



**HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS**

Chairmanship of the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative

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

**FIRST MEETING
OF NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES**

**CORFU, GREECE
29-30 SEPTEMBER 2001**

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CONCLUSIONS

A. The participants of the Meeting discussed thoroughly the Paper presented by the Greek Presidency and decided unanimously the following:

1. They approved the Presidency's Proposal regarding a) the organizational structure as outlined in paragraphs 17 to 24, including the establishment of the Steering Committee and the Convention of the Round Table (Appendix I), and b) the principles, rules, internal procedures and timetables as outlined in paragraphs 25 to 28 (Appendix II).

2. They accepted the need for an inter-university cooperation concept wider than the one related to the UNIADRION Network. However, they decided to discuss the relationship between these two concepts during the next session of the Convention of the Round Table, which is scheduled to take place in February 2002.

3. They authorized the Steering Committee to discuss the issue of the cooperation between the Round Table "Education and Inter-University Cooperation" and the other five Round Tables of the Initiative, and to prepare relevant proposals for the next session of the Convention.

4. They authorized the Steering Committee to decide on the following two issues related to the forthcoming Call for Proposals (paragraph 28):

- On the reconfirmation of the thematic priorities, taking into consideration the related decisions made in the previous meetings.
- On whether the Steering Committee will contact directly or indirectly all the institutions involved in the process.

5. They authorized the Presidency to contact the Ministries involved and ask them to nominate as soon as possible the national representatives for the Steering Committee.

B. The participants of the Meeting also took into consideration the proposal of the Secretary General of the Region of the Ionian Islands on "Regional strategies and the inter-university cooperation in the framework of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative" and decided unanimously to encourage promoting close links between inter-university cooperation and inter-regional cooperation, which are expected to be realized through the development of common project proposals on a wider basis, aiming at supporting regional development needs of the wider geographical area. In this context, they approved the broadening of the thematic priorities of the Round Table "Education and Inter-University Cooperation" with additional subjects such as agricultural activities, food technology and tourist economy, being of major importance for the regional development.

APPENDIX I

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ROUND TABLE

- 1.** The organizational structure of the Round Table consists of two bodies: The Convention and the Steering Committee.
- 2.** The Convention of the Round Table consists of the national delegations, which comprise representatives of the governmental, regional and institutional authorities together with national experts. Each national delegation carries only one vote in the Convention. The President and the other members of the Board of Advisors of the UNIADRION Network participate in the Convention under the status of the observers. The above can obviously be at the same time members of the respective national delegations.
- 3.** The Steering Committee of the Round Table consists of one representative from each participating country. The President of the UNIADRION Network participates in the Steering Committee under the status of the observer.
- 4.** Both the Convention and the Steering Committee are chaired by the country which currently holds the Presidency of the Initiative. Decisions of both the Convention and the Steering Committee are taken by consensus, every country carrying only one vote in both bodies.
- 5.** The Convention convenes in its regular session during the annual regular session of the Adriatic and Ionian Council of Ministers. The Convention may also be held in extra-ordinary sessions under the call of the current Presidency of the Initiative. During the regular session of the Convention, the current Presidency presents its annual report on the facts and the proceedings during its mandate, while the coming Presidency presents its programme statements for the coming mandate.
- 6.** The Convention is responsible for setting or revising the priorities of the Round Table, for adopting the action plan of the Round Table, for adopting the principles and the rules determining the activities of the Round Table, for specifying the internal processes regulating the functioning of the Round Table, and for approving the proposals for projects following the respective recommendations of the Steering Committee.
- 7.** The Steering Committee has the following responsibilities: It coordinates and superintends the activities carried out in the context of the Round Table and it helps confronting any difficulties, problems and obstacles may appear. It examines the proposals for projects and it makes the respective recommendations, properly justified, to the Convention as regards their approval or not. It prepares, together with the current Presidency, the sessions of the Convention.

APPENDIX II

PRINCIPLES, RULES, INTERNAL PROCEDURES, TIMETABLES FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ROUND TABLE

1. The principles determining the overall activities of the Round Table are portrayed in the several official texts. In general, they are described in the two Ministerial Declarations of Ancona and Split. More specifically, they are outlined in the respective statements of the Round Table.

2. Taking all those principles into consideration, the activities of the Round Table should serve the following major necessities:

- 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.

3. The above necessities construct a clear framework for the rules of our cooperation. One characteristic of those necessities is that they are interrelated and interdependent as well. The relevance of the objectives of a project proposal to the principles of the Initiative ensures for both the consistency and the continuity of the respective actions. The effectiveness of our cooperation depends largely on the active involvement of all the countries, which in turn depends on equality in partnership. At the same time, the active involvement of all the countries strengthens the cohesion of the Initiative.

