

Joint Declaration

On the basis of the Memorandum on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Italian Republic signed in 2007, the fifth meeting of the Coordination Committee of Ministers was held in Rome on the 27th of May, 2014.

The talks were held in a constructive and friendly atmosphere, taking stock of the progress achieved in the different areas of cooperation. The intensity of high-level contacts and visits reflects a very dynamic political dialogue and all-round cooperation in various fields. Since the previous session of the Committee (Ljubljana, 19th October, 2012), many significant high-level meetings and visits have taken place between the two Countries, including, most recently, the State Visit that President Pahor paid to Italy on the 6th of May.

Slovenia and Italy welcome the regular annual consultations held between State Secretaries and Directors General for bilateral and European affairs and for political affairs.

Added value are also the trilateral meetings of the representatives of Slovenia, Italy and Croatia, that started last September.

Slovenia and Italy look forward to further enhancing the bilateral relations in all sectors, as neighbour EU partners and allies in NATO enjoying excellent economic and trade as well as cultural ties and defence cooperation, including close cooperation in international crisis management operations and missions, and sharing geo-political interests bridging the Adriatic and the Mediterranean Seas with Central and South-Eastern Europe.

In this perspective, Slovenia and Italy consider the respective **national Minorities** as a significant asset, as they represent a factor of enriched and dynamic progress in the economic and cultural relations between civil societies. The two countries should continue to work together to ensure full safeguard as well as further involvement of Minorities in the respective civil societies.

Slovenia and Italy support the endeavours to recover political and public support for the European project and **reinforce the integration process**, establish a genuine economic and monetary union and restore the economic growth. To this end, the two Countries fully share the

commitment to a European agenda built on growth and employment, with particular reference to youth employment and competitiveness, to which the incoming **Italian Presidency is highly committed**. With a view to the forthcoming discussions in the relevant EU Institutions, the parties look forward to closer consultation in these crucial fields, such as on new ways to foster structural reforms in Member States and differentiate public spending in order to stimulate investments.

Slovenia and Italy also agree to continue to strongly support the **Western Balkans' and Turkey's accession path to the EU**. The parties acknowledge the strategic role of the Enlargement process for the enhancement of stability, democracy, rule-of-law and overall progress in the European continent. Western Balkans' integration to the EU needs to be matched to three main goals, especially after the events of the 1990s: the progressive stabilization of the whole area; regional cooperation and reconciliation of the region; economic and social growth. Not only are these goals mutually interconnected, but they are also a *conditio sine qua non* of a credible and sustainable enlargement strategy both for the EU and for the interested countries.

In reaffirming their convinced support of the enlargement agenda, the two Countries welcome the recent progress by most aspirant countries, including Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Albania, and express hope that they will continue on this path. Moreover, Slovenia and Italy believe it is time that positive messages are sent also from and to Sarajevo and Skopje. It is of the utmost importance to ensure constant dynamics for all countries of the region.

Slovenia and Italy renew their deep sympathy and heart-felt solidarity to the communities and Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, affected by recent devastating floods and extraordinary damage.

As Allies, our two countries strongly support the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans' countries. Full integration of the region into the Euro-Atlantic structures is vital for ensuring lasting peace and stability.

Regional cooperation, both in its traditional fora such as the Central-European Initiative and the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative, as well as in more innovative formats, such as the EU Macro-regional Strategies, represent a significant impulse to the European perspective of the Balkan and Eastern European countries. The EU Macro-regional Strategies also contribute to a better utilization of the EU and national funds in key-

sectors such as infrastructures and transport, environment, tourism and culture, fisheries, research & innovation. Slovenia and Italy are highly committed to the European Council's final endorsement of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region and its Plan of Action, in the second semester of 2014, as well as to a successful preparation of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region in view of the European Council's final endorsement in autumn 2015.

Italy praises the active role Slovenia had in the **“Mare Nostrum” operation** in the Mediterranean sea aiming at enhancing the safety and security at the Southern border of the EU. The parties agree on the importance of an effective migration and asylum policy of the EU, based on the principle of solidarity, for a better management of the migratory phenomenon both in the short and in the medium-long term. To this end, dialogue and cooperation with the Third Countries of origin and transit of the migratory flows is essential.

Slovenia and Italy welcome the holding of the Presidential elections on May 25 as an expression of the will of the Ukrainian people. They were characterized by high voter turnout and a clear resolve by the Authorities to hold what was a genuine election largely in line with international commitments and with a respect for fundamental freedoms. They stand firm in upholding Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, support the European union's commitment to the Geneva Joint Statement of 17 April and support the implementation of the OSCE Roadmap, as indicated in the Conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council of May 12th, 2014.

