



**XVIII CONFERENCE  
OF PRESIDENTS OF PARLIAMENTS  
OF THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE**

*5-6 May 2022, Tirana*

**DRAFT JOINT STATEMENT**

The XVIII Conference of Presidents of Parliaments of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative was held in Tirana on 5-6 May 2022, under the chairmanship of the Speaker of the Parliament of Albania, Ms. Lindita NIKOLLA.

At the conference, the participating states were represented by: Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania, Ms. Lindita NIKOLLA; the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Cultural and Educational Affairs of the Hellenic Parliament Mr. Vasilios DIGALAKIS; Deputy Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Republic of Italy, Mr. Ettore ROSATO; Member of Senate of the Republic of Italy, Sen. Sergio PUGLIA; President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, Mr. Talat XHAFFERI; Members of the Parliament of San Marino, Mr. Gerardo GIOVAGNOLI and Mrs. Maria Katia SAVORETTI, and the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, Mr. Igor ZORČIČ;

The Presidents of Parliaments of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII) member states:

- GUIDED by the principles of the founding document - the Ancona Declaration of 20 May 2000;

- TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION the commitments and all documents adopted at the previous meetings of presidents of parliaments of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative;
- FIRMLY BELIEVING in the values of the European Union, as basic principles for cooperation among the AII countries;
- RECOGNISING the significance of strengthening cooperation within this forum for achieving long-term regional stability and stronger economic development of the Adriatic-Ionian region;
- AWARE that the EUSAIR and AII are important means to foster economic integration and territorial cohesion of the Adriatic and Ionian region;
- CONSIDERING the role of national parliaments as institutions closer to the citizens in supporting an enhanced regional cooperation and a vivid networking;

The participants,

- UNDERLINE the parliaments' full support for EUSAIR that has contributed in an increased regional cooperation and in supporting the European integration process of Western Balkans;
- SUPPORT the EUSAIR as a useful tool of cooperation among the EU countries and candidate countries and potential candidates for EU membership;
- REITERATE the commitment to continue the close co-operation among the AII participating states and of AII with the international and EU institutions in order to address the challenges faced by our region;
- DEPLORE the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by armed forces of the Russian Federation; EXPRESS their STRONG SOLIDARITY with Ukraine, its government and the friendly Ukrainian people and SUPPORT diplomatic efforts aimed at restoring Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders

- HIGHLIGHT the importance of the EU enlargement process;
- PROMOTE and SUPPORT the Western Balkan countries in their path towards EU, by accelerating the enlargement process, notably by having the date for the first IGCs with Albania and North Macedonia during the French Presidency of Council of EU, believing that EU should maintain its geostrategic focus on Western Balkans as an added value of Europe;
- STRONGLY BELIEVE that implementation of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region will encourage better cooperation, improve attractiveness and competitiveness, as indispensable elements for economic growth, sustainable development, social peace and political stability in this region;
- ENCOURAGE EUSAIR governing structures to continue investing in capacity building, focusing on strengthening the liaison between stakeholders/beneficiaries and all available funds at EU, international, national and private level;
- CALL UPON the stakeholders to work together towards a sustainable, responsible, resilient and diversified tourism, able to offer innovative and quality tourism products and services, recalling that the AI region is one of outstanding natural beauty and rich cultural, historic and archaeological heritage;
- ENCOURAGE participating states to expand the tourist season to all year-round, by positioning the Adriatic-Ionian as an excellent off-season destination;
- EMPHASISE the importance of improving the infrastructure which has an essential role in increasing connectivity of the region and developing tourism in the participating states;
- WELCOME San Marino as the tenth participating country of the EUSAIR from 14 February 2022;
- THANK Albania for the constructive and productive chairmanship of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative and the Parliament of Albania for

strengthening AII parliamentary dimension and for the organization of the XVIII Conference of Presidents of Parliaments;

- WISH a lot of success to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the next presiding participating state of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative.