



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



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

**MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS  
OF THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE  
8 February 2017**

**BRUSSELS**

AGREED MINUTES

The second AII Committee of Senior Officials under Hellenic Chairmanship was held on 8 February 2017 in Brussels, back to back with the EUSAIR Governing Board.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Ioannis Pappas, representing the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, assisted by the AII Secretary General, Amb. Pigliapoco.

All countries were present to the Meeting with the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After the adoption of the Agenda the following items were discussed:

**A. Mid-Term report on the Presidency's activities and planned events until May**

The **chair** reminded the activities carried out or supported by the Hellenic Chairmanship up to date, from the opening CSO of Athens (6 October 2016), to the AII Round Table on Blue Growth and Maritime Cooperation held in Heraklion, Crete (16 November 2016) in the margins of the EUSAIR TSG 1 (Blue Growth) and the meeting of the three Adriatic and Ionian Fora held in Olympia (19-20 October 2016) where the Chambers of Commerce, Cities and the Universities of the Adriatic and Ionian basin joined forces with the aim of finding ways to contribute to the implementation of the EUSAIR.

Referring to future activities of the Presidency until May 2017, Mr. Pappas informed that the following events are foreseen:

- Round table on Environmental and Civil protection (21 March, Athens);
- Round Table on Sustainable Tourism and Culture (28 March, Athens);
- Round Table on Transports and Energy Connections (29 March, Athens), focusing on gas networks;
- Round Table on Inter-University Cooperation (8 April, Patras);
- Conference of the Speakers of the AII (6-7 April, Ioannina);
- CSO and Adriatic Ionian Council / EUSAIR Ministerial Meeting (10-11 May, Ioannina)

**Mrs Mavromati**, of the Hellenic delegation, completed the picture of the Hellenic Presidency activities carried out so far by reporting on the RT on Blue Growth and Maritime cooperation (16-11-2016) expressing satisfaction for its results and for the participation of many representatives of civil society (although regretting the absence of some All Participating Countries).

The meeting – she continued - was chaired by Ms. Sofia Loukmidou, EUSAIR Coordinator for Pillar 1 (Blue Growth), highlighted the connection already established between RTs and TSGs. It focused on Scientific cooperation in fisheries and fish stocks; development of common standards and practices in the field of aquaculture; and identification of networking and cooperation mechanisms for promoting and supporting the marine equipment and shipbuilding industry.

Concluding her intervention, Mrs Mavromati invited Senior Officials to make “every possible effort” to guarantee an adequate participation to next Round Tables foreseen in the calendar of events.

#### **B. All Round Tables: Possibility of financing travel and accommodation expenses for selected participants;**

Picking on the words of the Greek representative, the **Secretary General** stressed the need of a “qualitative attendance” to the All RTs and reminded that, to this aim, Senior Officials (along with EUSAIR National Coordinators) should play a pivotal role in selecting the experts for each All cooperation field.

He underlined that, in order to promote a “qualitative and complete” attendance to All Round Tables, the All-PS has decided to finance travel and accommodation expenses for “selected” participants, as announced with a All-PS mail on 12 January last.

The Secretary General affirmed that the decision was taken to help experts coming from All countries to attend each RT. As already stated in the 12 January mail, in principle only one participant per Country will get the approval for refunding, while participation remains obviously open to all other interested stakeholders (at their own expenses).

The Secretary General went on illustrating the process of reforming the All RTs which develops in three stages:

**FIRST PHASE** : reorienting the activity and the goals of RTs to align them to the relevant TSGs (completed);

**SECOND PHASE** : promoting a qualified attendance encompassing experts from all the Eight participating Countries by refunding their travel and accommodation expenses. This is the PHASE we are in now;

**THIRD PHASE** : completely synchronizing the work of All RTs with the work of relevant EUSAIR TSGs. This phase will have to be implemented during the upcoming Italian All Chairmanship under the Secretary General responsibility;

The entire "overhaul operation " will be fully financed by the Budget of the All Permanent Secretariat , which will assume vis-a-vis the intergovernmental process and RTs a role similar (mutatis mutandis) to the one played by the Facility Point vis-a-vis the Strategy and TSGs so transforming the character itself of the All Permanent Secretariat ( already standing member of the EUSAIR Governing Board) .

In a nutshell: connecting closer and closer the All intergovernmental process with the EUSAIR Strategy is the paramount goal of the whole overhaul exercise.

At the end of his intervention, the Secretary General asked SOs whether they agreed on:

- a. **recognising** the change in character of the All P.S. (already "standing member " of the EUSAIR Governing Board ) transforming it into a NEW and UPDATED tool to effectively connect All and EUSAIR;
- b. **mandating** the Secretary General to implement the third phase of the overhaul during the upcoming All Italian Chairmanship.
- c. **expressing appreciation** for the Italian Government regional and local administrations, sole financiers of the All P.S.

The Chair gave then the floor to Senior Officials for a “ **tour the table**” :

**Serbia** expressed its full support for the new phase of RTs, noting that the research for the right experts will be much easier with the perspective of having their expenses refunded. This should ensure, in principle, a consistent and qualitative presence.