Slovenia and Italy are appalled by the situation in Syria, where around 150,000 have died and 9.3 million are in need of humanitarian assistance. All those responsible for serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law must be held to account, including through Security Council referral to the International Criminal Court. The parties agree that there can only be a political solution to the conflict in Syria and thus that the planned Presidential elections would only undermine efforts to reach such a solution. Moreover, the Slovenia and Italy deplore the lack of progress on the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 2139 and urge the parties, and in particular the Syrian regime, to allow immediate and unfettered access to aid for those who need it. Slovenia and Italy support the adoption of a new Security Council resolution also allowing humanitarian cross-border operations. The chemical weapons program must be completely eliminated and Syria must show the international community that it is complying with its obligations under UN Security Council resolution 2118 and the Chemical

Weapons convention. The chemical weapons program must be completely eliminated and Syria must show the international community that it is complying with its obligations under UN Security Council resolution 2118 and the Chemical Weapons convention.

Slovenia and Italy follow with concern the latest political and security developments in Libya and call upon all Libyans to work together to forge a broad consensus on management of the political process, avoiding acts which risk to undermine the process leading to a peaceful transition of power. To this end, they emphasize the urgency and imperative need for a national dialogue process in full respect of Libyan ownership and with the support of the United Nations. Slovenia and Italy stand determined to facilitate this process as a key to the stabilization process, in the national interest of Libya and of the security of the region. Recognizing the challenge represented by the priority for Libya to secure its border and the impact on the European Union of migratory flows coming from Libya, they stand ready to continue supporting bilaterally and within the EU Libyan efforts aimed at restoring Libya's capacity to manage all aspects of the migratory issue in full respect of international standards.

Slovenia and Italy take note of the progress made in different areas of cooperation on the basis of the previous Joint Declaration signed in Ljubljana, on the 19th of October, 2012, and have agreed as follows:

As regards economic and commercial cooperation, the parties welcome the increasing bilateral turnover, which has grown by 47% during the 2004-2013 decade, rising from 4.118 million euros in 2004 to 6.055 million euros in 2013. In order to further improve the positive trade and investment relations between Italy and Slovenia and with the aim of strengthening trade promotion, a *Memorandum of Understanding* between ICE/Agenzia and SPIRIT was signed in Rome on June 13th 2013,

Slovenia and Italy agree on the importance of consolidating bilateral ties and highlighted former initiatives for the development of the collaboration between Italian and Slovenian enterprises, such as the “*Italy – Slovenia Investment Forum*”, held in Milan on December 9th 2013. The parties express their interest in organizing another event aimed at increasing mutual trade, investments and other forms of industrial cooperation between Italian and Slovenian SMEs in relevant fields, favouring the establishment of joint ventures. The parties recently signed an agreement on cooperation among GOIS (Slovenian Defence Industry Cluster) and AIAD (Italian Industries Federation for Aerospace,

Defence and Security), which is an important step towards increasing trade flows.

Slovenia and Italy share the view that **EXPO Milan 2015** will represent an extraordinary opportunity to address the global issues of food and nutrition security and the sustainable use of natural resources through innovative solutions, coming from international public and private partners. Italy praises Slovenia's participation in the Event with a self-built pavilion, which will provide a relevant contribution to the success of the World Exhibition. Both Parties consider that a six-month promotional presence of Slovenia in Italy, through Expo 2015, shall be taken as a privileged occasion to further enhance their bilateral relations.

*As regards the **European Territorial Cooperation***, Slovenia and Italy support the strengthening of bilateral cooperation within the framework of the Structural and Investment Funds "European Territorial Cooperation" objective regarding both the current and the next financial perspective 2014-2020. In addition to transnational and interregional cooperation, they will facilitate the implementation of cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes in order to contribute to sustainable development and competitiveness of the interested territories in line with EU2020 goals. This will be built on the experiences of the current programming period supporting the mechanisms to promote legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions. As such, EGTC Gorica represents the pilot case in building joint and sustainable development of urban area composed of three towns.

*As regards **infrastructure and transport***, Slovenia and Italy agree to promote the exchange of experiences and best practices on the facilitation of maritime transport, supporting maritime safety and security whilst ensuring protection of the marine environment. With increased volumes of maritime traffic in the northern Adriatic, the increased risk of maritime accidents is becoming a harsh reality; therefore, further cooperation in terms of prevention, preparedness and crisis management would be much appreciated.