4. Actually, the above necessities form a set of prerequisites and criteria for the approval of the several project proposals. In consistency with the above necessities, the following rules and procedures for the submission and approval of the several project proposals have been decided:

- i. The call for proposals will be sent to all countries until 15 October 2001, together with the resolutions adopted in the Corfu Meeting and with the summary of the minutes.
- ii. The project proposals will be submitted to the Steering Committee until the end of November 2001.
- iii. The Steering Committee will finalize the review and the assessment of the proposals and will submit its justified recommendations to the Convention until the end of January 2002. The Steering Committee may be helped in the assessment of the proposals by ad hoc groups of experts.
- iv. The Convention will decide on the approval of the proposals during its second extra-ordinary session, which is scheduled to convene in February 2002.
- v. The above timetable will be valid for the coming years as well, except if it is revised by the Convention.

- vi. A prerequisite for the approval of a proposal is to adapt to the thematic priorities of the Round Table and to 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.
- vii. The need for involving 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.
- viii. The project proposals are to be submitted by higher education institutions. But they may also be submitted by wider partnerships, provided the partnership includes at least one higher education institution from each participating country. 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.

REFERENCE DOCUMENT 1

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE – RULES AND INTERNAL PROCESSES

Discussion Paper by the Greek Presidency

Introduction

1. In the beginning of the second year of our Initiative, we have to admit that we have not taken yet the necessary steps in order to implement our plans, in order to realize our objectives. Looking back to those 15 months since May 2000 in Ancona, we can see many Declarations and many Statements, but for the time being we remain without a concrete action plan and without a clear framework to rule our relations and govern our joint activities.
2. As stated by the Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Grigoris Niotis in Split, one of the main objectives of the current Greek Presidency will be to clarify the landscape in which our inter-university cooperation is to develop and evolve. The Declarations of Ancona and Split in general and, more specifically, the Statements of the respective meetings of the Round Table on Education and Inter-university Cooperation have outlined the areas and the directions in which our cooperation is to proceed. What we have not discussed yet is how to build our cooperation, how to organize our activities, how to improve our plans.
3. At this point, we have to mention a concrete step which was the establishment of the UNIADRION Network in Ravenna last December. We will have the opportunity to discuss it with our Italian colleagues in the Corfu Meeting. We have to consider it as an important step towards the implementation of the Initiative's objectives. The establishment of the UNIADRION Network (as the Network of the Universities of the Adriatic and Ionian Basin) promotes undoubtedly the development of the inter-university cooperation, providing a network-type structure for this cooperation. However, no concrete steps have occurred since that time towards the activation of the Network. We are aware that the assembly of the partner institutions will be held after the Corfu Meeting, aiming at approving the UNIADRION's charter and constructing its constitutional bodies.
4. Nevertheless, there are still issues to be clarified at the Corfu Meeting as regards UNIADRION. The Split Declaration considers the establishment of the Virtual University UNIADRION as part of a wider inter-university network carrying the same name UNIADRION. The Ravenna Declaration states that the participants of the Ravenna Conference decided to establish a Virtual University of the Adriatic – Ionian Region, which will be named UNIADRION. However, the draft charter appearing in the respective web site refers to the establishment of the UNIADRION Network, as a Network of the Universities of the Adriatic and Ionian Basin, without referring to the concept of a Virtual University.
5. The Greek Presidency has the view that we need to elucidate the landscape and to dissipate any confusion regarding the characteristics and the nature of UNIADRION and the relation between UNIADRION and the wider inter-university cooperation in the context of the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative. This presupposes however that we all have first of all to decide whether we do need a wider concept for the inter-university cooperation. And, if so, we have then to discuss whether and how UNIADRION is to be incorporated into this wider concept, to discuss whether and

how UNIADRION is to be covered under the political umbrella of the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative. The position of the Greek Presidency is that we do need a wider concept for the inter-university cooperation. This concept should not necessarily have the characteristics of a network. On the contrary, we believe that the existence of one network (i.e. the UNIADRION) in the region is enough. What we really need is effective inter-university cooperation on a bilateral or multilateral basis, which should be supported by an efficient organizational structure.

6. We come therefore to the vital questions as regards the characteristics and the future of our Initiative. The activities carried out in the context of the Initiative are subject to the political responsibility of the participating countries. This political responsibility concerns of course only the overall framework discussed and adopted during the several meetings and does not intervene into the specific projects to implement our priorities. But, we need to have a politically adopted action plan, including the thematic priorities which have already been adopted in the several past meetings. Furthermore, we need to have a politically adopted organizational framework for our cooperation. And, we have to agree politically on the principles and the rules which will govern our relations and our joint actions. This is what the Greek Presidency considers of major importance this very moment. We are convinced that the cooperation will not evolve if we do not clarify all the aforementioned issues. And, of course, UNIADRION too is subject to the above political responsibilities, if it is to be covered under the common political umbrella of the initiative.

