



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
CHAIRMANSHIP OF SERBIA
JUNE 2011 – MAY 2012

Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials

Ancona, 6 March 2012

Agreed Minutes

The second meeting of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative (AII) Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) under the Serbian Chairmanship was held on March 6th 2012 in Ancona. The meeting was chaired by Amb. Duško Lopandić of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia with the assistance of the AII Permanent Secretariat.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Chairman introduced the meeting welcoming the presence of Senior Officials in Ancona and regretting the absence of the delegate from Croatia who communicated the impossibility to be present because of health problems. The Chairman expressed the wish that next meetings will be participated by all Member Countries. Subsequently, he proposed the Agenda that was approved with no objections.

2. Communication by the Serbian Chairmanship about activities carried out until today and to be carried on until the end of the period of Presidency

Introducing his presentation, the **Chairman** highlighted the importance of regional cooperation in such a difficult moment for Europe and expressed his satisfaction for the important steps ahead by All participant Countries in the process of EU integration, which is one of the main goals of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative.

Subsequently, the Chairman listed the activities carried out until now by the Serbian Chairmanship, starting from the Ministerial meeting held in New York last September 23, in the margin of the UN General Assembly, with the participation of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Secretary Generals of AII, CEI, RCC and SEECF. After that event, two other Ministerial Conferences were organized in Belgrade (on "Prevention of Natural Disasters" 8-

11-2011 and on “Fighting Organized Crime” 29/30-11-2011) and two Round Tables on Small and Medium Enterprises (Belgrade, 3-10-11) and on Maritime Cooperation (Ancona, 13-12-2011). Furthermore, the Chairmanship represented the All in other occasions and fora.

For the future activities, the Chairmanship has already scheduled a Round Table on Environment in cooperation with UNDP and OSCE (Belgrade, March 22) also in preparation of the Earth Summit Rio+20; a Ministerial Meeting on Rural Development; a Round Table on Culture and Tourism and the meeting of the Presidents of Parliaments of the All (end of April).

Considering that Serbia will have parliamentary elections, it has finally been decided that the Adriatic Ionian Council will probably take place during the month of April. Relevant information about the place and the date will be communicated soon .

All delegates expressed satisfaction for the progress of Serbia and other Western Balkan Countries in the process for EU accession and underlined the crucial role of regional cooperation in this process.

Slovenia confirmed her readiness to take over, starting from next June, the All Chairmanship and informed that Ljubljana is already working on the programme.

Italy informed that on the 11th of January the Italian Senate approved a decision on the establishment of a Parliamentary Dimension/Assembly of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative. The above decision foresees that, as per Italian legal framework, the Government is entitled to support this process once the relevant decision on this matter has been adopted by the Conference of the Speakers of the Parliaments of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative.

3. All Project Oriented activities. Procedures for co-financing cooperation projects by the All-PS Foundation. Forthcoming publication of the first call

The Secretary General reminded that in many occasions the necessity for All to be a “project oriented” Initiative was expressed. In line with the approval by Senior Officials of the “Guidelines on Funding of All initiatives” and thanks to the budget put at disposal for such a program by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we have now this concrete opportunity.

Precise procedures in order to co-finance projects have been devised and the All-PS is ready to publish the first “Call for Proposal”. The Financing Programme (**Regional Cooperation Programme**) is inspired by the All funding documents and aimed at giving implementation to the **All Protocols** already signed (**SME, Tourism, Rural Development**). It will be possible to co-finance only project proposals aimed at fostering cooperation in the fields covered by the protocols or projects proposals supporting the process of establishment of the Adriatic Ionian Macro-Region. The All-PS contribution will be a co-financing rate that will not exceed the **50%** of the total budget of the project and will amount to a range of

10.000€ (Min.) and **25.000€ (Max.)**. The total budget funded by the Italian Government at disposal for the Call for Proposal 2012 amounts to **200.000€**.

The Senior Officials will be in charge of **disseminating information as much as possible** in their own country in order to give the opportunity to participate and accede to the All contribution to national institutions, associations, private and public bodies, universities, research centers, etc. It is foreseen a **minimum partnership** for a project to be eligible.

Once the Call for Proposal is closed (Mid May 2012) the All-PS will carry out a first **Formal Assessment** including an admissibility and eligibility check. **The Quality assessment** will be made by the Senior Officials through a Committee of Evaluator.