An exchange of views on the possibilities for mutual cooperation in the improving of vessel traffic monitoring in the Adriatic (ADRIREP, VTS, AIS) and the establishment of national Single Windows in line with the

FAL directive 2010/65/EC could be further explored and would be beneficial to both Parties.

Slovenia and Italy recognise the need for calling a new meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission, in order to evaluate the activities carried out by the EEIG established in May 2013 for the revision of the feasibility study and development of the preliminary and final design of the cross-border railway link Trieste-Divača.

Moreover, Slovenia and Italy agree to:

- take all efforts to accelerate the activity of the EEIG in completing the activities which fall within the scope of the funding Commission Decision referred to the Trieste-Divača project;
- continue in the cooperation among the Italian ports and the Slovenian port in the context of NAPA (North Adriatic Ports Association), in order to develop projects under the common umbrella of EU funding in the framework of the CEF (Connecting Europe Facility) and EUSAIR (EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region);
- reinforce the role of the North Adriatic ports as “core ports” in the new TEN-T networks, reaffirming their potentiality as sea gateway to the TEN-T network through the Baltic-Adriatic Corridor and the Mediterranean Corridor;
- enhance regional connectivity by establishing a permanent forum with regional authorities to develop joint projects.

Regarding the Northern Adriatic Sea corridor as a multimodal gateway to the EU TEN-T network, an effort is required in order to ensure access of the ports to the northern Adriatic hinterland markets of Central and Eastern Europe, the establishment of equivalent infrastructure, according of the new financial decisions as far as corridors are concerned in the 2014-2020 Framework Program, under the new regulation TEN-T and the progressive harmonization of the legal framework regulating the port activities.

Slovenia and Italy agree on the importance of their inclusion into the Baltic – Adriatic Corridor which, together with the Mediterranean Corridor, is of great economic and strategic importance for the connection between the Baltic and Adriatic European Region and the European transport network and then both to the Central and Eastern

European market and to the growing Asian markets.

*As regards **energy***, Slovenia and Italy highlight their commitment to energy efficiency, the use of renewables and to working together on the diversification of gas and electricity supply also by establishing new transmission and merchant interconnections. Taking into account the context provided by the current international energy security situation, the two countries will also continue to closely cooperate on South Stream Project and on the European Projects of Common Interest (PCI) with the aim of their timely implementation. The two countries will also continue to support national transmission system operators to elaborate a possible project for the interconnection in the area of Osp/San Dorligo della Valle (Dolina).

Italy confirms to implement efficient measures to solve the **interference situations** towards Slovenia, with aim to fully respect the international treaties regarding the use and coordination of the allocated radio frequency spectrum and safeguard mutual interests on the basis of the principle of equitable access, as implemented in the Final Acts of Geneva 06 for the Countries in the Adriatic area. As a huge number of interference cases, both in in the television and sound broadcasting field, also reported to ITU, still have to be solved. The process of clearing the radio spectrum is scheduled to be completed by 31 December 2014. In the meantime, Italy refrain from any action that could deepen the problem of interference. As regards FM radio stations, both sides agreed to continue devoting their utmost attention to the issue to make evident progress in the shortest possible time. Both countries are committed to intensify work to permanently resolve the issue. Both sides agree to make constructive step forward in the meeting in June 2014.

*As regards the **environment***, Slovenia and Italy agree to:

continue and enhance regular consultations on trans-boundary strategic environmental aspects, including population and health, water, marine, coastal and inland biodiversity conservation, transport and security and civil protection cooperation, according to EU legislation, EU best practices and international obligations;

recognize the need and importance of anticipatory policies and of preventing, mitigating and monitoring significant adverse environmental impacts in a trans-boundary context, and to continue cooperation and the exchange of information regarding energy, including nuclear energy, and other infrastructural projects in the border area in compliance with the provisions of international conventions, to which both countries are parties, especially the Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-boundary Context, and with the provisions of the EU legislation, especially the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) and Air Quality Directive;

promote collaboration in pursuing the objectives of the Syracuse Charter on biodiversity in the Adriatic region;

intensify the implementation of the Regional Working Programme for the Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean, including the High Seas;

strongly support inclusion of the Investment priority 6 b. (“investing in the water sector to meet the requirements of the Union’s environmental acquis and to address needs, identified by the Member States, for investment that goes beyond those requirements”) in the cross border programme Slovenia Italy 2014-2020;

strengthen crossborder cooperation on protected areas, including preparation of the Dinaric Karst serial transnational World Heritage nomination;