The particularity of the Round Table on Education and Inter-university Cooperation

7. The implementation of the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative proceeds through six Round Tables, as follows:

- Round Table on Economy, Tourism, Small and Medium-size Enterprises.
- Round Table on Maritime and Transport.
- Round Table on Environment Protection and Sustainable Development.
- Round Table on Security and Cooperation in Combating Illegal Activities.
- Round Table on Culture.
- Round Table on Education and Inter-university Cooperation.

8. The first five Round Tables have a clear thematic content, referring to concrete issues which appear to be the priority objectives of the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative. This is hardly the case with the last Round Table, since Inter-university Cooperation is a primarily methodological concept and thus has no thematic content by itself. We know that the previous meetings in Ancona and Split have already determined a thematic framework for Inter-university Cooperation which we have to take for granted of course.

9. However, there is already a question raised by the representatives of the other Round Tables on whether Inter-university Cooperation should adapt to the action plans of the other Round Tables, and especially as regards the scientific implementation of their priorities. According to that approach, our cooperation should be influenced by the outcomes of the other Round Tables and should, therefore, be also oriented towards the priorities set by them as well.

10. We obviously face a rather complicated situation, which we have to clarify. From the very beginning, our Round Table had three parallel components: a) One vertical thematic component, referring to the areas of culture and education, b) one horizontal scientific component, referring to the development of information society in the region, including several thematic areas of implementation, and c) one organizational or methodological component, referring to the inter-

university cooperation. Given that the Greek Presidency has already proposed the separation of the thematic area of culture and the establishment of a separate Round Table on Culture, our vertical thematic component is now restricted only to issues on education. However, we have already set many thematic priorities in our Round Table on issues which are not related to education as such. These are all priorities for inter-university action, either being autonomous or covered under the umbrella of the development of information society. Those priorities have been proposed and accepted jointly by the universities of the region and the national representatives comprising our Round Table during the several past meetings.

11. To some extent, many of the above thematic priorities, apart from those on education as such, are compatible with those set by the other Round Tables. Such priorities are, for example, those referring to issues on sustainable economic development and those referring to environmental and ecological issues. On the other hand, most of the priorities set in the other Round Tables, like e.g. issues concerning tourism, transport and combating illegal activities, are not included among the thematic priorities of the inter-university cooperation. However, at the same time we have included among our priorities issues referring to applications of information society in the field of health (e.g. tele-medicine), which neither relate to education nor are included among the priorities of the other Round Tables.

12. However, we have to mention at this point that the Ravenna Conference has included some of those fields in the thematic priorities for the action plan of the UNIADRION. Those fields were the one concerning with tourism (specifically in its cultural dimension) and the one concerning with economics, communications, harbours and trade relations. But, this was only an initiative taken by the participants of the Conference, without having been previously discussed either with the national representatives of the Round Table on Inter-university Cooperation or with the national representatives of the thematically respective Round Tables.

13. Therefore, and given that UNIADRION has an autonomous function anyway, we can conclude that there still remains an open question as whether our Round Table should cooperate with the other Round Tables and, if yes, in which way. Should the inter-university cooperation adapt strictly to the priorities of the other Round Tables or should it have only loose bonds or contacts with them? Should representatives of our Round Table participate in the activities of the others and/or should their representatives participate in our activities? These are questions to be answered in our meeting.

Thematic priorities of the Round Table on Education and Inter-university Cooperation

14. Reviewing the previous meetings in Ancona and Split, we get the following approach to the thematic priorities set by our Round Table:

Issues concerning Education

- Application of information technologies in education (higher education, vocational education and distance learning).
- Environmental education.
- Revitalization of abandoned school buildings along the coast in order to launch various youth programmes.
- Promotion of primary and secondary school-level Centres of Excellence with special regards to vocational education.
- Research in the field of Archives classifying Adriatic – Ionian issues as a part of the Mediterranean region with a view to new technologies.

Issues concerning thematic priorities of other Round Tables

- Projects on environmental and ecological issues.

Issues not included among the thematic priorities of anyone of the Round Tables

- Research on health and life sciences (e.g. medical and biomedical sciences, molecular biology etc.).

Issues related to the priority for developing the information society in the region

- Application of information technologies to health sciences (e.g. tele-medicine).
- Application of information technologies to education (higher education, vocational education and distance learning).

Note: The development of information society in the region allows for a wide range of thematic priorities either in the field of research on information technologies or in the field of applications. Hence, we can consider it as an “open” priority where there is room for almost every scientific area.

Methods and instruments for implementing thematic priorities

15. Referring again to the outcomes of the previous meetings, we conclude that the objectives set by our Round Table are to be implemented primarily through the effective cooperation among the higher education institutions of the region, carried out on a bilateral or multilateral basis and in the following forms:

- Development of joint research projects.
- Development of joint developmental projects.
- Development of joint training courses.
- Exchange of expertise and good practices, by promoting mobility and organizing conferences, seminars, workshops etc.
- Development of common study programmes leading to joint degrees and establishment of a common credit transfer system in the spirit of the Bologna and Prague Process.

