



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
CHAIRMANSHIP OF BiH

MEETING OF THE **COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS**
OF THE **ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE**
January 22, 2015

ANCONA

Agreed Minutes

The second meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative under the Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina took place in Ancona on January 22nd 2015 in the margins of the "First meeting of the Governing Board of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region".

The meeting was chaired by **Amb. Branimir Jukić**, Senior Official and Chairman in Office for BiH, with the assistance of the AII Permanent Secretariat. Mr. Giannantonio Ballette (EU Commission - DG REGIO) attended the meeting as invited guest.

The **Chairman** introduced the agenda that was adopted with no objection.

1. Report on the first six months of Chairmanship and events planned by the AII Presidency until May 2015;

After adopting the agenda, and welcoming the Senior Officials in Ancona, the **Chairman** briefly described the activities carried out up to January from the BiH Chairmanship, starting from the Committee of Senior Officials held in Sarajevo on June 2014 which focused on the disastrous floods in BiH, Serbia and Croatia. After this first meeting, a Round Table on Small and Medium Enterprises organized in Sarajevo in December mainly focused on Entrepreneurial learning.

As for the future activities, the Chairmanship reminded that a save-the-date message has already been sent for the Round Table on Tourism that will be held next February 5th in Trebinje and asked the Senior Officials to make sure that experts from their tourism administration attend the meeting.

He concluded informing that the authorities of BiH are planning to organize a Round Table on Environment, the annual AII meeting of the Speakers of Parliaments and the Adriatic Ionian Council concluding the Presidency in May 2015. Dates and venues will be circulated as soon as possible.



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2. Overhaul of the AII Round Tables. Report by the Secretary General on the basis of the AII-PS paper;

The **AII Secretary General, Amb. Pigliapoco**, took the floor in order to illustrate the contents of the paper “AII Round Tables, Proposal for an Overhaul” circulated in advance to Senior Officials.

The Secretary General stressed that there is nowadays a clear need to overhaul the main AII cooperation instrument in order to align it with the change of times and conditions and, above all, with the new challenges required by the EUSAIR implementation phase.

As a matter of fact, it is becoming more and more complicated to organize Round Tables both because of budgetary constraints and because of the feeling that such cooperation does not pay off. A growing feeling that it would be worth concentrating more on the EUSAIR is now prevailing.

For these reasons it is crucial to change it by putting our Round Tables “at the service” of the EUSAIR Thematic Steering Groups (EUSAIR Pillars are already very similar to the AII Round Table priorities), without losing the intergovernmental nature of the AII, but making both avenues stronger, by keeping them up with the times.

Consequently, Amb. Pigliapoco asked Senior Officials for a mandate to further study the issue and to present an updated version of the “Rules of Procedure” of the AII Round Tables. He added that a first version would be prepared soon so that Senior Officials could timely give their contribution to the new document.

An updated Rules of Procedure document could then be approved by next CSO in May and subsequently endorsed by the Adriatic and Ionian Council.

The **Chairman** positively evaluated the Paper that was circulated by the AII-PS and, before giving the floor to Senior Officials, said that the BiH Chairmanship agreed on giving the AII-PS the mandate to update the Rules of Procedure.

Slovenia considered the Paper “very reasonable” and affirmed that an overhaul of the Rules of Procedure would be beneficial both for the EUSAIR Steering Groups and for the functioning of the AII Round Tables. Linking RTs to the EUSAIR would give them better chances to be effective and a meaningful agenda with a clear focus on EUSAIR projects and actions would motivate delegates to participate and offer a meaningful contribution both to the intergovernmental cooperation and to the EUSAIR.

Albania considered that the need to refresh the RTs according to the new challenges is clear and agreed on the mandate. Furthermore, he suggested the AII-PS to identify other regional organizations for a stronger cooperation.



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Italy fully agreed to give the AII-PS the task to update the RTs to the EUSAIR targets: the Italian Senior Official observed that AII is not only the “intergovernmental anchorage” of the EUSAIR, but also a strong and experienced link between the strategy and civil society.

Montenegro approved the mandate deeming it reasonable to think about a new model of cooperation in the intergovernmental framework.

Croatia welcomed and supported transforming R.T. into a further instrument of the Adriatic and Ionian Strategy and requested to make sure that the intergovernmental character of the AII would not be lost.

The **Secretary General**, fully agreeing with the suggestion, noted that overhauling and updating the RTs Rules of Procedure to new conditions would be beneficial both to the intergovernmental cooperation and to the EUSAIR.

Serbia touched upon the question of lack of funds, which often makes it difficult for experts to attend Round Tables. Furthermore he noted that when the goal of a meeting is not fully clear it is even more difficult to convince line Administrations to spend money and fund travel expenses for delegates.

A new vision of the RTs, as envisaged in the AII-PS paper, is very positive and could be really helpful both for EUSAIR and AII.

The **Secretary General** took the floor again thanking colleagues for their positive evaluations and informed that the AII-PS will soon start working on a new version of the “Rules of Procedure” using a step-by-step approach. He then asked the guest from the EU Commission DG REGIO to give CSO his opinion on the proposal.

Mr. Ballette stressed that everything insuring consistency to the EUSAIR is seen with favor and added that two points should be taken in mind when reforming RTs:

- The need to avoid duplications, so to concentrate resources;
- The link between the technical level of TSGs and the intergovernmental level with the goal to be useful for the EUSAIR Governance would be welcome by the European Commission.

3. Any Other Business

Under any other business, the AII-PS informed Senior Officials about a project financed by the AII-PS local partners (Region Marche, Ancona Municipality, Ancona University, Chamber of Commerce), aiming at training 40 young future entrepreneurs of the Adriatic and Ionian Region for the “development of innovative cultural start up enhancing the local cultural heritage”.

The project organizers ask for suggestions on how to spread the call in AII countries in order to choose young students that will attend the school “free of charge”.



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