



PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

05/05/09

ANNUAL REPORT of the Results
OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AII PERMANENT SECRETARIAT
(Under responsibility of the Chairmanship-in Office and the Secretary General – art.13
Guidelines and Rules of Procedure of the AII PS)
(June 2008 – May 2009)
CSO 13th May 2009

Introduction

During the annual Adriatic and Ionian Council held in Sarajevo (1st June 2007), the Foreign Ministers of the AII member states have convened on the necessity to give impetus to the Initiative and strengthen the cooperation in the Adriatic and Ionian region in a perspective of European integration and within a Mediterranean dimension. In the framework of a prospected revitalization aimed at strengthening the operational ability of the Initiative, participant countries have welcomed an Italian proposal of providing the AII with a Permanent Secretariat with functions of coordination of the cooperation activities on the sectors of interest of the Initiative.

In November 2007, accepting an Italian proposal, the Permanent Secretariat was located in Ancona, Marche Region. Later, Amb. Alessandro Grafini has been appointed as Secretary General during meeting of Foreign Ministers held in Zagreb on May 27th 2008 on a proposal of the Committee of Senior Officials (meeting in Split, 5th March 2008 and Zagreb 26th May 2008).

The Permanent Secretariat (AII-PS) was officially inaugurated in Ancona in the old Cittadella – a prestigious site - on June 19th 2008 thanks to the logistical support provided by the Region Marche. The ceremony was attended by local authorities at the highest level. Among them, the Secretary of State Doukas representing the Greek Presidency, and Secretary of State Mantica representing the host country.

On June 20th the PS-AII has participated for the first time in a meeting of the AII Committee of Senior Officials under the Greek presidency in Ancona. In that occasion it was reaffirmed the role of coordination and support of AII-PS in all activities of AII in order to allow a more systematic job among the Member Countries in priority areas.



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Secretarial Activities

The first aspect of the activities of the AII PS has been the classical work of a Secretariat of a regional organisation. This aspect is foreseen in article 6 of the **Guidelines and Rules of Procedure of the AII PS** “*The task of the AII-PS is to provide secretarial support to AII meetings and to grant coordination among Participating States in the framework of the AII activities, [...] The AII-PS will also organise, in cooperation with the local authorities, all AII meetings which will take place in Ancona*”, and article 14 “*The AII-PS shall produce, compile and disseminate information materials on AII activities and shall establish a comprehensive documentation of the AII*”.

In this regard, the AII PS has organised, in cooperation with Region Marche, the event of inauguration of the AII PS in Ancona (19-20 June 2008) which has coincided with the inauguration of the Hellenic Chairmanship of the AII. Therefore, at the same time the AII PS has given support to the new chairmanship in the organisation of a Committee of Senior Official and a Round Table on Protection Against Fire.

During all meetings that have followed (1 AIC, 2 CSO, 6 Round Tables, 1 Parliamentary Dimension meeting, 1 Comprehensive Conference on Tourism) the AII PS has worked closely with the Chairmanship-in-Office for the production, compilation and dissemination of all relative documents. Furthermore, the AII PS has served as an information point for all participant countries on the documentation produced during the year and before.

An internet site of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative has been created and is constantly updated with the new documentation produced. The site is going to have soon an independent internet domain and to be improved with a new graphic and an easier system of navigation.

Cooperation with Adriatic-Ionian Fora and regional authorities

Since the beginning of its activities, the PS is committed, as requested by the Council of AII in the Declaration of Zagreb (27 May 2008), to maintain strong links with local institutions and Fora of the Adriatic and Ionian seas (Forum of Adriatic Ionian Chambers of Commerce, Forum of the Adriatic & Ionian Cities and Towns, UniAdriion) in order to collect already realized project experiences and submit them at the meetings of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative. In this way, local experience can be brought to attention of state level government of the different countries. This coordination activity was highly appreciated by the partners and represents a focal point of the present function of the AII PS.



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On July 14th 2008 a meeting took place at the seat of the Chamber of Commerce of Ancona between representatives of the Forum of Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Sea and the AII PS. During the meeting it was confirmed by both parties the will to establish a regular cooperation and a constant exchange of information on the activities of the two entities.