16. Opening a parenthesis at this point, we have to remind that four of the countries participating in the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative have already signed the Bologna Declaration (Italy, Greece and Slovenia) or joined recently in Prague the overall Process (Croatia). Hence, the spirit of the Bologna and Prague Process towards the establishment of the European Higher Education Area is strongly present in our Initiative, which has to be consistent with the current European trends. In this context, the four countries mentioned above have furthermore the task to support the remaining three countries participating in our Initiative (namely, Albania, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) in their efforts to join the Bologna and Prague Process.

Organizational structure of the Round Table

17. The crucial question for all of us today is to resolve upon an organizational structure which will assure for planning, organizing, coordinating and superintending all the above activities in the context of our Round Table. It must be clarified here that the activities undertaken in the context of the UNIADRION Network will be also subject to the responsibility of the above organizational structure, if they are to occur as part of the Round Table on Education and Inter-university Cooperation.

18. The Greek Presidency proposes an organizational structure of the Round Table which consists of two bodies: The Convention and the Steering Committee. We avoid using expressions which refer to strict structures (like e.g. assemblies, councils, directing or executive bodies etc.). Instead, we use the expression "convention" which relates more to a group of persons than to an organ or to a body with rigid structure. And we use the term "steering committee", which indicates a rather loose connection between those who steer and those who are steered. The Greek Presidency believes that we do need an organizational structure, the main characteristic of which should be effectiveness, efficiency and flexibility. We need a supportive and, why not, an attractive and inspiring organizational structure. We have thus to avoid establishing a bureaucratic, authoritarian and repulsive structure. In the following paragraphs, the main characteristics of this structure are outlined.

19. The Convention of the Round Table consists of the national delegations, which comprise representatives of the governmental, regional and institutional authorities together with national experts. Each national delegation carries only one vote in the Convention. The President and the other members of the Board of Advisors of the UNIADRION Network participate in the Convention under the status of the observers. The above can obviously be at the same time members of the respective national delegations.

20. The Steering Committee of the Round Table consists of one representative from each participating country. The President of the UNIADRION Network participates in the Steering Committee under the status of the observer.

21. Both the Convention and the Steering Committee are chaired by the country which currently holds the Presidency of the Initiative. Decisions of both the Convention and the Steering Committee are taken by consensus, every country carrying only one vote in both bodies.

22. The Convention convenes in its regular session during the annual regular session of the Adriatic and Ionian Council of Ministers. The Convention may also be held in extra-ordinary sessions under the call of the current Presidency of the Initiative. During the regular session of the Convention, the current Presidency presents its annual report on the facts and the proceedings during its mandate, while the coming Presidency presents its programme statements for the coming mandate.

23. The Convention is responsible for setting or revising the priorities of the Round Table, for adopting the action plan of the Round Table, for adopting the principles and the rules determining the activities of the Round Table, for specifying the internal processes regulating the functioning of the Round Table, and for approving the proposals for projects following the respective recommendations of the Steering Committee.

24. The Steering Committee has the following responsibilities: It coordinates and superintends the activities carried out in the context of the Round Table and it helps confronting any difficulties, problems and obstacles may appear. It examines the proposals for projects and it makes the respective recommendations, properly justified, to the Convention as regards their approval or not. It prepares, together with the current Presidency, the sessions of the Convention.

Principles, rules, internal procedures, timetables

25. The principles determining the overall activities of the Round Table are portrayed in the several official texts. In general, they are described in the two Ministerial Declarations of Ancona and Split. More specifically, they are outlined in the respective statements of the Round Table.

26. Taking all those principles into consideration, the Greek Presidency believes, and proposes as well, that our activities should serve the following major necessities:

- 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.

27. The above necessities construct a clear framework for the rules of our cooperation. One characteristic of those necessities is that they are interrelated and interdependent as well. The relevance of the objectives of a project proposal to the principles of the Initiative ensures for both the consistency and the continuity of the respective actions. The effectiveness of our cooperation depends largely on the active involvement of all the countries, which in turn depends on equality in partnership. At the same time, the active involvement of all the countries strengthens the cohesion of the Initiative.

28. Actually, the above necessities form a set of prerequisites and criteria for the approval of the several project proposals. In consistency with the above necessities, the Greek Presidency proposes the following rules and procedures for the submission and approval of the several project proposals:

- i. The call for proposals will be sent to all countries until 15 October 2001, together with the resolutions adopted in the Corfu Meeting and with the summary of the minutes.
- ii. The project proposals will be submitted to the Steering Committee until the end of November 2001.
- iii. The Steering Committee will finalize the review and the assessment of the proposals and will submit its justified recommendations to the Convention until the end of January 2002. The Steering Committee may be helped in the assessment of the proposals by ad hoc groups of experts.
- iv. The Convention will decide on the approval of the proposals during its second extraordinary session, which is scheduled to convene in February 2002.
- v. The above timetable will be valid for the coming years as well, except if it is revised by the Convention.
- vi. A prerequisite for the approval of a proposal is to adapt to the thematic priorities of the Round Table and to 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.

- vii. The need for involving 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.
- viii. The project proposals are to be submitted primarily by higher education institutions. But they may also be submitted by wider partnerships, provided the partnership includes at least one higher education institution from each participating country. 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.

Implementation of the projects – Focal points

29. Given that a significant number of projects will be approved every academic year, with a larger number of partners involved from various countries, quite evident appears the need for coordination on a decentralized basis, apart from the central coordination through the Steering Committee. This decentralized coordination may be assured through the concept of the “focal points”, which appears already in the official texts, although connected with the idea of the network. However, the focal points may serve as a means to coordination irrespectively of the network-type operation of the inter-university cooperation. Each focal point may be in charge of coordinating two or more projects in the same thematic area. The designation of the focal points and their distribution to the several countries will be decided by the Convention during the session in which the approval of the project proposals will occur.

Confirmation of the already adopted thematic priorities – Supplementary proposals

30. The participants of the Corfu Meeting are asked to consider the thematic priorities presented earlier in paragraph 14, and to either confirm them or propose any revisions. In this context, the Greek delegation proposes the following issues to be adopted as supplementary thematic priorities:

Issues concerning Education

- Curriculum development for primary and secondary education in the areas of the history and the culture of the region (proposal aiming at strengthening the cohesion of the Initiative by promoting the mutual understanding among our young people on the basis of our historical and cultural background).
- Quality assurance in higher education institutions (information, exchange of expertise and good practices, training seminars, joint institutional review projects, benchmarking projects etc.).

Issues concerning thematic priorities of other Round Tables

- (There are no supplementary proposals from the Greek delegation for the present).

Issues not included among the thematic priorities of any Round Table

- (There are no supplementary proposals from the Greek delegation for the present).

Issues related to the priority for developing the information society in the region

- (There are no supplementary proposals from the Greek delegation for the present).

Cooperation of the higher education institutions with the regional authorities

31. The Adriatic – Ionian Initiative should take full advantage of the regional characteristics of economic and social development in Europe, at least to the degree they are expressed and materialized through the regional policies of the European Union. Hence, the involvement of the regional authorities in the implementation of our thematic priorities seems to be rather obvious. The development of regional strategies in the context of the Adriatic – Ionian Initiative, as well as the establishment of effective partnerships between the regional authorities and the higher education institutions, will be discussed during the last session of the Corfu Meeting. It is actually the first time we go through such a regional approach. This may lead to the need for re-examining, and perhaps for revising, our priorities. For example, a certain number of the priorities adopted in the other Round Tables may be of high importance for the regional authorities, which will then address to the inter-university cooperation (i.e. to our Round Table) seeking for our support. Of course, this is not something that can be decided in Corfu. But, we can agree on the establishment of a close cooperation and a constant dialogue with the regional authorities, so that we can re-examine our thematic priorities under a regional approach as well during the regular session of the Convention on May 2002.

Programme of work of the Greek Presidency of the Round Table

32. The programme of work of the Greek Presidency derives from the above analysis. Providing that the proposals concerning organizational issues are approved by the national delegations participating in the Corfu Meeting, the programme evolves as follows:

- i. The Corfu Meeting (29-30 September 2001) should be considered as the first extra-ordinary session of the Convention of the Round Table.
- ii. A second extra-ordinary session of the Convention is scheduled to be held in February 2002. The approval of the project proposals will be among the items of the agenda of that session. The second extra-ordinary session will be held in Patras, unless Patras hosts the regular session of the Council of Ministers.
- iii. Finally, the regular session of the Convention will convene together with the regular session of the Council of Ministers, probably in May 2002. Among the items of the agenda of the regular session will be the annual report of the Greek Presidency on the facts and the proceedings during its mandate, the presentation of the programme statements for the coming mandate of the Italian Presidency, and the re-examination of the thematic priorities of the Round Table under a regional approach.
- iv. The Steering Committee will have of course to convene several times between the sessions of the Convention in order to carry out its tasks and its responsibilities. For reasons of convenience, the meetings of the Steering Committee will be held in Athens. One of the major tasks of the Steering Committee is to carry out the procedure of submission and assessment of the project proposals according to the previously described timetable.
- v. Among its tasks, the Steering Committee has to present to the second extra-ordinary session of the Convention its proposals concerning the financial support of the activities of the Round Table. The Steering Committee will come to its proposals, taking stock of the analysis to be presented to it by the Greek Presidency, which in the meantime has to scrutinize all the existing possibilities and prospects.