All delegates appreciated the start-up of the Regional Cooperation Programme and gave assurance they will circulate the information in their own Country.

Bosnia-Herzegovina and **Albania** suggested that “significant projects” with participants from three All Countries (and not only those from “at least four”) could also be accepted since, sometimes, it may be difficult to gather many partners considering the small scale of the projects to co-finance.

The **Secretary General** explained that the idea to encourage large cross-border participation was to be “as inclusive as possible”. The proposal will naturally be taken on board and an element of flexibility introduced.

Greece added that it will be up to the Senior Officials to assure that, among the co-financed projects, no All Country is excluded.

Finally, the **Italian Delegation** explained that the “Call for Proposal” is the natural follow up of the three All Cooperation Protocols signed during the Italian Presidency and that being this only the “first call” we will have time to evaluate the mechanism and, if needed, adjust it for the future.

The **Chairman** concluded that this will be a very important step forward for the All and that project oriented activities will give the All a greater visibility than in the past.

4. EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Macro-Region. Latest Developments. Stakeholder meeting (Athens, 14 February)

The Chairman confirmed the commitment of the All in working together for the establishment of the Adriatic Ionian Macro-Region and gave the floor to the **Greek delegate** in order to inform partners about the Workshop on the Macro-Region held in Athens last February 14th.

Greece affirmed that the meeting was crucial and confirmed once again the large consensus existing towards the common aim of establishing the Macro-Region. The

Workshop started with a plenary session with the participation of the Secretary General of the MFA of Greece, the rapporteur of the EU Parliament, the representative of the EU Commission and the All Serbian Chairmanship. The full support to the EU Strategy for our Macro-Region that was shared to the large audience of representatives of Ministries, Regions, Universities, Private Companies, etc., was made clear by their intervention.

Later on, the meeting was divided into four technical Round Tables: Fisheries, Environment, Safety at Sea and Blue Growth. Each of the meetings was co-chaired by the EU Commission, DG MARE.

A large awareness on the necessity of a EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Macro-Region emerged. Therefore, the next step is expected to be a decision by the European Council of June 2012 to give instruction to the EU Commission to start the preparation of the Plan of Action for the Strategy. After that, it will take about one and half year for the end of the process. The “maritime strand”, that is now the most advanced, is a great support in the framework of the comprehensive Macro-Region.

In the occasion of the meeting in Athens, the rapporteur of the EU Parliament (Committee of Foreign Affairs) for the Macro-Regions, **Nikolaos Salavrakos**, presented a Draft Opinion on the evolution of EU Macro-Region Strategies with the request to the EU Commission “to lend specific support to the idea of an Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region” (the draft opinion has been distributed to the participants).

Although according to the general rules of Macro-Regions, no new funds will be provided, the Greek Senior Official confirmed that it will be up to us to put together “flagship projects” to be financed by some EU sources (a paper on EU funding possibilities was delivered).

The **Chairman** agreed that, “for the time being”, there will be no new funds dedicated to Macro-Regions: therefore, we will have to carefully consider how to activate existing funds for projects in the Adriatic Ionian area.

Mr. Radulovic, representing the All Chairmanship at the Athens Workshop, expressed his satisfaction for the success of the meeting and added that the Report will be published on the internet site of DG MARE as soon as possible. Furthermore, he proposed that the invitation to the EU Council to give mandate to the Commission to start the Action Plan for the Macro-Region be integrated in the Belgrade Declaration to be approved by the next All Council.

The **Secretary General** agreed on the proposal and informed the audience that in the very recent past the rapporteur of the Committee REGI of the EU Parliament, **Francois Alfonsi**, visited Ancona and met relevant Adriatic partners, particularly at the regional level.

After listening to the participants, he gathered all the elements which prove that the Adriatic Ionian Macro-Region will not be an obstacle for a future larger Macro-Region for the Mediterranean but, on the contrary, a preliminary step for a wider Macro-Region that will be realized when political conditions are mature.

5. UniAdrion: Communication by the President (Rector Marco Pacetti)

The Rector of the “Politecnico delle Marche” **Marco Pacetti**, started his speech by giving a general picture of the university network **UNIADRION**, of its history, its members and its fields of action.

Among the projects activated with the support of UNIADRION it is worth to note the e-learning course on the Common Agricultural Policy (ELCAP), an English and free of charge training course mainly for students coming from countries approaching to the EU; a project for the creation of multicultural network for the preservation of common heritage of Trebinje in the framework of the tourism offer in the Adriatic financed with IPA funds; a research project on the Roman City and military legion of Viminacium in Serbia.

