



Montenegro
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Chairmanship of Montenegro



EU Strategy
for the Adriatic
and Ionian Region
EUSAIR

Adriatic and Ionian Council/EUSAIR Ministerial Meeting

4th FORUM of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region

BUDVA Declaration

8 May 2019

We, the Representatives of the Governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia¹, Serbia and Slovenia meeting in Budva (Montenegro), with the participation of a representative of the **European Commission**, in the framework of the Adriatic and Ionian Council/EUSAIR Ministerial Meeting and 4th Forum of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region:

GUIDED by the Ancona Declaration of 20 May 2000 and its basic principles, as well as by the principles expressed by the consecutive Adriatic and Ionian Council (AIC) declarations from 2001 to 2015 and by the joint AIC/EUSAIR Ministerial Declarations of 2016, 2017 and 2018 from Dubrovnik to Ioannina and Catania;

RECALLING the Conclusions of the EU General Affairs Council (GAC) of 29 September 2014 and those of the European Council of 23-24 October 2014 which endorsed the EUSAIR, on the basis of the Commission's Communication of 17 June 2014 and **ACKNOWLEDGING** that the experience of 19 years of cooperation among All Governments had benefitted the Strategy;

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION the European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2018 on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies.

RECALLING the Report from the European Commission {COM(2019) 21 final} to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and

¹ All Participating Country, in the process of becoming member of EUSAIR.

the Committee of the Regions of 29 January 2019 on the implementation of EU macro regional Strategies which underlines that the preparation for programmes over 2021 – 2027 funds provides EUSAIR participating countries with a unique opportunity to demonstrate and strengthen their shared commitment to the jointly agreed priorities of the strategy;

APPRECIATING the valuable contribution brought by EUSAIR and AII in strengthening the regional cooperation dimension in policy areas of major importance for the future of the whole Region and their positive impact on the process of integrating candidate countries and potential candidates in the EU;

RECALLING the Ministerial Declaration adopted in Catania on 24 May 2018, which paves the way for an effective and mutually beneficial relationship between the EUSAIR and the ESIF and IPA programmes for the 2021 – 2027 programming period;

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1. **WELCOME** the General Affairs Council Conclusions of 9 April 2019 accepting the request put forward by the countries participating in the EUSAIR to include the Republic of North Macedonia and **INVITE** relevant European Institutions to follow-up on the process;
2. **COMMIT**, in cooperation with the Commission, to launch a discussion on the role and responsibilities of the Republic of North Macedonia in the context of the EUSAIR governance, and to ensure its proper reflection in all revised official documents. **AGREE** to include representatives of the new participating country in all activities as a guest, until full membership is achieved;
3. **ACCEPT** the request put forward by the Government of the Republic of San Marino to become the tenth participating country of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative and **REMAIN** open to consider possible forms of participation of the Republic of San Marino in the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region;
4. **WELCOME** the inclusion of macro-regional cooperation as a horizontal element in the forthcoming legislative framework for EU funds including the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (2021-2027) as an opportunity to facilitate consistent planning and programming of EU funds in support of the EUSAIR objectives;
5. **REITERATE** the necessity to ensure continued alignment between the priorities of mainstream Cohesion policy and IPA funds, and the selected EUSAIR priorities through the implementation of the Position Paper adopted by the Governing Board on the basis of paragraph 6 of the Catania Declaration (2018);
6. **URGE** the EUSAIR governing structure to proceed to a swift implementation of the Position Paper by closely consulting and coordinating with the competent authorities for planning in their countries and by seeking for an agreement with the authorities responsible for ESI and IPA funds on a set of macro-regional priorities to be embedded in the relevant Partnership Agreements and the IPA Programming Framework for the period 2021-2027, and to engage with them in

parallel and coordinated action from planning to implementation of macro-regional projects (in particular Cohesion policy and IPA);