Conclusions / Resolutions

33. The participants of the Corfu Meeting are asked to consider and resolve on the following issues regarding the present Discussion Paper presented by the Greek Presidency:

- i. On whether we do need a concept for the inter-university cooperation wider than the one related with the UNIADRION Network (paragraph 5).
- ii. On whether we favour and improve the cooperation between our Round Table and the other Round Tables of the Initiative (paragraph 13).
- iii. On the organizational structure as outlined in paragraphs 17 to 24.
- iv. On the principles, rules, internal procedures and timetables as outlined in paragraphs 25 to 28.
- v. On the need for establishing focal points to coordinate the several projects on a decentralized basis (paragraph 29).
- vi. On the confirmation of the thematic priorities as presented in paragraph 14 or on possible revisions or supplementary proposals (paragraph 30).
- vii. On the need for developing joint strategies with the regional authorities (paragraph 31).

34. Nevertheless, resolutions can be also made on any proposal made by any of the participants in the Corfu Meeting, irrespectively of the present Discussion Paper.

REFERENCE DOCUMENT 2

REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND THE INTER-UNIVERSITY COOPERATION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ADRIATIC – IONIAN INITIATIVE

Proposal by the Secretary General of the Region of Ionian Islands

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am really pleased to have the opportunity to host, along with the Ionian University, your Round Table in Greece.

I am especially happy because, apart from the inter-university meeting, we have also today a meeting of the Regions, Prefectures or Municipalities, depending on the administrative structure of each country participating in the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, which have Universities within their area.

Even though a University is an autonomous establishment with its independent function, the thought that what is going on in Greece must be going on in the other parts of Europe as well, that is the University community should become integrated in the society of the area, should lead to its demographical and social promotion and renewal, to its financial and functional support, led us to the proposal of a much broadened meeting in order to give the opportunity to the administrative and political bodies of the area to attend and participate in the discussions within the framework of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative, for the first time. You all realize the interrelation of the Universities and the Regions and how the one part can contribute to the operation of the other in a positive way.

For us, the University constitutes a decisive factor for our development, for the planning and the study of applications which will determine the development of the area. Universities are the advisors and the experts assisting the Region, the Prefecture and the local authorities. They are the specialists who can study common issues as well as extremely specialized ones.

I believe that this is the way all Universities function all over the world and we, the administrators and politicians, are satisfied when we not only cooperate with the Universities but also host them in our area of responsibility.

Nowadays, when the technology developments allow us to speak of and to formulate policies for broader areas on the planet, now that the European Union supports inter-state cooperation and strengthens the role of the broadened regions in the perspective of extending cooperation further than state borders, we believe that inter-university cooperation, which is in a visibly leading position to this direction, can become the planning basis which will not be restricted within the geographical and administrative borders between the states but will be directed to the links between the cultures, the economies of the broader areas, the protection of natural resources and the environment, which naturally cannot be limited within national borders, and the promotion of many other parameters.

Thus, having in mind the supranational character of our society and in the framework of a European cooperation model, we considered that it would be useful to exchange views on whether it is possible to formulate regional development strategies which can and must be supported by the cooperation between the Universities of the Adriatic and the Ionian area.

Despite the fact that European initiatives are taken in favour of inter-state cooperation between European countries, such as Interreg and other projects funding the cooperation with third countries such as Cards, we realize that all the above simply express Europe's political determination to develop cooperation between the European regions and not to satisfy the explicit strategic planning for the development of all parameters which can actually promote a historical, economic, cultural and geographical entity, independently of administrative or state borders.

This remark led us to the thought that we should attempt and suggest a reversed way of formulating European policies in order to support inter-state and inter-regional cooperation and on the opportunity of the officially established inter-university cooperation in the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea, we should try to formulate a proposal expressing the development strategy of our broader area, aiming to the cohesion of our development policies, to the cooperation and solidarity for the peaceful living together of the professionals and the people in these areas thus establishing closer relations of friendship and cooperation.

I also believe that the Ancona agreement has a similar goal, and that in the framework of the inter-university cooperation, our proposal can become the first tangible outcome of the cooperation between Universities and of the implementation of the Ancona declaration philosophy.

Of course, we understand that there are certain difficulties of either institutional or economical nature which may not allow the immediate mobilization of such a cooperation scheme. However, I think that we all agree on the necessity of launching and practically implementing inter-university and furthermore interregional and interstate cooperation, then we would be able to plan step by step the way of its implementation.

Taking advantage of my being the speaker, I would like to present you how we consider the practical aspect of the issue so that you can have a complete picture of our thoughts and expectations.