For the future, it has been decided to have a stronger connection between UniAdrion and the All with the opportunity to place the network within the All Permanent Secretariat and to link UniAdrion Chairmanship with the rotating All Chairmanship.

As for the future Strategy, UniAdrion will work on a project for reproducing the Baltic Organisation for Funding Science (BONUS) in the Adriatic Ionian region in order to manage a common research programme to be financed by the EU.

Greece appreciated the work done by UniAdrion in particularly regarding international PhDs since research programmes are very important also for the definition of our Macro-Region and could be co-financed by the European Union. It proposed to prepare a joint project including a call for researchers in order to give concrete project proposal for the Adriatic Ionian Macro-Region.

The **Chairman** commented the work done by UniAdrion and added that we should take in due consideration also the cooperation with the Baltics at all level since they have a longer experience concerning the Macro-Regional process.

6. Adriatic Ionian Forum of Cities and Towns (Communication by the All PS Secretary General)

The **Secretary General** gave information about the latest developments of the Adriatic Ionian Forum of Cities and Towns.

Last December 14th, the XIII Session of the Forum of Adriatic Ionian Cities was held in Ancona with the participation of 52 Municipalities of the Region. Three new Municipalities were admitted to the Forum: Trogir (CRO), Hvar (CRO), Budva (MNE).

For the first time the Forum of Cities has promoted the establishment of a new “**Forum of the Youth and the Schools**” of the Adriatic Ionian area. The result of such work was the finalization of the “**Charta of Educational Commitments of the Forum Member Cities**”

Forum of the Adriatic Ionian Chambers of Commerce (Vice President Rodolfo Giampieri)

The Vice President of the **Forum of the Adriatic Ionian Chambers of Commerce** gave a presentation of the activities of the network. Up to today 39 Chambers participate to it. Recently the national Chamber of Serbia acceded to the Forum.

The networks represents a 1.2 million enterprises from all over the Adriatic Ionian area and about 31 billion euro of commercial exchanges per year. Therefore, it is sensible to say that economy is a crucial element for integration and for facilitating the EU accession process.

A big success of the Forum has been the establishment of the International Court of the Adriatic Ionian Area with the task of **mediation, arbitration, arbitrage and contractual expertise** in transborder areas.

The Forum is active in Tourism with the internationally recognized brand ADRION for an integrated promotion of the whole Adriatic Ionian region in order to intercept mass tourism coming from the Asian and American continents. The Forum is also member of NECSTOUR, the European net for sustainable tourism and from 2012 the first network to be member of EuroChambre. The Forum is also actively supporting the establishment of the Adriatic Ionian Macro-Region and raising awareness about it in every possible occasion.

Concluding, President Giampieri invited all participants to the next session of the Forum that will take place in Brindisi next June.

Serbia expressed great satisfaction for the accession of its National Chamber in the Forum and recalled that representatives of the Forum participated to international Fairs organized in Belgrade and Novi Sad.

Bosnia-Herzegovina asked the Vice President of the Forum to invite and give membership also to the Chamber of Republika Srpska and the National Chamber of Foreign Trade. Furthermore, he noticed that in the AIC Forum leaflet there is mention of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and not of the State of Bosnia Herzegovina and asked to correct it.

Mr. Giampieri took note of the comment and assure to modify the leaflet soon.

7. Any Other Business

Greece reported that Greek Regions (that after a recent reform are elective bodies) expressed their great interest in cooperating with other Adriatic Ionian regions in the framework of the Adriatic Ionian Macro-Region.

The **All-PS** suggested that Greek regions take contact with the “Adriatic Euroregion” having seat in Pula, Croatia and the Presidency in Region Molise. It would be useful to open this institution to the Ionian area and in particular to Greek Regions by modifying its name into “Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion”.

Italy informed that, after the meeting, it will circulate a proposal of cooperation activity in the maritime sector, whose political meaning is to possibly provide the All Countries with an updated automatic ship monitoring and reporting system in line with the EU standards in this field. The proposal is managed by the Italian Coast Guard Headquarters and represents a follow-up of the Round Table on Maritime Cooperation held in Ancona on the 13th of December 2011.

The **All-PS** gave information of a contest organized by a Foundation of Region Marche dedicated to young people coming from All Countries.