



10 YEARS  
ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE  
   
ITALIAN CHAIRMANSHIP  
2009-2010

**MEETING  
OF THE COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS  
Ancona, 26 March 2010**

**Agreed Minutes**

The third meeting of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative (AII) Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) under the Italian Chairmanship was held on March 26<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Ancona. The meeting was chaired by Minister Plenipotentiary Guglielmo Ardizzone of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic. The related Agenda is attached hereby.

Min. Ardizzone presented the Agenda of the meeting and gave the floor to Mr. Fabio Vallarola representing the “**Adriatic Protected Areas Network**” (AdriaPAN). AdriaPAN is a spontaneous network of 19 protected areas and 24 other institutions interested in the conservation of the biological diversity in the basin (mainly universities). The network does not have a pyramidal structure and usually works on EU financed projects managed by the lead partner. The most important project AdriaPAN is following at present is “PAEIAS” (Protected Areas efficiency in Adriatic Sea) where the lead partner is the University of Primorska (Slovenia).

Mr. Vallarola asked for support to the network by the AII and committed in informing the AII-PS of all activities carried on by it. All participants agreed to support AdriaPAN by giving the opportunity to use the AII logo for its activities.

Mr. Dimitris Makrynicolas from Greece appreciated the presentation of Mr. Vallarola and suggested him to take contacts with the other Adriatic-Ionian Fora having seat in Ancona and to involve AdriaPAN in the future AII meetings on Environment.

Min. Ardizzone presented the state of affairs of the **AII Protocols of Cooperation** proposed by the Italian Chairmanship. The Protocol on SMEs Cooperation was signed in Verona on the 11 February. The Protocol on Tourism Development was accepted by all AII participant states after the last revision including Croatian and Greek comments and should be signed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May by AII Ministers of Tourism. The Protocol on Rural Development was discussed in Rome during the ad hoc Round Table on Rural Development and the AII experts found an agreement very easily. The Protocol could be signed in Ancona during the International Fishing Fair (21-23 May 2010). The Protocol on Underwater Archaeology Cooperation was delivered to AII Senior Official in its last version.



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After its approval it is foreseen to sign it during the meeting of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe to be held in Cetinje, Montenegro on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2010 (There is a request of postponement).

Mr. Makrynicholas proposed, in order to give more visibility to the Protocols, to invite competent EU Commissioners to their signature.

Ms. Sanja Bujas-Juraga from Croatia appreciated the effort of the Italian Chairmanship for the realization of the 4 Protocols and made a proposal in order to make them operative. Every Protocol should have a focal point for its application and follow up. The focal point should be an already existing institution working in the international environment on the issue related to the Protocol. As a first example, Ms. Bujas-Juraga proposed the Center for Underwater Archaeology of Zadar as focal point for the Protocol on Underwater Archaeology Cooperation. Mr. Milko Dolinsek from Slovenia added that every protocol should have an action plan to be implemented and coordinated by the focal point. The Presidency agreed with the Croatian proposal and asked the participants to think about institutions in their own countries that could act as focal point for the Protocols.

Amb. Alessandro Grafini proposed to use the Secretariat of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce as focal point for the Protocol on Small and Medium Enterprises. Furthermore, he suggested to insert a paragraph in the Ancona Declaration (2010) on the matter.

Min. Guglielmo Ardizzone introduced the question of the establishment of the **EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Macro Region**. For its geographical similarities and similar problems the Adriatic Ionian area can be compared and take advantage of what have been already done in the Baltic area that is the only European Macro-Region that have seen approved a comprehensive EU Strategy. Also the experience of the process of establishing an EU Strategy for the Danube Region could be of help.

Amb. Alessandro Grafini presented an Illustrative Note of the AII-PS on the EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Macro Region which is an improvement of the one adopted after the previous CSO (28 January 2010). The document is a supporting paper for better understanding what are the aims of the Strategy and the steps forward.

Min. Ardizzone proposed that as a first step, the AII Ministers of Foreign Affairs could, in the occasion of the AI Council (5 May 2010), adopt a political declaration expressing their will of supporting the process to approve the EU Strategy for the AI Macro Region.

Mr. Stojovic from Serbia proposed that the declaration should contain a sentence where the AII Foreign Ministers ask to the Foreign Ministers of EU member



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countries to foster the realization of the EU Strategy at the competent EU institutions. All delegates agreed.

According to Mr. Dolinsek, the process for establishing the Macro-Region should be inclusive. All AII countries should participate at the same level. Everybody agreed. All countries participate to the decision making process, and the EU member states should make leverage on the EU institution in order to make them aware of the importance of the Adriatic Ionian basin for the EU and to speed up the process.

Ms. Djurovic from Montenegro affirmed that the incoming AII Montenegrin Chairmanship will work together with the other AII countries in order to give the follow up to this process.

Min. Ardizzone introduced the question of the **legal status of the AII-PS**. The Secretariat is working together with the Italian Chairmanship in order to obtain an internal legal capacity. The idea is to set up a foundation with Italian legal capacity. In order to do that it is proposed a modification to the Guidelines and Rules of Procedure of the AII-PS. A draft recommendation to the AI Council for this purpose was delivered during the meeting. There were no objection to this amendment.

Amb. Grafini added that the AII-PS needs legal capacity in order to better exert its functions. The phrase to be added to the Guidelines has been taken from the Statute of the BCSS which has a similar structure and functions to the AII.

The proposal by the Italian Presidency to add to the Rules of Procedure two new Round Table (Rural development and Tourism) was discussed by the delegates. The conclusion was not to change the Rules of Procedure of the Round Table. In order to give Rural Development and Tourism the right space within the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative the ad hoc Round Table (art. 4) should be used.

In conclusion Min. Ardizzone presented the **Programme of the AI Council (4-5 May 2010)** that will be sent in due time.

The CSO will have place before the AIC on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May in Portonovo di Ancona. After it the Region Marche offers a dinner for the delegations and local authority in the same place.

The following day (5 May) the meeting of the AII Foreign Ministers will have place at Palazzo degli Anziani (where the Adriatic Ionian Initiative was founded in 2000) from 10 a.m. ending with a working lunch approximately at 3 p.m.

The Foreign Minister of Lithuania as President of the CBSS and the Secretary General of the CBSS will be also invited in order to start a cooperation with an experienced organization with similar problems and for the exchange of best



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practices particularly on the process of establishing an EU Strategy that for the Baltic has been already approved.

In order to involve the EU in AII activities also the EU Commissioner on Regional Policy Johannes Hanh has been invited.

During the AIC three documents should be presented

- 1) The traditional AII Declaration including a paragraph relating the cooperation between AII and CBSS, another paragraph on the mentioned four AII Protocols and a special mention on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AII;
- 2) A political Declaration related to the EU Strategy for the AI Region;
- 3) A Decision on the Legal Status of the AII-PS modifying the Guidelines and Rules of Procedure of the AII-PS

The AII Senior Officials agreed on it.

At the conclusion, Amb. Grafini gave and additional information: On the 28-29 of April the Meeting of the Speakers of the AII Countries will take place in Bari. President Fini will chair the meeting. Amb. Grafini proposed to insert a paragraph in the final declaration related to the AII Parliamentary Dimension. There was no objection to the proposal.