First, we have to determine the development model of the broader area based on the economic characteristics mainly focusing on the agricultural activities and the tourist economy.

Universities could start by recording the existing situation, by describing the potential of each area as far as development is concerned and by elaborating a proposal regarding the needs in infrastructure and funds, so that we can have our development planning and implementation supported.

It is obvious that for a common study and a common planning we need a stable centre of reference, collecting the required data, facilitating their diffusion, supporting the exchange of views. This centre will also administratively support the effort to formulate a specialized project funded and realized by the European Union covering the suggested needs and enjoying the support of the National Governments.

Finally, it is necessary that the administrative bodies of each area are of assistance to this end in order to effect exchanges of human resources, professors and students who will participate in the research.

In this simple, as it seems, way we can lead ourselves to an overall proposal for our regions which, in my opinion, can get a positive response from the Governments and the European Commission in the framework of the total planning for the broadening and the cohesion of European regions.

This discussion seems to gradually bring us to a Fourth Funding Framework with high requirements as far as planning and efficiency are concerned. Moreover we are convinced that such a proposal, well grounded as a result of the Universities' research work, easily applicable as it will be based on real and not provisional needs and on the experience, and presenting the goals

and the perspectives of a peaceful cooperation and development of a broader European zone, may become a realistic proposal and therefore be accepted as such.

On our side, we would like to add that we are ready to provide an important building, almost in the centre of Corfu town, to host the supporting mechanisms of this initiative, to provide the necessary accommodation to University teachers and students and to financially support the undertaking of this initiative by the Universities within the framework of the Interreg Project and our Regional Operational Program but also in the framework of exchange programs organized by the Youth Secretariat or other research programs related to the cooperation development between European and third countries.

Therefore, we believe that our proposal can succeed. We would be greatly interested to have it accepted by the Universities and supported. Of course, it is a practical proposal which requires coordination, a steady reference basis and professional commitment.

Thank you very much.

REFERENCE DOCUMENT 3

THE UNIADRION NETWORK

THE INTER-UNIVERSITY COOPERATION IN THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN BASIN

Presentation by
Prof. Paulo Pupilo, Vice-Rector, University of Bologna

1. Less than one year has elapsed since the Universities of Bologna and Ancona with the Italian Ministry for University and Scientific Research (now the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research) and other supporting institutions organised the **Ravenna Conference** (December 15-16, 2000). The city of Ravenna is a seat of scientific and educational activities of Bologna University, and an emblematic one in that this city was a state capital in late Roman times and later, when it became the capital of the Byzantine Hexarchate, it maintained tight relationships with adriatic-ionic and eastern mediterranean countries for several centuries. Therefore, Ravenna seemed to be a suitable place both to run the first Conference of Adriatic-Ionian Universities, which hopefully will be repeated many times more elsewhere, and to sustain the ensuing effort towards a stable organization of cooperational activities among these Universities.

The Ravenna Conference Charter was signed by official representatives of 20 Universities as well as political representatives of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, and Yugoslavia. The Ravenna covenants of December 2000 agreed that Ravenna is to become the stable seat of co-ordination of the Uniadriion network (not of all Uniadriion activities, of course) and this appears to be a good decision on many grounds.

2. As you know, the Ravenna Conference was a follow-up of the Conference held in Ancona on Security and Development in the Adriatic and Ionian area (May 19-20, 2000), which saw the launch of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative with a Round-Table dedicated to Inter-University Cooperation, one of the four Round Tables established there. The **Ancona Charter**, adopted at the conclusion of that important Conference, focuses on the intention of the Adriatic-Ionian countries to support peace and security in the area through economic development and the multi-lateral study and promotion of the environmental and cultural heritage. Within this framework it was recognised that:

- co-operation between Universities and excellence centres is important to favour international relationships in a more general sense;
- the building up of the Information Society and the defence/promotion of the artistic and cultural heritage of the Adriatic-Ionian countries are a main subject of the inter-university co-operation;
- a inter-University informatic and telematic network is a necessary step and tool towards a quick and solid implementation of this collaboration.

3. It may be useful to recall that the Commission president of **U.E.**, professor Romano Prodi, warmly shared and supported the Ancona Conference and Charter as he saw the opportunity of recognizing the Adriatic-Ionian basin as a unique "Euro-region" having the possibility of creating more equal conditions of infra-structural, economic and cultural development, as a true "hinge between Eastern and Western Europe". Therefore, we believe that the U.E. would be glad to participate to co-operation efforts - especially feasible between Universities - aimed at overcoming national barriers and mentalities in a common acknowledgement of the need for well-authenticated "regional" programs, conducted on a sound scientific or cultural or educational basis.

