

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNTRIES  
PARTICIPATING IN THE EU STRATEGY FOR THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN REGION  
ON A GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, SET UP IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

Brussels, 18 November 2014

**We, Representatives of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia\***

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 (EUSAIR).

UNDERLINING that the Strategy is an innovative instrument of cooperation between EU and non-EU countries, territories and people of the Adriatic and Ionian Region, also with the political aim of assisting participating candidate and potential candidate countries on their path towards the EU;

COMMITTED to move without delay to the implementation phase of the Strategy, in partnership with the European Commission, as indicated by the European Council;

STRESSING the EU Commission Communication of 20 May 2014 and the Council conclusions of 21 October 2014 on the governance of macro-regional strategies, which recall that the delivery of results of macro-regional strategies relies on an effective governance model and efficient procedures for the implementation, fully respecting the institutional architecture of the participating countries, as well as the specificities and competences of their administrative structures;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Council conclusions of 29 September 2014 on the EUSAIR call upon the Member States participating in the Strategy to set up, by the end of 2014, in partnership with the European Commission and the non-EU countries, an effective multilevel governance system and effective procedures for the timely implementation of the Strategy; ACKNOWLEDGING that governance involves three levels: (i) political leadership and ownership, (ii) coordination and (iii) implementation and that these levels are interrelated, in particular political leadership and ownership being a pre-requisite for effective coordination and implementation;

UNDERLINING that governance is a shared process which describes how and by whom a macro-regional strategy is implemented and that implementation of the Strategy therefore relies on a collective effort on the part of the participating countries, the European Commission and the other European Institutions, as appropriate;

AGREEING accordingly that, for the EUSAIR to bring clear impact and deliver practical results, a multi-level governance and management system based on strong political leadership and decision making as well as clarity in the organization of work is required;

TAKING NOTE of the coincidental timing of the launch of the EUSAIR and the start of the 2014-2020 EU programming period, STRESS the need to ensure a prompt setting of the EUSAIR governance and management system in order to secure the required alignment and synergies between the two processes;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the work done by the EUSAIR National Contacts Points - henceforth be to be renamed "National Coordinators" so as to better reflect their role with regards to the Strategy - and the Commission for devising a streamlined architecture for the governance and management of the EUSAIR, aligned with the general recommendations issued by the Council for the governance of macro-regional strategies, yet taking into account the contextual conditions specific to the Adriatic and Ionian Region;

AGREE with the outline of the EUSAIR governance and management architecture as devised in the paper "Towards a streamline governance and management architecture for the EUSAIR" attached to this Statement, and ENCOURAGE all parties to consider tailoring it further, as appropriate, to implementation requirements as they emerge and taking into account the dynamic nature of the Strategy;

COMMIT to:

- favour all necessary actions at respective national level – fully respecting the institutional architecture of each country and the specificities and competences of the administrative structures – aimed at the appointment and empowerment of the relevant key implementers (National Coordinators, Pillar Coordinators, members of the Thematic Steering Groups) in order to ensure a prompt set up, in partnership with the European Commission, of the devised governance and management architecture, in particular the EUSAIR Governing Board and Thematic Steering Groups;

- reinforce the political leadership and ownership of EUSAIR, translating it into institutional and administrative support in order to ensure effective delivery of the Strategy;
- encourage the involvement of relevant national/regional/local stakeholders as well as civil society in all steps of the Strategy's implementation;
- earnestly encourage the respective national and regional authorities responsible for the management of EU funds to ensure the embedding, where appropriate and subject to the territorial needs, of the EUSAIR into the programmes for the 2014-2020 financial cycle and the mobilisation of the relevant EU funds and of other national/regional/local available resources to support the implementation of the Strategy and the achievement of its objectives.

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**Attachment:**

**EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region**

**Towards a streamlined governance and management architecture  
for the EUSAIR**

**Working Paper devised by the EUSAIR National Coordinators, in partnership with the  
Commission**

\* Slovenia expresses its procedural reservation