



HELLENIC PARLIAMENT



ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE
HELLENIC REPUBLIC

DRAFT JOINT STATEMENT

XV Conference of President/Speakers of Parliaments of the Adriatic & Ionian Initiative

All Chairmanship of Greece

April 6-7, 2017, Ioannina, Greece

The Speakers of the Parliaments of the Participating Countries to the Adriatic & Ionian Initiative (AII),

- GUIDED by the principles of the Ancona Declaration of May 20, 2000, as the founding political document of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative;
- TAKING STOCK of the commitments made during all the previous meetings of the Presidents/Speakers of All Parliaments;
- CONFIRMING that the European Union's values are the basic principles of cooperation among the countries of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative;
- REFERRING to the basic principles of the Dubrovnik Declaration of May, 2016;
- GUIDED by the principle that the national parliaments -as the closest institutions to the citizens- could play a central role in implementing the goals of the Strategy;
- CONFIDENT that the implementation of the EUSAIR with the support of the activities carried out in the framework of its governance structures and the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative -its governmental anchorage- will promote sustainable economic prosperity in the Adriatic and Ionian Region;
- AWARE of the fact that economic growth is fundamental in order to achieve social peace and political stability in the Adriatic-Ionian region;
- CONSIDERING that the Macroregional strategies could contribute to the shaping of an integrated vision of the European future;
- CONVINCED that the EUSAIR and AII are unique and useful means to foster economic integration and territorial cohesion in the Adriatic and Ionian Region;

- BELIEVING that the realization of the EUSAIR strategic projects, as defined by the four pillars of the Strategy will boost growth and prosperity in the Adriatic and Ionian region;
- CONSIDERING that Blue Growth is a long term strategy which seeks to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole, and that Sea is a driver for European economy, presenting great potential for innovation and growth;
- BELIEVING that closer cooperation among All Parliaments, as citizens' representing institutions, will boost the existing excellent neighborly relations among our peoples, and that stronger commitment of All Parliaments shall become increasingly necessary in the future, in order to face the challenges of the new phase of cooperation in the region represented by the EUSAIR;
- EMPHASIZING that cooperation in the framework of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative is essential for further developing peace, stability and prosperity in this region as well as anchoring EU Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries on the path towards EU integration;

- ACKNOWLEDGE that Europe is still facing the impact of the worst economic and financial crisis since World War II; therefore they will focus their policies on the main challenges that their economies and societies face;
- REITERATE their commitment to continue their close cooperation with international and European institutions, in order to address the economic challenges faced by the region;
- ACKNOWLEDGE that Europe is facing the most severe refugee and migration crisis since World War II, triggered by the conflict and crisis in Syria, but also by wars, human rights violations and lack of development and economic opportunities in other countries and regions neighboring Europe;
- EXPRESS their solidarity with the countries and local communities hit by the refugee and migration crisis;
- BELIEVE that the EUSAIR Framework could play an important role in improving resilience of participating countries in coping with the refugee and migration crisis;
- RECALL the Joint Statement of the XIV Conference of Speakers of Parliaments of the All (Split, 15-16 April 2016) and the Dubrovnik Declaration of 12 May 2016 and acknowledge the efforts of the EUSAIR to contribute to the comprehensive European response to the migration issue in a constructive and cooperative manner;
- DECLARE their faith in EU values and its capacity to shape policies and instruments that will support economic, social and territorial cohesion, convergence, solidarity and prevent disparities between regions and countries;

- BELIEVE that major societal challenges cannot be solved by single cities, regions or countries individually; macro-regional strategies provide a good platform for developing shared visions of our future – focusing on specific geographic areas and specific development questions;
- UNDERLINE that the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative should prioritize its new role as advocate of civil society organizations that can bring innovative ideas into the Strategy, by their full involvement into it and call on the national parliaments to add their full support to this purpose;
- ENCOURAGE an even closer cooperation of the All Participating States with the Adriatic and Ionian fora of civil societies;
- UNDERLINE that Blue Economy is a big opportunity for the Region to prosper and change; and is thus a great potential for improved land-sea connectivity and intermodal transportation;
- EMPHASIZE that aquaculture is one of the most promising economic sectors in the Region with a significant potential for increasing production capacity, and thereby reducing dependency on imports, as well as for decreasing the pressure on wild stocks, provided that this is done in a sustainable manner;
- BELIEVE that maritime contribution is necessary for achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth;
- SUPPORT the strengthening of the Strategy's ownership, through a more active involvement of the regions and stakeholders at all levels (implementation, monitoring, evaluation);
- EMPHASIZE that now it is high time to move forward to the phase of the EUSAIR implementation, through the materialization of projects;
- ENCOURAGE the established network of high parliamentary officials, to further facilitate the constant exchange of information and good practices among Parliaments on EUSAIR and All activities;
- LOOK FORWARD to the establishment of the EUSAIR "Stakeholders' Platform" which should promote the connection of the civil society organizations with the EUSAIR Governing structures and stakeholders ;
- SUPPORT the efforts to make the EUSAIR Facility Point fully operational as soon as possible;
- UNDERLINE the importance of administrative resources and capacities to deliver the set objectives;
- BELIEVE that, in the light of future cohesion policy and the next Multiannual Financial Framework, there is need for further improvement of the governance system as well as for creating synergies and complementarities between EUSAIR and programmes

supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds and other EU financial instruments;

- LOOK FORWARD to obtaining access to EU funds and other financial instruments in order to support projects on macro-regional level;
- CONSIDER that coordination with other Macroregional Strategies plays a key-role to the aim of facilitating contacts and synergies, exchanging experiences and know-how and ensuring prompt responses and greater visibility;
- BELIEVE that the strengthening of cooperation between the parliamentary committees for Regional Policy in the framework of the AII is an important factor for further regional integration, through the exchange of expertise and best practices on issues aiming to support regional economies with particular geomorphological features, such as islands and mountainous regions of countries participating in the AII;
- WELCOME the upcoming 2nd Forum of EUSAIR which will be held at Ioannina, Greece, in May 11-12, 2017 and during which a Joint EUSAIR / AII Ministerial meeting will be held;
- THANK Greece for a constructive and productive Chairmanship of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative and Co-presidency of the EUSAIR Governing Board;
- WISH success to Italy in its mission as the upcoming Chairmanship of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative and in effectively Co-Chairing the EUSAIR.