

THE ANCONA DECLARATION

Adopted at the Conference on Development and Security in the Adriatic and Ionian (Ancona, 19- 20 May 2000)

**Albania, represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Paskal Milo;
Bosnia and Herzegovina, represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jadranko Prlic;**

**Croatia, represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tonino Picula;
Greece, represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, George Papandreou;**

**Italy, represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lamberto Dini;
Slovenia, represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dimitrij Rupel;**

at the presence of the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi;

- meeting on 20 May 2000 in Ancona at the Conference on Development and Security in the Adriatic and Ionian (henceforth referred to as the Conference) at the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Italy;
- reaffirming their commitment to all the principles and norms enshrined in the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and other OSCE documents;
- realizing that enhanced regional cooperation is an effective incentive that is instrumental to fostering political and economic stability, thereby making it the most solid basis for progress in the European integration process;
- determined to foster peace and security in the Adriatic and Ionian region by promoting sustainable economic growth and environmental protection and by exploiting cultural heritage that the countries in this region share;
- taking into account the many cooperation initiatives and programmes in the region already carried out by the European Union and looking forward to their development;
- aiming at fostering synergy, coordination and complementarity between

the Adriatic and the Ionian cooperation network launched at the Conference, activities carried out by the other regional Organizations and Initiatives present in South-Eastern Europe and/or Central Europe, and activities envisaged by the "Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe" and the CEI;

- building upon a multifaceted network of bilateral relations that they intend to further strengthen by promoting new bilateral agreements, such as those signed in the framework of the present Conference, which can create a homogeneous, multilateral pattern of cooperation through shared content and objectives;
- wishing to open the Adriatic and Ionian cooperation to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as soon as it is firmly on the path to respect for human rights and democratic freedoms in line with the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe principles and criteria;
- welcoming involvement in our meetings of representatives of the Republic of Montenegro and wishing at this early stage also to include the Republic of Montenegro, as a constituent Republic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in the cooperation framework launched at the Conference;
- conscious that the Adriatic-Ionian basin forms an integral part of the Mediterranean and therefore ready to examine ways of cooperation with the other countries of the Mediterranean to implement the aims and objectives outlined in the Declaration;
- taking stock of the conclusions of the four Round Tables on cooperation in the field of economy, tourism and maritime transport in the Adriatic and Ionian area; on cooperation for the environment and the safeguarding of the resources in the Adriatic and the Ionian; on interuniversity cooperation in the Adriatic and Ionian; on organised crime in the Adriatic and Ionian basin and the role of coastal states and supranational and multilateral organisations; as well as of the workshop on the role of the private sector in the development of the Adriatic and Ionian areas, held in the framework of the present conference;

1. agree to cooperate on ensuring that the whole of the Adriatic and Ionian

basin can become an area of peace, stability and increasing prosperity, based on neighborly relations and protected from illegal activities that are causing their societies human suffering, social and economic damage, and security threats;

2. decide to launch the "Adriatic and Ionian Initiative" (AII) as an Initiative for dialogue and cooperation in the Adriatic and Ionian region and to this end to establish the "Adriatic and Ionian Council" (AIC), which will be convened on a rotation basis at the ministerial level; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia are members and invite the European Commission to fully participate in the activities of the AIC according to the procedure to be determined later on;

3. determine that, without prejudice for other areas of cooperation which might be selected in the future, special attention shall be given to the following areas: economic, transport and tourism cooperation, including technical assistance; sustainable development and protection of the environment; cooperation in the fields of culture, science and education; and cooperation in the fight against illegal activities;

