



REPUBLIC OF MONTENEGRO  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



ADRIATIC-IONIAN INITIATIVE PRESIDENCY

**SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO PRESIDENCY OF  
THE ADRIATIC-IONIAN INITIATIVE**

The Republic of Montenegro, on behalf of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro, took over the Presidency of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII) at the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the AII Member States Portorož, Slovenia, on 25 May 2004. During the meeting in Portorož, Montenegro announced its firm commitment to continue with strengthening cooperation, enhancing the already started and new projects and programmes and institutionalising the Initiative. The former Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia had shown great effectiveness and success in organising, coordinating and leading this initiative. This has given Montenegro an even more demanding task of carrying out the Chairmanship and maintaining the pace and the same standards.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Montenegro has been coordinating the activities within the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative that provided opportunities for presentation, promotion and introduction of regional cooperation projects and initiatives, which are to be coordinated by Podgorica until May 2005.

The Ministry has created a network of focal points and representatives of relevant institutions in both Montenegro and Serbia; and focused special attention to active participation in regional initiatives. Furthermore, in June 2004 a Working Group on Presiding the AII was created, in which eight Montenegrin ministries took active participation. The Working Group is presided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and it has held numerous meetings in order to enable a successful presidency of the initiative.

The **first Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of Adriatic-Ionian Initiative** was held in Prčanj, Kotor on 9 September. The meeting was attended by high representatives of all the AII Member Countries. The Committee approved the projects and ideas presented by the chairmen of the Round Tables in the area of fighting organized crime, environmental protection and sustainable development, culture, education and interuniversity cooperation, economy, tourism and SME cooperation and maritime transport.

At the Committee the Presidency presented a special paper for discussion *The Way Ahead of the AII*. It suggested a more enhanced institutionalisation of the initiatives through the establishment of a Liaison Office / Small Secretariat that would provide for a more consistent and continued stream of activities among the Member States and should serve as a primary point of contact within the Initiative for interaction with the AII partners, international organizations and NGOs.

Concerning the AII Round Tables, the Presidency put forward several proposals: 1) to nominate permanent chairmen of the six Round Tables of the AII, 2) to separate tourism from economy and SMEs and 3) to transform Round Tables to Working Groups. In this way, a higher level of consistency and communication among the chairmen and the members of the Round Tables would be acquired.

The **first meetings of the eight AII Round Tables and Sub-Tables** were subsequently held in Pržno, Montenegro, on 15-16 November. Around two hundred participants took an active part in discussing about various topics in the areas such as: ecology, economy, transport, tourism, culture, education and organised crime.

When it comes to **parliamentary cooperation**, two meetings of the Adriatic-Ionian Parliaments Committees have been held. The meeting of Foreign Policy Committees of the countries of the Adriatic Ionian Region was held in Cetinje on 14 September 2004 and the Committee for Defence and Security of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative in Cetinje, on 30 November 2004. Both were held within the framework of the Cetinje Parliamentary Forum (CPF).

The **future activities** of the Adriatic-Ionian Presidency shall be focused on the preparation of the next Committee of Senior Officials of the AII, which is to be held in February 2005, the second round of the Round Tables in March 2005 and the Council of Foreign Ministers of the AII, which is to be organised in May 2005. During this period of time, the Presidency shall try to promote and implement the suggested ideas on institutionalisation of the initiative and the transformation of the Round Tables. It shall, also, work on improving and deepening of cooperation in all the areas of common interest of the AII Member States.

The Presidency finds the meetings and other events organised within Adriatic Ionian initiative to be a very productive mechanism for the development of the cooperation between the Member Countries in solving various problems common for the whole region. AII areas of cooperation are great opportunity for presentation, evaluation and preparing important decisions and recommendations for both present and future efforts of Member States towards the more efficient realisation of the agreed activities. For that reason, Montenegro is giving its best in making its one-year Presidency productive and efficient in achieving mutual interests and goals.