7. In case of IPA participating countries, **INVITE** EEAS, DG NEAR and the EU Delegations to participate in defining macro regional priorities and actions, and to **SUPPORT** their inclusion in the relevant IPA Programming Framework for the period 2021-2027;
8. **INVITE** the EC to consider different financial mechanisms, *inter alia* the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, in the process of mainstreaming selected EUSAIR priorities, given the particularly high potential of the Blue Economy in the Adriatic and Ionian region;
9. **CALL** on all concerned authorities to strengthen the alignment between the EUSAIR objectives and the new ADRION Programme and **URGE** for additional financial support for IPA countries, also in terms of participation in INTERREG ADRION Programme;
10. **REITERATE** the importance of dedicated administrative capacity to ensure that the political commitment translates into effective implementation of the Strategy, **SEEK** for strengthened ownership and commitment by involving line ministries at political level;
11. **ACKNOWLEDGE** the progress made by the “EUSAIR Facility Point” and **CALL** on its partnership to speed-up and spread up facilitation of strategic project development, monitoring and evaluation activities and implementation of the Stakeholders Platform;
12. **CONGRATULATE** Montenegro for conducting the successful Presidency over the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative and the EU Strategy for Adriatic and Ionian Region. Particularly **APPRECIATE** the efforts in securing for the first time, as a non EU Member State, a successful Chairmanship over an EU Macro-regional mechanism, marked by very busy and productive calendar of events listed in the Annex I of BUDVA Declaration. Therefore, **COMMEND** the introduction, within the AII, of the new areas of cooperation such as Youth and Anti-corruption, which resulted in the high level meetings; **ACCEPT** the gift offered by the Government of Montenegro as a rotating symbol of the Presidency which will be transferred at the time of Chairmanship handover;
13. **REAFFIRM** the AII traditional connecting role between Governments, regional actors and civil society FORA and networks as an essential factor in the implementation phase of the macro-regional mechanisms **CONVINCED** that without subsidiarity principle the Strategy would lose its value;
14. **CONFIRM** the role of the AII as the “political anchorage” to the EUSAIR and **CONSIDER** that its efforts to fine-tune its activities and structures in order to contribute to the goals of the Strategy have achieved remarkable results mainly in the field of AII Round Tables, which now systematically cooperate with Thematic Steering Groups, providing them with the proposals and recommendations originating from the civil society;

15. **COMMEND** the current Montenegrin Chairmanship for calling the first AII Troika plus Secretariat meeting, as well EUSAIR Trio Presidency meetings, as an innovative and constructive mechanisms to assure the continuity and the synergy of the AII and EUSAIR activities;
16. **ACKNOWLEDGE** the importance of contacts among the Secretariats of Regional Organizations in order to further develop synergies, exchanging experiences, best practices and know-how and **CONSIDER** the signature of the technical Memorandum of Understanding between the Central European Initiative (CEI) and AII by the two Secretary Generals a positive step in this direction;
17. **TAKE NOTE** of the Annual Report of activities of the AII Permanent Secretariat and of the TSGs Annual Reports and Annual Comprehensive Report of the activities of the IV EUSAIR Thematic Steering Groups;
18. **THANK** Montenegro and the city of Budva for the excellent organisation and hospitality offered on the occasion of the AIC/EUSAIR Ministerial meeting and 4th EUSAIR Forum and 2nd Annual Conference of the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, Cities and Universities;
19. **ENTRUST** the incoming AII/EUSAIR Chairmanship from 1 June 2019 to 31 May 2020 to the Republic of Serbia inviting it to use all instruments at its disposal with the aim of consolidating cooperation and leading all Participating Countries into a period of sustainable growth and prosperity.

ANNEX

- ❖ The EUSAIR Montenegrin Presidency organized thematic events: EUSAIR Thematic Steering Group for Pillar III - Environmental Quality held in Budva on 13 November 2018, EUSAIR Thematic Steering Group for Pillar I - Blue Growth held in Budva on 13-14 November 2018, EUSAIR Thematic Steering Group for Pillar IV - Sustainable Tourism held on 4-5 April 2018 in Podgorica;
- ❖ The Second Joint Conference of the FORA of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, Cities and Universities, held in Budva back to back with the EUSAIR Forum, and represents a further step forward in bringing a wider group of stakeholders from various sectors to build and consolidate the relationship between civil society, local, regional, national and European Institutions;
- ❖ The EUSAIR PORTODIMARE International Conference on Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime Spatial Planning held in Budva in November 2018, EUSAIR Financial Dialogue meeting held after the EUSAIR Forum, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, the Adriatic and Ionian Euroregion, and the FORA of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, Cities and Universities in the context of the AI-NURECC initiative;

- ❖ AII Ministerial Conference on Youth, chaired by the Minister of Sports and Youth, organized by the Ministry of Sports and Youth in cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, in Budva on 4-5 April;
- ❖ International Art Colony and Art Exhibition, 24 April – 8 May, during the days of the Adriatic and Ionian Council; an *ad hoc* event, which shed light on the value of the common cultural and artistic heritage of the Region and further highlighted the importance of the youth contribution in the framework of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative;
- ❖ Along with the numerous AII Round Tables organized during the current Chairmanship: Round Table on Blue Growth organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development in Budva on 13 November; Round table on tourism and culture organized by the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism and Ministry of Culture in Podgorica on 4 April; Round Table on Environment Protection organized by the Ministry for Sustainable Development and Tourism in Podgorica on 12 April; Round Table on transport and energy connections organized by the Ministry of Transport and Maritime Affairs in Budva on 24 April and Round Table on Inter-university cooperation organized by the University of Montenegro in Budva on 6 May and the *ad hoc* Round Table on integrity of public officials and state authorities which took place in the framework of the Regional Conference on prevention of corruption held in Budva on 16-17 April;
- ❖ XVI Conference of the Speakers of Parliaments of the AII, chaired by the Speaker of the Montenegrin Parliament, took place in Budva on 18-19 March 2019.