**Italy** expressed appreciation for an initiative which will make a “transformed” All-PS more operational, also for the benefit of the implementation of the EUSAIR and suggested that most of these funds be allocated, wherever possible, in favour of non-EU Countries.

At the same time, he voiced the Italian determination to continue funding the All Permanent Secretariat and the Italian wish that also other All Countries could, in future, evaluate the possibility of contributing to the initiative.

**Slovenia** acknowledged the evolution of the role of the All-PS, agreed on the proposals of the SG and suggested that, in the search for the right experts to select for RTs, it would be wise for **SO to get in contact also with TSG Pillar Coordinators and Members.**

**Also Albania, Greece, Croatia and Montenegro** agreed on the proposals, committed to support the process for selecting participants to RTs and expressed appreciation for the Italian government, regional and local administrations for the funds they are going to allocate for the successful functioning of the RTs. They also agreed on the mandate to the Secretary General to fully implement the RT overhaul during the upcoming Italian All Presidency and EUSAIR Co-Presidency.

At the end of the “ tour the table “ the Secretary General read the following conclusions which were **unanimously approved** by the CSO:

**The Committee of Senior Officials:**

***appreciates** the efforts to transform All RTs into a new and updated tool to effectively connect All and EUSAIR and **recognizes the transformation** of the character itself of the All Permanent Secretariat ;*

***invites** the All Secretary General to closely follow the process of transformation and reform of the All and **give him mandate** to begin the implementation of the All RT overhaul within the Hellenic Presidency term and to fully implement the All R.T. overhaul during the upcoming Italian All Chairmanship and EUSAIR Co- Chairmanship;*

***thanks** the Italian national, regional and local authorities for their continuous funding and support for the functioning of the All Permanent Secretariat.*

**C. Annual Conference of Speakers of All Parliaments;**

The **Chairman** informed that the next “Conference of the Speakers of the All Parliaments” will take place in Ioannina, on 6-7 April 2017. Its overarching topic will be Blue Growth (needs and opportunities in the region) as well as the role of the All Parliamentary Dimension in achieving the objectives of the EUSAIR.

At the end of the Conference, a Joint Statement will be issued and later circulated to Senior Officials.

The **Secretary General** reminded that the “Parliamentary Network of High Officials” established in Neum in 2015 is now up and running. “Contact persons” have been appointed (except for BiH) and the All-PS is keeping them updated on All and EUSAIR activities through a dedicated newsletter.

**Slovenia** took the floor highlighting that **parliamentary cooperation** could be very useful to our purposes since MPs are the ones taking decision and drafting laws, which can help the implementation of the EUSAIR and facilitate regional cooperation. Ms. Jerina reminded that, in the framework of the “Mediterranean coast and EU Macro-regional Strategies week” (September 2016, Koper), an event in cooperation with the Adriatic-Ionian and Danube area parliamentary dimensions was organized and attended by the President of the Slovenian Parliament and members of the Greek and Italian Parliaments signalling the high level of interest Parliaments attach to the All and EUSAIR.

#### **D. Adriatic Ionian Council / EUSAIR Ministers of FA Declaration**

**Mr. Pappas** informed that the Chairmanship chose Blue Growth and its links with connectivity, tourism and environment as the overarching thematic for the Ministerial Declaration. He subsequently gave the floor to the Secretary General to describe the procedure of drafting the Declaration.

Being the declaration “double hat” (EUSAIR and All), the drafting procedure will be a responsibility both of All Senior Officials and EUSAIR National Coordinators.

As far as the procedure is concerned, the following steps will be necessary to finalize a shared Declaration:

- By the beginning of March, the **All-PS** will make a first draft restricting its intervention to the preamble and to other All issues (All Round Tables , Parliamentary dimension, cooperation with stakeholders and Fora, cooperation with other Regional Organizations) sharing it with the **All Hellenic Chairmanship**;
- This part of the declaration , after approval by the Greek All Chairmanship , will be passed to the **two co/chairs** (Greece and EC) that will draft the parts concerning EUSAIR issues;
- The draft Declaration, so completed, will subsequently be circulated via email to **Senior Officials** with the task of liaising with their National Coordinators (MFAs and EU funds) in order to propose modification or additions to the text;
- The process of fine-tuning of the declaration will have to be concluded **by the end of April** and approved by mail.

**No drafting session** is envisaged during the CSO preceding the Ministerial Meeting in Ioannina.

#### **E. Any Other Business**

Among any other business, the Secretary General reminded that, on the occasion of the “ Joint Fora of Olympia “ (19-20 October 2016), the three Fora of Civil Society (Chambers of Commerce, Universities, Cities) decided to join forces in order to be more active in the process of implementation of the EUSAIR.

Notwithstanding their concerns about the financial sustainability of their own Secretariats, the three Fora will make every possible effort in order to ensure that the meeting of Olympia has a significant follow-up.

The three Fora are now finalising a “Joint Position Paper” aimed mainly at collecting possible macro-regional projects to implement jointly and at accrediting them as privileged actors for the implementation of the Strategy.