Always in the context of cooperation with the Fora of A & I seas, the Technical Assistant Giuseppe Di Paola attended the X session of the Forum of Cities of A & I in Durres on 26-27 September 2008.

In different occasions Secretary General Amb. Grafini met UniAdrion President Mr. Marco Pacetti in order to agree on a strategy of cooperation regarding the participation of UniAdrion representatives to AII meetings and on opportunities of common project activities

On the 1st October 2008 a meeting was held, with the aforementioned Fora based in Ancona, at the seat of the PS AII. The meeting was chaired by Secretary-General, amb. Grafini and attended by Min. Plen. Guglielmo Ardizzone (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Mr. Marco Pacetti chairman of UniAdrion, Mr. Emilio D'Alessio, Secretary General of the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities, Mr. Giampaolo Giampaoli Vice President of the Forum of Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Sea (FCCA), Mr. Orsetti Raimondo Manager of International Relation section of Marche Region and other employees of attending institutions. From this meeting emerged the belief that this coordination is particularly useful to make more logical and cohesive participation in international meetings with a focus on AII Round Tables, so that the AII PS could be represented in some meetings of the Round Tables by the colleagues of the aforementioned Adriatic and Ionian institutions. The final aim has been the identification of certain aspects to deepen particularly on the tourism field, which crosses several areas.

Project Oriented Activities

According to the **Guidelines and Rules of Procedure of the AII PS**, art. 7, the AII PS has *“the possibility to propose the implementation of projects, which will be further approved by the Committee of Senior Officials, and endorsed by the AIC”*.

In this view, further deepening the cooperation with A&I Fora, the AII PS has received, analysed and agreed on the support of a project proposal by the Forum of Adriatic & Ionian Chamber of Commerce (ADRION) for the diffusion of an Adriatic and Ionian common brand on tourism as its main purpose.



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The project is considered to be convincing and practicable for the following reasons:

- a) It already has an international basis (the net of the A&I Chamber of Commerce)
- b) The general purpose of the project is to strengthening the competitiveness of the tourist offer of the Adriatic-Ionian area on international markets through integrated and single promotion activities based on quality and sustainability
- c) There is the opportunity to enhance the cultural and ecological aspects
- d) The philosophy of the project is to extend maritime tourism in our region with evident benefit for the local economy and for the employment.

In order to give a follow-up to the project, the AII PS has organised in Ancona two meetings (13th January and 23rd March 2009) in order to inform and involve, besides the A&I Fora, all Italian adriatic regions, the Italian Department on Tourism of the Government and the Adriatic Euroregion. The goal has been to present the project aiming at the presentation to the relevant EU authorities for IPA funding. This could represent a test for European financing of projects in different sectors.

The AII PS has also been engaged in the promotion of the project at the AII level with the full support of the Greek Chairmanship-in-Office. Therefore, the ADRION project has been presented during the CSO in Athens (28th January 2009) where has received a first green light. Further publicity was given to it later during the International Conference for an Adriatic-Ionian Development Strategy in Corfu (13th February).

Afterwards, all AII Senior Officials have been involved by the AII PS in the promotion of the ADRION project that has been further presented during the IX Forum of the A&I Chambers of Commerce in Agrinio (Greece, 27/29 April 2009) and later during the Round Table on Tourism of the 7th May in Athens. At last, the AII PS proposes the approval of the project by the CSO of the 13th May 2009 and its endorsement by the Adriatic Ionian Council of the 14th May. The following step should be the presentation to the next IPA call for bid by the Forum of A&I Chambers of Commerce and under the aegis of the AII.

Taking the occasion of the inauguration of the Italian Chairmanship of the AII, the AII has sponsored two cultural events: a conference on the religious icons in the area and an exposition of ancient geographical and nautical maps of the Adriatic Ionian region.

To come to a conclusion, the AII PS has tried, in its first year of existence (in spite of the shortage of personnel and financing means), to represent a permanent point of reference for the participating states of the AII (with special regard to the Chairmanship-in-Office) with the aim, i.a., to intensify the relations in the regional dimension among the members of the AII.