



10 YEARS
ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE
ITALIAN CHAIRMANSHIP
2009-2010

PROTOCOL FOR STRENGTHENING COOPERATION ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN BASIN.

The Ministers in charge of Rural Development of

the Republic of Albania,

Bosnia and Herzegovina,

the Republic of Croatia,

the Hellenic Republic,

the Italian Republic,

Montenegro,

the Republic of Serbia,

the Republic of Slovenia,

- considering that the Adriatic and Ionian Region shares common agricultural and climatic conditions, a similar cultural heritage and its rural areas have a great potential in terms of landscape, tradition, quality food productions and food systems, biodiversity and natural resources;
- considering that the development of the rural areas of the Adriatic and Ionian Region is a priority for a sustainable economic development and for the actual benefit of rural population;

- convinced that the exchange of best practices and experiences among the AII Countries represents an important aspect for better addressing rural policies, improving institutional capacity building and creating new opportunities for economic growth, job creation and environmental protection;
- aware of the need of mutual cooperation among AII Countries in the enlargement process of the EU- especially concerning the alignment of the *EU acquis communautaire* on Common Agricultural Policy and EU Rural Development- in order to speed up the positive effects of European integration in the whole Adriatic and Ionian Basin;
- convinced that coordination among AII Countries on cross-border actions and other shared measures is an important aspect that can significantly contribute to enhance the impact of rural policies for the Region;
- considering that an harmonious development can be driven by an economic cooperation between the AII most dynamic rural clusters and the rest of the Region, especially in the private sector (SMEs);

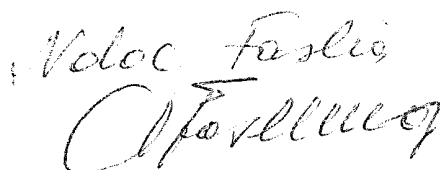
The Ministers have agreed the following:

1. The present Protocol is aimed at defining a common vision to effectively foster the development of rural areas in the whole Adriatic – Ionian basin through strengthen cooperation among AII countries.
2. At this purpose it is established an “Adriatic-Ionian Network for Rural Development” (AII-NRD) with the participation of representatives of related Ministries, that agree to meet at least twice per year;
3. AII-NRD promotes the exchange of best practices and experiences in Rural Development through regular meetings of AII Countries officials for better addressing the rural policies and improving institutional capacity building;
4. AII-NRD supports the identification and start-up of Rural Development cooperation projects between AII countries, with special reference to the participation to Programs financed by the EU and other international organizations;

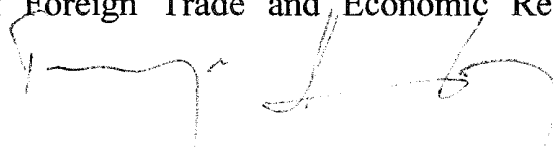
5. AII-NRD enables AII rural stakeholders to exchange best practices and experience, especially in the private sector (SMEs), in order to promote the transfer of economic development models, the higher integration among AII economies and the solution to common challenges.
6. AII-NRD supports any initiative aimed at promoting quality standards for agricultural products, including the identification of the origin of products and the defense of rural traditions and cultural heritage in food production.
7. This protocol shall enter into effect on the date of its signature by all the Signatories. The original of this Protocol in a single copy in the English language will be deposited at the AII Permanent Secretariat in Ancona (Italy).

Done in Rome, on May 26th 2010

For the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection of the Republic of Albania



For the Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina



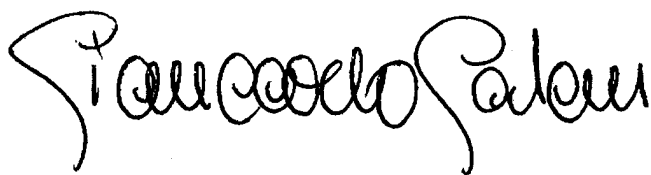
For the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development of the Republic of Croatia



The Minister of Rural Development and Food of the Hellenic Republic



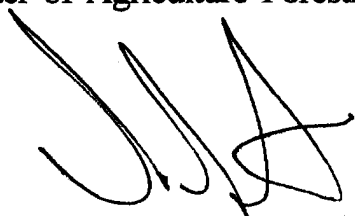
The Minister of Agriculture food and forestry policies of the Italian Republic

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paolo Salvi".

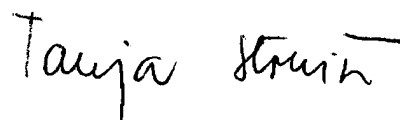
For the Minister of the Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Montenegro

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a final flourish.

For the Minister of Agriculture Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Serbia

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized initial 'S' followed by a few more strokes.

For the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of the Republic of Slovenia

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tanja Strniš".