continue cooperation in identifying and implementing measures for the achievement of EU environmental goals concerning water, the marine environment, biodiversity, and sustainable development, especially through enhanced bilateral and sub-regional cooperation in implementing: the EU Water Framework Directive by ensuring a good status of water, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive by ensuring a Good Environmental Status in the marine and coastal environment by 2020 and the EU Recommendation on integrated coastal zone management through the development of an Adriatic region; the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 particularly its target for mainstreaming biodiversity in all EU policies, together with the global biodiversity strategic goals; the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, in particular the Ecosystem Approach, the ICZM and the SPA-BIO Protocol;

enhance cooperation within the Joint Commission for Protection of the Adriatic Sea Waters and Coastal Areas for the drafting and adoption of the Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region also on the basis of the Joint Statement on Environmental Protection of the Adriatic Sea (Portorož 2008), and with particular reference to its the 3rd pillar ” *Preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment*”.

As regards integrated territorial development: Slovenia and Italy recognize possible added value of tools for sustainable development of marine areas and coastal zones, such as maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management, which need further enhancement of cooperation in order to support smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the Adriatic area.

Slovenia and Italy emphasise the importance of **agriculture** as a driver of development and strategic sector for economic recovery.

In view of the incoming Italian presidency of the EU, Slovenia and Italy shared priorities for the CAP sector, starting the reform of the regulation on “organic products”. The dossier of school milk and fruit scheme were also discussed, as well as the Sanco package, in order to update and simplify the current sanitary and phytosanitary regulations. Special attention must be paid to the future of the milk sector after the end of the quotas scheme, in particular ensuring measures for the LFA areas. The role of young farmers is another subject to which careful attention must be paid, also through supporting measures, because the agriculture sector will have no future without them. In that context smallholder and family farms important contributions should also be recognised. The issue of consumer information (including new tools for labelling) was also discussed.

Bearing in mind the important role of bees related to agriculture, food security, environment and biodiversity, raising awareness thereof, for instance with European Honey Breakfast, is vital.

In the context of negotiations on free trade agreements with third countries, Slovenia and Italy emphasize the importance that agricultural interests are adequately protected, including geographical indications and the fight against counterfeiting. The two parties also acknowledge the importance of agricultural cooperation with Mediterranean partners, particularly those from the Western Balkans.

In the fisheries sector Slovenia and Italy shared their concerns with regard to the situation of fisheries in the North Adriatic Sea, recognizing the importance of cooperation between coastal States in the framework of the regionalization allowed by the Common Fisheries Policy, particularly as regards the landing obligation and fisheries control, and in the context of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and its regional projects of cooperation, such as Adriamed.

Regarding *research, innovation and education*, Slovenia and Italy agree, in their mutual interest, to promote exchange of experiences and best practice and further strengthen scientific and technological cooperation, including in research infrastructures, at bilateral, international and European level in particular in the framework of the new research and innovation programme Horizon 2020, thus contributing to their economic and social development. To this end, the Parties will promote contacts among scientific institutes, research facilities and communities, universities, schools, government agencies and other organizations and work to prevent that administrative barriers could limit the full implementation of all reached agreements.

Considering the positives results of the previous Executive Programme of Scientific and Technological Cooperation, the parties agree to start the drafting of the 6th Executive Programme in September 2014. They also agree to broaden the cooperation in the sector of higher education, by taking advantage of the new European Program Erasmus +.

The parties recognized the importance of regional cooperation and expressed their willingness to contribute to the development of existing and future regional initiatives and to foster regional mobility of students, researchers and professors.

The parties recognized the role and the academic potential of the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI) and agree to promote the cooperation among Slovenian and Italian universities already members of the EMUNI as well as the participation of other universities.

Both sides agree to cooperate, in line with the recently launched EU initiative Opening Up Education, to boost innovation and digital skills in

schools and universities. The new initiative Open Up Slovenia is an excellent opportunity for exchanging views and experiences on learning and teaching through ICT and digital content in the region. The role of education in the digital era will be one of the priorities of the upcoming Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

*As regards **cultural cooperation***, Slovenia and Italy emphasize the importance of the “Walk of Peace” project, also as part of the cooperation in culture and tourism.

The two parties will favour the negotiations of a new Executive Programme of the Cultural Agreement signed in 2000 between the Republic of Slovenia and the Italian Republic, and agree to continue with the activities foreseen in the 2012 Joint Declaration.

A mid-term assessment of activities of the working groups in the above sectors will be carried out in 2015, prior to the next Coordination Committee of Ministers, which will be held in Slovenia.

Rome, 27th of May, 2014

For the Government of the
Republic of Slovenia
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
Foreign Affairs
Karl Erjavec

For the Government of the
Italian Republic
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Federica Mogherini