4. We believe that declarations approved at Ancona and Ravenna and during the successive working sessions have satisfactorily illustrated and explained the goals of both Conferences and the inter-University agreements to establish the **Uniadrion** network, and the measures to be taken thereafter as well. The Adriatic-Ionian Initiative and consequently the actions put into being by many colleagues - Italian and of other countries - involved in the programs launched by the Universities of Bologna, Ancona and Trieste with the financial support of Italian Ministries (Foreign Affairs, Education/Research) are important and have been successful, thus far at least. These are the first real steps of the forthcoming Uniadrion network, they are under way and it would seem wise to support them from any part interested.

5. It useful to recall, moreover, that a Uniadrion site - www.uniadrion.unibo.it – contains proposals (feasibility studies) submitted to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for funding. These are

Courses of formation (master courses) in:

- Implementation of multi-medial didactic tools;
- Sustainable development of agricultural and environmental systems;
- Planning, management and development of cultural tourism;
- Safeguard, conservation and promotion of monuments and buildings in a cultural - historical context;
- Economy of the development of transports, ports and communications with a care for sustainability.

Projects of common research:

- Development and sustainability in agricultural and coastal areas of the area;
- Tour-Adrion: a multi-use touristic region in a network.

All projects feature a participation by several Universities of the Adriatic-Ionian area.

6. The Uniadrion network, therefore, is a **virtual University** in a first sense. It is based on informatic-telematic technologies to facilitate a continual connection between Universities in all the fields mentioned above. As such, and on the basis of Ancona declaration, Uniadrion it will be instrumental to the establishment of concrete multi-lateral initiatives in the above fields inasmuch as they are properly linked to the principal mission of the University, formation and research. A significant improvement of knowledge, development, and general relationships between Universities and people will hopefully ensue by following this route. Uniadrion, we believe, must be fully open from the very beginning to any institution wishing to exploit the skills, capacities and typical qualifications of the different Universities of the area and their scientists and experts, also through joint ventures: regions and municipalities of the Adriatic-Ionian basin first of all, but also firms and private organisations. A major and growing aim of the University all over the world is to have inputs and contacts by and with economic and cultural entities.

7. On the other hand, Universities are “autonomous” by vocation. This means that, in order to fulfil their functions thoroughly they must be put into a condition to create their statutes and pursue objectives and activities on their own, regardless of the fact they are partially or totally financed by the state or by other public (even European) or private institutions. This position was held by over 800 Universities several years ago, when the Bologna declaration (Magna Charta of the Universities) was signed in 1988. In this sense, the inter-University network Uniadrion appears to have a particular configuration within the context of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative.

8. The Uniadrion network is again “virtual” in a second sense: it still lacks, up to now, a parliament and a government. We have proposed a scheme of a statute for Uniadrion, which like all official documents and constitutions will be discussed and possibly emended in some of its parts prior to its definitive approval by the participating Universities at the next **Ancona meeting** of October 12th, 2001. The only condition to be observed during discussions is that Uniadrion maintains its character of a voluntary and representative convergence by the Universities of the basin (those wishing to join it) characterized by unity of decisions.

9. Everybody rightly wants to avoid the error of burdening these beautiful, voluntary initiatives with bureaucracy (down to “repulsiveness”). These are real problems always impending on national and trans-national calls for research and education proposals. At the same time, are we sure that a body formed by “governments, regions and other institutions” to direct actions and fund flows to Universities, with one University representative as observer (the new proposal by the Greek Presidency) represents a better, non-bureaucratic alternative?

10. We do not cast doubt on this or any other proposal on account of bureaucracy, however. Such proposals are fully legitimate, and we respect them. In principle, several lines led by different groups of Universities could co-exist to achieve more or less the same goals. It may happen, now and in the future.

Our real point is that all the official statements wisely outlined a single structure, led by Universities, to overview the quality and equality of research-education projects presented by Universities. The Presidency proposal, on the other hand, fails to include Universities in decision making, and, furthermore, this new structure is conceived as a part of the “Round Table for Inter-University co-operation”. It would seem that the Universities are little confident in their own forces and role.

Finally, it is not clear how a separate Table for “Culture” could be kept distinct from “inter-University co-operation”. It is not easy to argue that Universities do something different from culture.

11. With this concern we do hope that a point of convergence can be found between Uniadriion and parallel undertakings in the field of inter-University co-operation. It is expected that Uniadriion becomes in due time a centre of excellence, able to involve the best minds of the Adriatic-Ionian area in the working out of good projects of research and formation of personnel mainly in fields such as cultural heritage, sustainable economic development and development of transport, agriculture and tourism. Such a formation of future leading classes in all these countries would then promote a mentality aiming at full integration into the European Union.

It is not really a matter of Uniadriion “chauvinism”, but of functioning of the inter-University co-operation at a level adequate to the cultural, political and economic aims and scope of the entire Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (and of the Universities of the area). Which is the ultimate goal of Uniadriion and of other proposals. The problem is how to get there through the shortest and most effective way.

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