



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION
AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

*Chairmanship
of the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative*

Athens, 27 December 2001

ROUND TABLE
“EDUCATION AND INTER-UNIVERSITY COOPERATION”

FIRST MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE
ATHENS, GREECE
15 DECEMBER 2001

CONCLUSIONS

The Steering Committee of the Round Table “Education and Inter-university Cooperation” in the context of the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative met in Athens on December 15, 2001 for its first meeting under the Greek Presidency. The meeting was chaired by Prof. **Dionyssis Kladis**, Secretary for Higher Education of the Ministry of Education of Greece, and it was attended by Prof. **Davor Butkovic**, Deputy Minister for the International Scientific and Technical Co-operation of the Ministry of Science and Technology of Croatia, and by Ms. **Germana Verri** from the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research of Italy.

Prof. **Miodrag Ivkovic**, Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Development of Serbia, representing the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Mr. **Andrej Kotnik** from the Ministry of Education and Sports of Slovenia, were not able to attend the meeting. Apologies for not been able to attend the meeting were also expressed by Prof. **Pier Ugo Calzolari**, President of the UniAdriion Board, who participates in the Steering Committee as an observer.

As two of the member states (Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina) have not yet nominated their representatives in the Steering Committee, the meeting was considered to have the required quorum.

The Steering Committee took into consideration the tasks which were assigned to it according to the Conclusions of the Corfu Meeting of September 2001. The Steering Committee also took stock of the Discussion Paper presented by the Greek Presidency and discussed in-depth the arising issues, especially as regards the prospects of the Round Table “Education and Inter-university Cooperation” and its future steps.

The Steering Committee expressed its concerns as regards four issues of major importance, which make it necessary to reconsider the thematic priorities of the Round Table. These four issues are as follows:

- Many of the thematic priorities of the Round Table “Education and Inter-university Cooperation” overlap with those of other Round Tables, which obviously have the primary responsibility for developing activities in these priorities. At the same time, the other Round Tables do not seek support from the inter-university cooperation that our Round Table can offer. But, even if they did, they should have the primary responsibility to decide on the relevant projects.
- Many of the thematic priorities of our Round Table seem to overlap also with those of UniAdriatic, which has already established its organisational and operational structure and which is already developing its activities with the financial support of the Italian Government.
- As derived from the Draft Conclusions of the meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of the Initiative, held on December 3, 2001 in Athens, the European Commission announced that there are limited possibilities for supporting financially the activities of the Initiative. And these possibilities seem, at the moment, to be confined to the sectors of “environment” and “fight against crime”. There is no reference as regards financial support of our Round Table in the above Draft Conclusions, either positive or negative.
- One and a half year after the Ancona Conference, which launched the Initiative, the lack of an identity of our Round Table seems to be as clear and as perturbing as ever. All the actors of the Initiative consider inter-university cooperation as a means to improving the objectives of the Initiative. However, there still seems to be unclear who is in charge of setting these objectives. Therefore, the need to clarify the identity of the Round Table seems both urgent and pressing at this very moment.

Taking into consideration the above four issues, the Steering Committee concluded that, in order to clarify the identity of our Round Table, we have to consider “education” as the thematic content of the Round Table and focus our activities on it, while considering “inter-university cooperation” as the means to reach the objectives set. Of course “inter-university cooperation” may also serve as a means to support the other Round Tables to realise their own objectives, but it is up to them to take the initiative for such cooperation.

According to the above thoughts, our Round Table should be considered as the only way for the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative to invest on education, training and manpower development in the area through the necessary synergies. But, furthermore, education should be considered as a crucial means to improving cohesion in the area.

The Steering Committee stresses once more the need for financial support of the relevant activities in order for the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative to survive and grow. It is clear that the possible sources should be sought either from the national authorities or from the European Commission. The Steering Committee has to continue its efforts. But, it seems that the proper time for discussing the entire problem of funding will be the next regular session of the Council of Ministers in May 2002.

At the same time, the Steering Committee believes that, in spite of the above-mentioned difficulties, our Round Table has to be activated through a number of projects, which should evolve through the procedures agreed at the Corfu Meeting. Seeking for funding will hence be with reference to concrete projects.

In the above context, the Steering Committee decided to proceed to a Call for Proposals, limited to a small number of thematic priorities, which will be restricted strictly to issues concerning Education. The thematic priorities were selected so that they assure for higher fi-

nancing probabilities, being unique among all the Round Tables and portraying therefore in the clearest way the particular identity of our Round Table.

The following four issues were approved by the Steering Committee as thematic priorities fulfilling the above requirements for the current Call for Proposals:

- Curriculum development for primary and secondary education in the fields of the history and the culture of the area. This thematic priority aims a) at strengthening the cohesion of the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative by promoting the mutual understanding among our young people on the basis of our historical and cultural background and b) at promoting closer relations in the area through rewriting its history on the basis of peace and not on the basis of war, as a source of friendship and not as a source of hate.
- Cultural issues concerning the field of humanities, aiming at reinforcing common cultural roots in the area.
- Quality assurance in higher education institutions (information, exchange of expertise and good practices, training seminars, joint institutional review projects, benchmarking projects etc.). The aim of this thematic priority is to raise the quality of higher education institutions in relevance with the current European standards.
- Integrated curricula in higher education through the establishment of a common credit transfer system allowing for the mutual recognition of credits. The aim of this thematic priority is to promote the idea of student mobility and to serve as a first step towards improving the objective of the Bologna Process concerning the establishment of joint programmes leading to joint or common or double degrees.