4. stress, with regard to economic and transport cooperation, the importance of making full use in a sustainable way of the vast potential of the Adriatic and the Ionian in order to turn the region into an area of progress and growth in Europe; underline the role of the AIC as a forum for discussing present and future cooperation in this field and formulating new ideas on cooperation; point to the need for economic and technical assistance to create, inter alia, a regional climate favourable to the participation of the private sector; stress the need to increase the efforts to create the conditions under which the private sector will invest and reaffirm their commitment to the implementation of the Stability Pact Investment Compact; underline that small and medium enterprises, Chambers of Commerce and business associations play an important role in the development of the Adriatic and Ionian region, appreciate the development potential of maritime links between the Adriatic and Ionian basins; underline the importance of freedom to provide international maritime transport services and stress the need for initiatives aimed at simplifying and

harmonising port administrative procedures and decide to increase co-operation in this sector and enhance navigation safety and information also by establishing links between ports and port operators on both sides of the Adriatic and the Ionian; conscious of the need to improve also the existing infrastructure for land transport communications, agree to support projects of common interest such as the Pan European and Trans European Corridors and underline the importance of freedom to provide the services in international road haulage on these corridors, with due respect to the existing international agreements; will consider the opportunity to support other projects of common interest in the framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, such as the Adriatic and Ionian Highway project, in the light of the feasibility study;

5. note that the establishment of closer cooperation creates better possibilities for solving specific environmental problems jointly; decide to promote and, where possible, institutionalise meetings between the professional categories involved in managing and utilising the resources of the Adriatic and the Ionian in a sustainable way; take note of the initiative of the Government of Italy to launch an Experimental Scientific Co-operation Project, which is open to participation of countries of the region, under the aegis of FAO, designed to safeguard fish resources in the Adriatic and the Ionian, in accordance with the guidelines set by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean; and urge the undertaking of further joint efforts in this area; stress the need to take into account the Adriatic and Ionian dimension within the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution; stress that an integrated approach among environmental and other sector policies should be encouraged to ensure that economic activities are compatible with sustainable development goals; note that increased efforts are also needed in capacity building activities to improve the scientific basis for strategic environmental assessments; recommend a stronger cooperation for the implementation of all the UN environmental conventions and in particular to strengthen the impact of Annex IV Countries action of UNCCD;

6. decide to increase cooperation in the field of culture, education and science, building upon the unique and diverse cultural identities of the Adriatic and the

Ionian area and on the historically close cultural links; stress their will to strengthen the cooperation in higher education and vocational training, referring particularly to partnerships between Universities, academic and training institutions and cultural and research centres; point to the importance of developing exchanges in the field of teaching and learning at the school level and of promoting direct contacts in the artistic and literary sectors as well as in the cultural industry; agree to foster the cooperation in order to preserve the tangible and intangible cultural heritage and to promote sustainable cultural tourism;

7. note that tourism offers a solid platform for promoting the identity of the Adriatic and Ionian region and stress their wish to increase cooperation in view of elaborating possible common projects;

8. underline the need to fight against illegal activities in the Adriatic and the Ionian that jeopardise the security and welfare of citizens of Adriatic and Ionian States -- both EU and non-EU members -- and may even hinder the development of some States in the region; decide to set up a coordination mechanism for more rapid, efficient exchange of information through the establishment of national points of contact for police, judiciary, and customs, according to the model foreseen in the meeting of the Chiefs of police of the Adriatic and Ionian countries; to promote the alignment of their legislation, enhance transparency in public administration and business, and develop an adequate policy to tackle corruption, including appropriate and effective measures; reaffirm their commitment to the Anti Corruption Initiative under the aegis of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe; decide to organise training courses in the judicial, policing and custom sectors in conjunction, wherever possible, with international organisations; to focus investigations on combating trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking, smuggling, money laundering, and every serious unlawful activity in which transnational criminal organisations are implicated;

9. underline the importance of promoting cooperation between local administrations and civil societies in the areas identified in the Declaration in order to foster links among peoples of the Adriatic and Ionian region and

favour the exchange of experiences and mutual understanding;

10. appreciate the actions and initiatives recalled by the European Commission at the Conference, which will substantially contribute to the fulfilment of the objectives that the Conference set for the region and could constitute a solid platform for future EU actions in the area; agree on the need for deeper involvement by the EU in the Adriatic and Ionian region and invite the European Commission to play an active role in the aforementioned cooperation areas; stress the desirability of a full and effective utilisation of EU available structural and assistance instruments to support cooperation that would involve the Governments and local administrations of the Adriatic and Ionian region in the fields identified in the present declaration;

11. resolve to meet in the second half of the current year and decide to convene a Committee of Senior Officials to consider ways of implementing ideas on co-operation within the AIC framework and establishing the relevant Rules of Procedure.