the opportunity to all stakeholders working in the area to better exploit already existing EU funding and better coordinate the regional cooperation.

The experience of the already approved strategy for the Baltic Region (the Danube Region is under approval) is an example of the big opportunity an EU Macro-Region can give.

When asking for the establishment of a Macro-Region it is important to present the panorama of networks, associations, fora and institutions working in the area and to demonstrate how all level of government work in synergy.

Every Macro-Region should have some precise strategy axes, that is to say, to identify two or three problems or priorities and build on them some flagship projects. This way it could be possible to have a priority access on already existing EU funds. It was, finally, indicated the possibility to present a strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian region which should focus on three or four main items. The participants showed evident interest on this aspect.



10 YEARS
ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
ITALIAN CHAIRMANSHIP
2009-2010

Second Session.

The second session of the CSO meeting (28th January) started with some clarifications by Mr. Spinaci. He clarified that the decision about the institution of a Macro-Region is taken by the Member States, not by the Commission, so that the role of Greece, Italy and Slovenia as member States of the EU appears crucial. Also the role of the members of the EU parliament is important for such purpose.

After the previous illustration, all delegations demonstrated their interest to the opportunity of creating a new Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region. Therefore, the Italian Chairmanship tasked the AII Permanent Secretariat to draft a document in progress (in the attachment) on the issue. The position paper could be relevant in view of the next Forum in Brussels (13 April 2010) on Europe's Macro-Regions, organised by the Committee of Regions.

The **Chairman Min. Ardizzone**, presented to the delegations the work of the Italian Chairmanship on subjects of particular relevance. The idea has been to propose the signature of Protocols in order to strengthen the cooperation on Tourism, Small and Medium Enterprises, Rural Development and Culture.

The meeting on Tourism took place already two times and finalized a version of the Protocol. Now it is only to be decided the suitable moment to sign it. During the meetings on tourism has been also raised by Croatia the question of changing some language in the text. The Protocol is attached.

The Protocol on Small and Medium Enterprises was discussed during the Round Table on the 26-27 November 2009 and later finalized. It will be signed by the AII Ministers of Economy in Verona during the Conference on South East Europe (11-12 April 2010). The Protocol is attached.

Rural Development has not been a focus of the AII in the past. However, according to the experts in agriculture, there is space for cooperation also in this field as the cooperation on a bilateral basis is already strong. Now, through the signature of a Protocol it will be possible to pass to a multilateral basis and to build an AII network for rural development. There was consensus in developing this new area of cooperation. Draft protocol and an explanatory note are attached.

Ms. Zarattini from the **Italian Ministry of Culture** presented the opportunities of cooperation on underwater archaeology which is the main issue to be analyzed under the Round Table on Culture during the Italian Chairmanship of the AII. Also within this field of cooperation it is foreseen the signature of a Protocol (a first draft in the attachment). The idea is to foster an exchange of experience and build common projects among the AII Participating States particularly in the field of



10 YEARS
ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
ITALIAN CHAIRMANSHIP
2009-2010

new technologies, classification of underwater archaeological and biological data and in combating archaeological funding thefts.

Min. Ardizzone added that there will be the opportunity to sign a Protocol on Culture on the 23 April in Montenegro during the Conference of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe.

Ms. Olivi from the **EU Commission Representation in Rome** gave a presentation on the EU cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes covering the Adriatic-Ionian basin. The most suitable EU funding programme for the countries of the AII is the IPA-Adriatic. Component II of IPA (Instrument for pre-accession assistance) regulation supports cross-border cooperation at borders between candidate/potential candidate countries and between them and EU member States. The priorities of the IPA Adriatic programme are economic, social, institutional cooperation; natural, cultural resources and risk prevention; accessibility and networks; and technical assistance. The first call has been closed on the 29 October 2009 and now projects are under evaluation. Ms. Olivi also pointed to the increasing relevance of territorial co-operation within the European context, as well as of an emerging interest in identifying macro-regional strategies in view of better co-ordinate efforts. Until now The European Council has invited the Commission to establish such an integrated framework for the Baltic Sea and the Danube areas. Nonetheless, there are discussions and reflections rising, here and there, about 13 other possible areas which could be subject of a macro-regional strategy. A macro-regional strategy would not imply additional money for the area concerned, but improved synergies and better alignment to joint policy developments.

