



***JOINT STATEMENT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ADRIATIC-IONIAN EUROREGION
CONCERNING THE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OF THE EU STRATEGY FOR
THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN REGION***

The 26 Regional and Local Authorities of the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion (AIE), in the context of the X General Assembly of the Association, held in Rome on 14th January 2015 at the premises of the Molise Region Delegation Office, **ACKNOWLEDGING** the Working Paper devised by the EUSAIR National Coordinators and the European Commission concerning the architecture for the governance and management of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), have unanimously agreed to approve the following Joint Statement:

WELCOMING the adoption, by the European Commission on 17 June 2014, of the Communication on the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, and **TAKING NOTE** of the annexed Action Plan elaborated by the Commission on the basis of the consultation with all the stakeholders of the Adriatic and Ionian area;

CELEBRATING the endorsement, by the EU General Affairs Council of 29 September 2014, and by the European Council of 23-24 October 2014, of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region;

APPRECIATING the official launch of the EUSAIR on 18 November 2014, by the new European Commission and the eight Ministers of Foreign Affairs involved;

EMPHASISING the importance of the Strategy for ensuring the security, stability and development of the Adriatic and Ionian Region;

RECOGNISING the potential of this macro-regional strategy, as innovative and integrated approach, for addressing the challenges of Member States and non-EU-countries belonging to Adriatic-Ionian geographical area;

RECOGNISING the importance of the EUSAIR as an instrument for pursuing the EU objectives of territorial cohesion and its capacity to further contribute to the EU integration path of candidate and potential candidate countries;

STRESSING the role that, since its establishment, the AIE has had in promoting and supporting the adoption of an Adriatic-Ionian Strategy, by encouraging a fruitful dialogue, the identification of shared issues and an exchange of best practices among its member territories;

EMPHASISING the impulse that the AIE, through the conference held on 24 February 2010 at the Committee of the Regions, entitled "Initiative for the creation of an Adriatic Strategy – A contribution to the European integration", has given to the Governments of the eight countries participating in the EUSAIR to bring to the attention of the European Institution the need for an Adriatic-Ionian Strategy;



RECALLING the already twenty occasions of meeting, political and academic exchange of views and events undertaken in the last five years by in AIE Members in their territories, which have specifically been dedicated to the development and definition of the EUSAIR thematic pillars;

RECOGNISING the contribution that the AIE, firstly through the Adri.Eur.O.P project – INTERREG/CARDS-PHARE 2000/2006 –, and secondly through the AdriGov project - IPA Adriatic CBC Programme 2007/2013, has given to the strengthening of good relationships between the Local Authorities and the National Governments of the Adriatic area, aimed at enhancing territorial cooperation and shared management of European funds;

HIGHLIGHTING the role that the AIE has had in bringing the Local Authorities of EU Member States and those of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro around the same table; and **STRESSING** the uniqueness of the AIE as the only transnational and interregional Association that allows the territories of candidate and potential candidate countries to see their voice represented on issues of common interest and concern for all the citizens living in the Adriatic-Ionian area;

COMMITTED to move without delay to the implementation phase of the EUSAIR, in partnership with the European Commission and the eight countries involved, as indicated by the European Council;

UNDERLINING the strong political value that the adoption of the Strategy represents for the AIE, as the result of a long negotiation process which has seen the AIE Members involved and the expression of a clear political will of all the territories of the Adriatic and Ionian area;

CALL the Commissioner Crețu and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the eight countries participating in the Strategy to:

- recognise the contribution that the Regional and Local Authorities have given to the definition of the Strategy and Action Plan, and to follow up with the model of multilevel governance experienced during the process of public consultation with the stakeholders, allowing to the relevant national/regional/local actors to have an active participation also during the implementation phase of the Strategy;
- take into consideration the request of the AIE to be represented, as a full participant, in the EUSAIR Governing Board (GB) by its President and Vice-President, in order to allow the AIE member territories to have a dynamic involvement in the strategic management and implementation of the Strategy.