The projects realising the above thematic priorities should derive from cooperation among higher education institutions of the area. However, proposals may also be submitted by wider partnerships, provided the partnership includes at least one higher education institution from each participating country, under the condition that they are in accordance with the above thematic priorities and with the rationale and aim of each one of them. The other members of the partnership may be research institutions, regional and/or local authorities, enterprises of the public and/or the private sector etc.

A critical prerequisite for the approval of a proposal is that it should result from the cooperation of at least three higher education institutions belonging to three countries. Proposals submitted by only two countries may also be approved, unless those two countries are Italy and Greece. However, the need to involve as many countries as possible in the overall process will affect the assessment of the proposals to a certain degree, but it should not lead to reductions or compromises regarding quality.

The Steering Committee also decided that the Call for Proposals should reach every higher education institution in the area through the national delegates of each member state.

The deadlines and the related timetable for the submission, assessment and approval of the project proposals are as follows:

- The Call for Proposals will be sent to all national delegates by the end of December 2001, together with the Conclusions of the meeting of the Steering Committee.
- The national delegates will forward the Call for Proposals to all interested institutions and other actors by January 15, 2002.

- The project proposals will be submitted to the Steering Committee by March 15, 2002.
- The Steering Committee will finalise the review and the assessment of the proposals and will submit its justified recommendations to the Convention of the Round Table by April 15, 2002. The Steering Committee may be helped in the assessment of the proposals by ad hoc groups of experts.
- The Convention of the Round Table will decide on the approval of the proposals during its regular session in May 2002.



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**ROUND TABLE
“EDUCATION AND INTER-UNIVERSITY COOPERATION”**

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Introduction

The Steering Committee of the Round Table “Education and Inter-university Cooperation” in the context of the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative calls for proposals of projects which promote the general objectives of the Initiative as well as the specific objectives of the particular Round Table, as they are outlined in the present Call for Proposals.

Objectives

The general objectives of the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative and of the Round Table “Education and Inter-university Cooperation” are portrayed in the several official texts, especially in the two Ministerial Declarations of Ancona and Split and in the respective statements of the Round Table, which can be provided by the national authorities.

More specifically, the present Call for Proposals aims at the following:

- To secure and strengthen the cohesion of the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative.
- To improve the conditions for the active involvement of all the countries – partners, so that they gain full benefit of the cooperation.
- To ensure for the equality in partnership.
- To promote the effectiveness and the efficiency of our cooperation.
- To assure for the relevance, the consistency and the continuity of our actions.

Scope – Prerequisites

The present Call for Proposals is addressed primarily to higher education institutions. However, proposals may also be submitted by wider partnerships, under the condition that the partnership includes at least one higher education institution from each participating country, and they are in accordance with the above thematic priorities and with the rationale and aim of each one of them. The other members of the partnership may be research institutions, regional and/or local authorities, enterprises of the public and/or the private sector etc.

A critical prerequisite for the approval of a proposal is that it should result from the cooperation of at least three higher education institutions belonging to three countries. Proposals submitted by only two countries may also be approved, unless those two countries are Italy and Greece. However, the need to involve as many countries as possible in the overall process will affect the assessment of the proposals to a certain degree, but it should not lead to reductions or compromises regarding quality.

Thematic priorities

The following four issues were approved by the Steering Committee as thematic priorities fulfilling the above requirements for the current Call for Proposals:

- Curriculum development for primary and secondary education in the fields of the history and the culture of the area. This thematic priority aims a) at strengthening the cohesion of the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative by promoting the mutual understanding among our young people on the basis of our historical and cultural background and b) at promoting closer relations in the area through rewriting its history on the basis of peace and not on the basis of war, as a source of friendship and not as a source of hate.
- Cultural issues concerning the field of humanities, aiming at reinforcing common cultural roots in the area.
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- Integrated curricula in higher education through the establishment of a common credit transfer system allowing for the mutual recognition of credits. The aim of this thematic priority is to promote the idea of student mobility and to serve as a first step towards improving the objective of the Bologna Process concerning the establishment of joint programmes leading to joint or common or double degrees.

Content and structure of the proposals

The proposals should contain at least the following:

- Analytical description of the content, the rationale and the objectives of the proposal.
- Description of the methodology to be used.
- Timetable for implementing the project. The duration cannot exceed two years.

- Presentation of the profile of all partners and of their relevant expertise.
- Analytical budget estimations, including potential funders.

Assessment – Deadlines – Timetable

The proposals will be reviewed and assessed by the Steering Committee of the Round Table, currently operating under the Greek Presidency. The Steering Committee may be helped in the assessment of the proposals by ad hoc groups of experts. The final decision on the approval of the proposals belongs to the authority of the Convention of the Round Table.

The deadlines and the related timetable for the submission, assessment and approval of the project proposals are as follows:

- i. The project proposals will be submitted to the Steering Committee by March 15, 2002.
- ii. The Steering Committee will finalise the review and the assessment of the proposals and will submit its justified recommendations to the Convention of the Round Table by April 15, 2002. The Steering Committee may be helped in the assessment of the proposals by ad hoc groups of experts.
- iii. The Convention of the Round Table will decide on the approval of the proposals during its regular session in May 2002.