Mr. Scepanovic from **Montenegro** expressed his strong interest for the realization of an Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region which could be a great opportunity to help the process of accession of all countries participating in the AII which are at a different stage of integration. During the second half of 2010 Montenegro will have the presidency of three regional initiatives (AII, CEI and SEECF), therefore, Mr. Scepanovic proposed the idea of making a forum in order to share experience among the three initiatives. The next AII Presidency should follow the subsequent stages of the AII-PS.

Mr. Dolinsek from **Slovenia** stated that the AII should use all opportunities at its disposal for fostering development. He supported the intention of becoming a Europe's Macro-Region and proposed to involve AII Ministers of Foreign Affairs in order to give impetus to this idea (Especially in the next meeting of the AIC of the 5th May 2010).



10 YEARS
ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
ITALIAN CHAIRMANSHIP
2009-2010

Mr. Stojovic from **Serbia** supported the idea of a new Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region which regards the Western Balkans and asked the delegations to identify in every country which is the ministry in charge with EU funding programmes in order to have a better coordination.

Ms. Hoxha from **Albania** suggested to collect information from EU delegations in all countries to identify common projects and priorities in order to have a winning strategy when asking for the institution of a Macro-Region.

Mr. Makrynicolas from **Greece** also supported the idea of an Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region. He proposed to put together all elements, ideas, projects in order to involve more the EU Commission in the activities of the AII. It is possible to ask to hold a meeting in Bruxelles inside the EU institution in order to increase AII visibility. The representations of Greece, Italy and Slovenia could play a preparatory role. Such approach has been already taken by the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. The BSEC troika and the Secretariat have represented the organization and its member states within the EU institutions.

Mr. Makrynicolas underlined that the role of the CSO is to propose the way forward of the AII and that is important to take advantage from the past activity. In this light he identified encouraging signs and problems the AII faced.

The encouraging signs have been: the ability of the Presidency to involve more the EU Commission; the decision to establish a Permanent Secretariat which has given new impetus the AII work; the fact the UniAdrion will have its Secretariat in Ancona; the involvement of the civil society in Corfu during the Hellenic Presidency; the work of the Italian Presidency on Protocols; the opportunity of the Europe's Macro-Region regarding this area.

The problems the AII is meeting are: the current difficult economic situation (it is important to involve the private sector); Ministries do not always participate to the work of AII Round Tables; Some projects have been presented and did not have a follow up.

The **Secretary General amb. Alessandro Grafini** reminded that during the Hellenic Chairmanship of the AII the project ADRIION was presented. The project is now under the examination process of the IPA funding scheme.

Furthermore, he informed about the meeting of the Speakers of the Parliaments of the AII that will be held in Rome on the 29th April 2010. The Parliamentary Dimension is a crucial aspect of the AII and the Hellenic Presidency has the merit of having restored it. The celebration of the X anniversary of the AII



10 YEARS
ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE

ITALIAN CHAIRMANSHIP
2009-2010

and the AI Council will be held on the 5th May at the “Palazzo degli Anziani” in Ancona, the same palace where the Initiative was inaugurated ten years ago.

Finally, amb. Grafini presented to the delegates the “Intermediate Report of the activities of the AII-Permanent Secretariat” (in the attachment). Particular relevance has been given to the legal status of the AII-PS. The Secretary General has suggested to add an article to the AII-PS Guidelines and Rules of Procedure in order to give the host country an international reference for the internal definition of the legal structure and status of the AII-PS.

The Chairman, Min. Guglielmo Ardizzone concluded the meeting by informing that the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs has invited the CBSS (Council of Baltic Sea States) Troika to the AIC and related events, including celebrations of the X anniversary of the AII. The purpose is that of sharing AII and CBSS experiences in dealing with similar problems, as both the Adriatic-Ionian and the Baltic are semi-closed seas. In this regard, at the end of April a workshop will be held in Ancona.