



MONTENEGRO
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
CHAIRMANSHIP OF MONTENEGRO
JUNE 2018-MAY 2019

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

3 October 2018

PODGORICA

AGREED MINUTES

The first meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials under the All Montenegrin Chairmanship was held in Podgorica on 3 October 2018. The CSO was chaired by the Director General for Multilateral Affairs at the Montenegro MFA, Mr. **Ivan Ivanišević**, with the assistance of the All Secretary General, **Amb. Giovanni Castellaneta**.

Before kicking off the works of the CSO, **Mr. Ivanišević** welcomed the participants and addressed Senior Officials stressing that the Montenegrin Presidency will continue on the path of cooperation that has always characterized this organization for the past 18 years in order to foster a prosperous Adriatic-Ionian Region. Concluding, he also extended his congratulation and welcomed **Amb. Jon Ivanovski** of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for attending the CSO for the first time and expressed his hope to see FYROM as the part of the EUSAIR very soon.

The Chair gave the floor to **Secretary General Amb. Giovanni Castellaneta** for his opening remarks. Ambassador Castellaneta took the floor to highlight how the Permanent Secretariat will continue to be pivotal in its traditional connecting role between Governments, regional actors and civil society, Fora and networks, supporting the rotating All/EUSAIR Chairmanship in all its activities during the year and will continue to be the same all through the year of Montenegrin Chairmanship.

He also committed to work together with Senior Officials for the progress of the Initiative, so to bring benefits to the citizens of All participating countries.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

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

2. Priorities of the All Montenegrin Chairmanship

The **Chair** affirmed that Montenegro attaches the greatest importance to the Presidency of the All and EUSAIR and has the intention to make it as inclusive as possible.

He summarized the key priorities of the Chairmanship touching upon the points highlighted in the Program (see enclosed program).

Montenegro presented an All program, which intends to continue with fostering good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation in order to accelerate development and growth through strengthened role of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative and EUSAIR.

Particular focus was reserved to the connections and the integration with the “EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region”, by completing Round Tables progressive alignment to EUSAIR Thematic Steering Groups and enhancing policy dialogue and cooperation among All/EUSAIR Participating countries. At the same time, Montenegro will put special attention to the promotion of European standards and values, supporting the EU perspective of the non-EU Member States, thus representing an impetus to the enlargement and integration process.

Along with the typical All fields of cooperation (as blue growth, environmental and civil protection, transport and energy connections, sustainable tourism and culture, inter-university cooperation etc.) the Chairmanship will put emphasis on the dialogue with civil society, through cooperation with the Adriatic-Ionian Fora (Cities, Chambers of Commerce and Universities) as well as on the youth sector and anticorruption.

Concluding, the Chair expressed its satisfaction for the excellent cooperation with the All Permanent Secretariat so far, especially highlighted the working visit to Montenegro on 2-4 May 2018 during which working consultations with the General Directorate for Multilateral Affairs and official meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Srđan Darmanović on the priorities of Montenegrin Chairmanship and on possibilities of cooperation and working consultations took place.

Italy expressed its full support to the priorities listed by the Chairmanship stressing how the All progressive alignment with the overall EUSAIR strategy is fundamental in order to tackle the challenges of the area.

Serbia took the floor to welcome the Montenegrin Program and priorities and to express its full support, highlighting also the added-value of chairmanships making an effort to synchronise and plan for continuity of priorities that logically follow from each other and may take more than one chairmanship to be implemented, considering that Serbia will be the next participating country to hold the All Chairmanship.

The **program and priorities** were welcomed by all Senior Officials.

3. Calendar of All Events

A calendar of the main events envisaged until the end of the Montenegrin Chairmanship was circulated to delegates (see enclosed calendar of events). The **Chair** stressed that the foreseen events will take into account the calendar of TSG meetings, in order to make both exercises compatible, and the dates will be delivered as soon as possible.

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

- The joint EUSAIR / All Ministerial meeting, will be held around mid-May on the Montenegrin coast;
- The meeting of the Speakers of the Parliament of the All will be most probably held in April 2019 in Montenegro;
- Events dedicated to the anticorruption, youth and science and research will be organized together with other 6 Round tables in the All typical fields of cooperation;
- Other dates will be fixed at a later stage.

The **Chair** also informed Senior Officials about the idea of realizing a **Youth Event-Conference**, in cooperation with the Italian Chairmanship of the OSCE and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) by the end of the year, in order to foster cooperation in the area of youth and security within the region. Details and further information will be delivered as soon as possible.

