



**11<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Presidents of Parliaments of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative**  
**Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia, 13 May 2013**

***Joint Statement***

The 11th Conference of the Presidents/Speakers of Parliaments participating in the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative, was held at Brdo pri Kranju on 13 May 2013, under the chairmanship of the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia Janko Veber.

The conference was attended by: Member of the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina Nermina Zaimović Uzunović, Member of the Croatian Parliament Romana Jerković, Member of the Hellenic Parliament Ioannis Kefalogiannis, Deputy Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Italian Republic Luigi Di Maio, President of the Parliament of Montenegro Ranko Krivokapić and Special Envoy of the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia Miodrag Popović. The Republic of Albania was represented by Chargé d'Affaires a.i. at the Embassy of the Republic of Albania to the Republic of Slovenia Ardian Simoni.

Participants were addressed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia Karl Erjavec and the invited guests Dr Richárd Hörcsik, President of the CEI Parliamentary Dimension, and Amb Fabio Pigliapoco, Secretary General of the All.

***The participants:***

- drawing from the achievements of previous Conferences of the Presidents of Parliaments of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative;
- recalling the decisions of the Final Declaration adopted at the 8th Meeting of the Presidents of the Parliaments of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, held on 29 April 2010 in Bari (Italy), in which the Presidents request the European institutions to develop a European Union Macro-Regional Strategy for the Adriatic and the Ionian Seas;
- aware of the importance of a common geographical area and the numerous cultural, historic, economic and other ties, calling for joint measures to achieve economic growth, employment and sustainable development;
- considering the need for an enhanced political, development and substantive cooperation in the Adriatic and Ionian area which is essential for a sustainable, integral and inclusive development of the region;
- underlining their determination to focus primarily at the autonomous and solid dynamics of the All as a macro-region;

- recognizing the need to further strengthen cooperation with the Western Balkan countries which contributes to stability of the region, development and the promotion of EU values, thus bringing the region closer to the EU;
- emphasizing the need to enhance the cooperation of parliaments in the processes of shaping new orientations in the field of cooperation in the Adriatic and Ionian area;
- underlining the important role of parliaments which, by offering political support to common objectives, represent a key element in the future development of European macro-regional strategies;
- welcoming the European Council decision of 13 and 14 December 2012, imposing on the European Commission to prepare a Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Macro-Region by the end of 2014;

***have:***

1. welcomed the development of macro-regional strategies as a new innovative form of territorial cooperation at the interregional and transnational levels, complying with the strategic EU guidelines in the field of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and thus supporting the goals of Europe 2020 strategy and the EU cohesion policy concept;
2. expressed their belief that the development of the Adriatic and Ionian Macro-Regional Strategy is an important linking element between EU Member States and non-member states, thus drawing the attention to the Western Balkan countries and contributing to a more successful and smooth EU enlargement process for the countries of the region;
3. pointed out the importance of adopting the Maritime Strategy for Adriatic and Ionian Seas, adopted by the European Commission on 3 December 2012, forming an integral part of the future Macro-Regional Strategy;
4. expressed their willingness that the national parliaments, within the scope of their powers and mechanisms, cooperate with the civil society and thus contribute to raising public awareness that would help develop a common regional identity and enable to include more stakeholders, giving them the opportunity to express their opinions and ideas;
5. noted that an adequate model of parliamentary cooperation within the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative should be formed, capable of respond in due time to new tasks arising from the development of the Adriatic and Ionian Macro-Regional Strategy;
6. determined that the support and inclusion of parliaments, and the relevant stakeholders is of key importance for a successful identification and implementation of projects of wider regional character, which will act in the spirit of integration and cohesion, thus supporting the EU accession processes of the Western Balkan countries;
7. noted with satisfaction that the April Council Conclusions stressed that Croatia has shown the will and ability to fulfil all other commitments before accession and is expected to complete its final preparations for membership;

8. welcomed the forthcoming membership of the Republic of Croatia to the EU on 1 July 2013 following the completion of remaining ratification procedures;
9. taken note of the Enlargement Strategy Paper and the Annual Progress Reports for individual countries, and recalled the December Council Conclusions on enlargement, thus they expect that further concrete progress for the countries of the region will be agreed as soon as possible this year;
10. welcomed the April Council decision to remain unequivocally committed to the European perspective of the Western Balkans and take the enlargement process forward on the basis of the agreed principles and conclusions;
11. noted that the EU path depends on the individual merits and ability to meet the set criteria, therefore they will continue to cooperate and support each other also by providing the transfer of expertise and knowledge and thus help implement the necessary reforms based on European standards, principles and values.
12. underlined the importance of enhancing cooperation between the governmental and parliamentary levels which would bring wider political support to joint projects, and expressed their wish to establish a closer cooperation with the All Permanent Secretariat in Ancona.
13. calls upon the Albanian Presidency to convene in the Autumn a meeting of the Parliamentary Dimension, composed of ad hoc delegations, with the task to monitor progress of the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy.  
The Conference of Speakers to be held at the end of the annual Presidency shall take stock of the activities performed by the delegations and give further momentum to parliamentary cooperation.