



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC
JUNE 2016-MAY 2017

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MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS
OF THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
6 October 2016

ATHENS

AGREED MINUTES

The first meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials under the All Hellenic Chairmanship was held in Athens on 6 October 2016 in the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The CSO was chaired by **Mr. Ioannis Pappas** with the assistance of the Secretary General, **Amb. Fabio Pigliapoco**.

Amb. Nike Ekaterini Koutrakou, Director of the B2 directorate at the MFA was also attending the meeting.

Before kicking off the works of the CSO, **Amb. Louis Alkiviadis Abatis**, Director General for International Economic Affairs at the Greek MFA, addressed the Senior Officials underlining the relevance of the intergovernmental activities of the All in the new context after the endorsement of the EUSAIR. He stressed that the Hellenic Chairmanship will strive to put the All at the service of the EUSAIR objectives, while keeping its distinctiveness. Round Tables will be organized in order to benefit and support the work of EUSAIR Thematic Steering Groups thoroughly involving the civil society. Concluding, he expressed the intention of the Chairmanship to improve the All Parliamentary Dimension.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Pappas took note that the Agenda of the meeting was acceptable to all participants with no exception.

2. Priorities of the All Hellenic Chairmanship

The **Chair** reminded that the program of the Presidency had been circulated to Senior Officials already in June and summarized the key priorities of the new established chairmanship briefly touching upon the points highlighted in the program.

The program and priorities were welcomed by Senior Officials.

3. Calendar of the events

While presenting the calendar of the events, **Mr. Pappas** informed that:

- The joint EUSAIR / All Ministerial meeting, will be held at the beginning of May on the Greek Ionian coast;
- The meeting of the Speakers of the Parliament of the All will take place on 7 April 2017 in Greece;
- The Round Table on Blue Growth and Maritime Cooperation will take place on 16 November in Crete before the correspondent EUSAIR TSG;
- Other dates will be fixed at a later stage.

He also informed that the three Adriatic and Ionian Fora of civil society (Universities, Chambers of Commerce, Cities) will meet in Olympia on 19 October for their first joint meeting aimed at getting prepared for joint activities and projects in the framework of the EUSAIR.

Amb. Nike Ekaterini Koutraou added that, for the finalization of the All calendar, the calendar of the EUSAIR events will be taken into account. She also added that the event organized by the Fora has the potential to be a creative force supporting EUSAIR and All activities.

4. Program of the Activities of the Permanent Secretariat

The **Secretary General** welcomed the presence of Mr. Andrea Mairate, Head of the Competence Center "Macro-regions and European Territorial Cooperation" at DG REGIO, signaling the support of the EC for the All intergovernmental activities.

Amb. Pigliapoco 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).

He underlined how the All-PS participates as a standing member to the EUSAIR Governing Board, acting as a *trait-d'union* between the two exercises. After the Dubrovnik Declaration, the role of the All-PS has dramatically changed particularly as regards to the new All RTs which will be the channel through which messages by the civil society will pass to the EUSAIR Governance structures. In this regard, the establishment of the EUSAIR Stakeholders Platform will be of crucial importance.

The All-PS will support, *inter alia*, the All Parliamentary Dimension, which has become far more involved after the endorsement of the EUSAIR. He reminded that, during the last Speakers of Parliaments Conference in Split, a network of high officials of Speakers offices was established to deal with All and EUSAIR.

Senior Officials approved the Program of the Activities of the Permanent Secretariat.

In a tour de table, **Italy** stressed three points: the role of All as a potential backbone of the EUSAIR. After Dubrovnik, Italy aims at increasing the role of the All; the focus on civil society is much appreciated and new RTs have the potential to bring innovative ideas into the Strategy; the fact that parliaments are more involved in cooperation with All and EUSAIR is crucial for raising awareness to the public opinion.

Montenegro stressed the importance of connecting with the EUSAIR, welcomed Hellenic program and reminded that current activities are in line with the Thessaloniki agenda of 2003 promoting Western Balkans access to the EU.

Slovenia welcomed the enhanced role of civil society and its participation through the All and informed of the meetings held on the Slovenian Coast in the framework of the "Mediterranean Coast and EU Macro-regional Strategies Week" of various stakeholders, addressing needs, expectations and better communication for co-creating common space in the region, with the notable participation of the All Secretary General.

Serbia noted how the stronger engagement of civil society marked a very important junction for the functioning of the All and expressed the need of a thorough communication strategy that should highlight both the strict cooperation between All and EUSAIR and their clear distinction in functions.

Albania welcomed the Hellenic Program as very positive and concrete and expressed the need of raising more economic and social discussion on Adriatic and Ionian cooperation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina noted that fields of activities of other initiatives in the region should be thoroughly studied in order to avoid possible overlapping.

Croatia expressed satisfaction for the interlinks created between the All and EUSAIR, particularly through the overhauled Round Tables which can give a new impetus to the process.

Mr. Mairate who participated as a guest at the CSO, on behalf of the Commission, focused on few points:

the EU Commission full support for the efforts by the All-PS to align All activities with the EUSAIR objectives; the role of civil society that should be increased also through the Stakeholders' Platform supported by the Facility Point; the fact that a lot of work has been done, but still no concrete actions has been implemented. Failing to deliver would mean disappointing the expectations of people. Therefore, much effort is still required by all EUSAIR and All actors.

5. Connection between All activities and EUSAIR

The **Secretary General** intervened on this point by pointing out that the Dubrovnik Declaration changed the character of the All by strictly linking it to the EUSAIR (see Joint EUSAIR/All Ministerial meeting and overhauled RTs). Both initiatives now act in parallel, but it is important to communicate outside that no merger has been ever foreseen.

The overhaul of All RTs has been a crucial step towards a regional cooperation (All and EUSAIR) really based on subsidiarity. In order to make this principle work effectively, it is now crucial that a properly organized and well-functioning EUSAIR Stakeholders Platform is set in motion as soon as possible.

All this considered, Amb. Pigliapoco asked Senior Officials a mandate to highlight this point at the EUSAIR Governing Board of the following day, in order to voice the attention and encouragement of the All on a swift set up of the Stakeholders Platform calling to the Facility Point to act in the fastest possible way. **Senior Officials** agreed on the mandate.

6. Any Other Business

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