Mr. Di Paola, who participated as a guest at the CSO, on behalf of the EU Commission – DG REGIO, stressed the importance of realizing an initiative focused on the youth sector, reminding that AI-NURECC is working a lot on the same subject and proposed to discuss and coordinate with them in order to avoid overlapping, join forces and achieve synergies.

Croatia welcomed the suggestion from Mr. Di Paola, underlining that the AI-NURECC Initiative already has experience in this particular field of interest, stressing how it could bring an added value to the conference.

4. Program of the All Permanent Secretariat

The **Secretary General** asked for the approval of the Program of the All-PS, which was circulated in advance to Senior Officials.

As usual, the All-PS will work in close coordination with the Chairmanship giving it all needed assistance on secretarial activities and on the organization of All events and meetings, with a particular focus on Round Tables, which are now a crucial element for the **involvement of civil society** and stakeholders in regional cooperation in the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

The All-PS will be very active in cooperating with the **Adriatic and Ionian Fora** (Chambers, Universities, Cities) and other networks involving them in Round Tables and trying to make the connection with EUSAIR TSGs work.

The All-PS is also committed to support the **Parliamentary Dimension** for the organization of the XVI Conference of Speakers of the Parliaments and to keep Speakers updated about the All and EUSAIR activities through the “Network of High Officials”.

Croatia took the floor to express gratitude to the work brought forward by the Permanent Secretariat and to encourage the participation to the “**1st Joint Conference of the Fora of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, Cities and Universities**”, which will be held in Split from the 16th to the 18th of October, having as main objective to facilitate the activities of the civil society Fora towards the sound implementation of the EUSAIR. Furthermore, Croatia strongly encouraged and appealed to Mr Di Paola in order to have a representative of the EU Commission present to the event, considering the importance of involving stakeholders and civil society in the EUSAIR implementation phase. Moreover, Croatia appealed to the Commission and DG REGIO to look more carefully to the calendar of the Macroregions, since some countries are participating States in more than one Macroregion and there are cases of overlapping events and meetings.

Senior Officials approved the All-PS Program unanimously.

5. Appointment of the Senior Official by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The **Chair** welcomed **Ambassador Jon Ivanovski** and officially notified his appointment as All Senior Official for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Amb. Castellaneta took the floor to congratulate the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for its accession to the All and Ambassador Jon Ivanovski for the appointment as Senior Official, emphasizing how FYROM will bring added value to the Initiative and give new impetus to regional cooperation. **Amb. Castellaneta** informed FYROM and Senior Officials about the intention of the All Permanent Secretariat to go to Skopje for a courtesy call in order to deepen and explore the intergovernmental mechanisms of the All.

FYROM took the floor to express its honour to be part of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative, underling how cooperation in such a forum could be an opportunity to bring the country ever closer to the EU and NATO, which remain two strategic goals of the country, and to further deepen the relationships with neighbouring States and participating countries of the Initiative. He further expressed gratitude to the Permanent Secretariat for the support given and the fruitful communications. FYROM also expressed particular gratitude to Montenegro which, in its capacity as an All Chair, gave generous support to their membership.

Croatia and **Serbia** took the floor to welcome **Amb. Ivanovski** to the Initiative and expressed their hope to see FYROM joining the EUSAIR soon.

6. Inclusion of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the EUSAIR (art.2 Catania Declaration) – State of play

The **Chair** invited EU Member States to inform the CSO about the state of play of the matter of inclusion of FYROM in the EUSAIR.

Italy took the floor informing that the letter of the four All/EU countries to the Secretariat of the Council has been finalized and was circulated in order to gather the necessary signatures. Once they will be collected, it will be sent to the EU responsible bodies in order to obtain the inclusion of the FYROM in the EUSAIR.

7. Updating of the staff of the Permanent Secretariat

Amb. Castellaneta informed about the appointment of Filippo Alabardi as Executive Officer of the All Permanent Secretariat, which took office on September the 3rd after Mr. Di Paola has been appointed to the Macro Regions Unit – DG REGIO.

8. Any Other Business

Under any other business, the **Chair** brought to the attention of Senior Officials the fact that both the Statute and the Rules of procedures need to be updated due to the entry of FYROM in the All. The Chair, considering that no objection was received, charged the All Permanent Secretariat to carefully analyze the procedural documents and to bring forward the procedure.