

### Press Release

The XIV Adriatic - Ionian Initiative Council meeting, which concludes the Serbian presidency, was held in Belgrade on 30 April 2012.

The meeting was attended by representatives of All member states: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. Representatives of other regional initiatives also took part in it as guests, including: the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Central European Initiative, Council of the Baltic Sea Countries and the Regional Cooperation Council. The EU was also represented.

The participants discussed the current situation in the region and how to further strengthen regional cooperation. They expressed their satisfaction with the progress of the Western Balkans states in their respective EU processes and their hope that this will be intensified.



The support of all member states of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative for the development of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian region was reaffirmed. This is a strategic document that should support the development needs of the Adriatic-Ionian area modeled on the already adopted Danube and Baltic Region Strategy. They adopted the Belgrade Declaration calling on the European Council to approve the mandate to the European Commission to develop a strategy this year.

The significance of the cooperation between the member states of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative was once again confirmed at the meeting. It is expected that cooperation will be further intensified through financial support to projects in the field of rural development, tourism and development of small and medium-sized enterprises.

The participants congratulated to the Republic of Serbia for its successful one-year presidency

over the Initiative, which formally ends on 31 May 2012.

The Republic of Slovenia will take over the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative on 1 June 2012.