



REPUBLIC of CROATIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS



ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
CHAIRMANSHIP OF CROATIA

MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE

October 6, 2015

ZAGREB

Agreed Minutes

The first meeting of Senior Officials under the All Croatian Chairmanship was held in Zagreb on 6 October 2015. The CSO was chaired by Amb. Tonči Staničić with the assistance of the Secretary General, Amb. Fabio Pigliapoco.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

Amb. Tonči Staničić took note that the Agenda of the meeting was acceptable to all participants with no exception.

2. Priorities of the All Chairmanship of Croatia

The **Chair** briefly described the priorities of the Croatian Chairmanship, reminding that a non-paper had been circulated to Senior Officials few days before by the Presidency.

Along with the typical All fields of cooperation (as protection of the environment, cultural heritage preservation, tourism, etc.) the newly established Chairmanship will put emphasis on the political dialogue and synergies between the All and the EUSAIR. Avoiding overlapping will be the Presidency's priority: redirecting the new overhauled All Round Tables into a further instrument at the disposal of the EUSAIR Thematic Steering Groups and synchronizing the EUSAIR Political Level with the Adriatic and Ionian Council, so to have only one meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs for both exercises with a joint declaration, will be the main goal of the Croatian Chairmanship.

The **Secretary General** highlighted that, thanks to the newly created political framework, also in the All framework, most efforts will be directed towards the implementation of the EUSAIR.

All delegates expressed full support for the priorities of the Croatian Chairmanship.

3. Program and Calendar of the Chairmanship

A calendar of the main events envisaged until the end of the Croatian Chairmanship was circulated to delegates. The Secretary General stressed that the foreseen events will take into account the calendar of TSG meetings, in order to make both exercises compatible.

4. Program of the Activities of the Permanent Secretariat

The **Secretary General** reminded that the paper “Program of the Activities of the All PS” was circulated in advance, describing the main tasks of the All-PS (first among them, the support of the Chairmanship in Office and co-Chair of the EUSAIR Governing Board).

The Secretariat will work, together with the Presidency, in order to put the RT overhaul into practice.

The Secretary General was asked to report on it to the EUSAIR Pillar Coordinators meeting scheduled for the afternoon.

5. Round Tables. How to put the “overhaul” into practice

The **Chair** reminded that a non-paper of the Presidency on the overhauled Round Tables had been circulated to Senior Officials previously.

Amb. Staničić observed that the All Ministers of Foreign Affairs had endorsed the decision to transform RTs into auxiliary tools at the disposal of the EUSAIR TSGs on the occasion of AIC in Brussels last May, so strengthening the “anchorage role” of the All in respect to the EUSAIR. The Chairmanship intends to implement this decision by redirecting the system of RTs holding RT meetings “back to back” with TSGs meetings.

It is therefore crucial that Pillar Coordinators are aware of the new instrument in order to make the best use out of it: All Senior Officials were asked to help to make Pillar Coordinators aware of this new instrument.

The **Secretary General** reminded that, in the past, invitations for RTs were sent by Senior Officials to line ministries of participating countries. After the overhauled system of Round Tables approval, the focus shall shift to civil society: therefore line ministries, prompted by Senior Officials, will have the task to help identifying the experts from the ground (civil society associations, Universities, Chambers...) allowing them to give their contribution to the TSGs activities through the participation in the Round Tables.

The Permanent Secretariat will, on its side, use the experience and the network of the three Fora of Civil Society having their Secretariat in Ancona, in order to ensure a qualified and active participation of Universities, Chambers of Commerce and local Administrations.

Montenegro expressed full support to the new approach and reorganization of RTs towards the EUSAIR, being this an opportunity to refresh activities also in the All framework.

Slovenia welcomed the new way to deal with regional cooperation issues, being the *raison d'être* of the All changed over the last years. Implementation of the EUSAIR will be crucial and the RT overhaul is the best way to respond to the new reality.

According to **Serbia**, flexibility of All has been crucial to adapt to the new situation. Involving experts from the ground means complying with the need to focus on the subsidiarity principle which is at the basis of the macroregional strategy.

6. Interlinks between the AI Council and the EUSAIR political level

The **Chair** quoted the AIC declaration of 13 May 2015 inviting “*the incoming All Presidencies and EUSAIR co-Presidencies to further enhance the interlinks between*”

the All Council and EUSAIR, fully recognizing the All's role of intergovernmental anchorage of the European Strategy for Adriatic and Ionian Region" which, in practice, paves the way to a new organization of the Ministerial Meetings at the All and EUSAIR highest level.

There was agreement on the impossibility of organizing two meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs dealing mostly with the same issues and in a short timeframe.

The SO agreed on the formula of EUSAIR Ministers of FA meeting / Adriatic and Ionian Council and tasked the **Secretary General** to report to the Governing Board the following day, about the discussion and indication coming from the CSO.

Albania welcomed the proposals by the Presidency both in terms of the RT overhaul and the reorganization of the AIC meeting, reminding that the All has been and continues to be a "milestone" for the EUSAIR.

Italy fully supported the idea of a Joint Declaration and a Joint Ministerial meeting in a way that the intergovernmental specificity of the All be preserved.

In the context of the involvement of civil society into the EUSAIR governance, according to Italy, the All-PS can play an important role by hosting the Stakeholder Platform that is going to be established.

All other delegates welcomed the new approach foreseeing a strong interlink between the AI Council and the EUSAIR political level.

7. All Parliamentary Dimension. Follow up of the Neum Declaration (23 April 2015)

The **Secretary General** took the floor reminding that a Parliamentary Dimension of the All is active and has been aiming - for some years - at getting more involved into the EUSAIR process.

At the last Conference of the Speakers of the All Parliaments in Neum (23 April 2015), the representatives of the All Parliaments decided to *"to establish a constant and more efficient flow of communication with the All Chairmanship in Office, by appointing in the coming months a High Official from each National Parliament, in charge of liaising with the national Senior Official and the All Permanent Secretariat on intergovernmental and EUSAIR issues"*.

In order to get the appointments of High Officials from National Parliaments in charge of liaising with the All PS and SO, the Secretary General asked Senior Officials to get in touch with their respective Speakers Offices to remind them their commitment and give a list of contacts not later than the first week of March 2016.

The **Chair** informed that the meeting of the All Presidents of Parliaments will take place some time in May: a preparatory meeting with the appointed Contact Persons in each National Parliament could be called in early April.

8. Any Other Business

No other item having been raised by Senior Officials, the Chairman in Office, Amb. Stanicic, closed the meeting.