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**ADDENDUM TO THE COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

concerning the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region

INCLUSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SAN MARINO IN THE EU STRATEGY FOR THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN REGION

1. INTRODUCTION

In December 2012, the European Council requested the European Commission to present an EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) by the end of 2014. Following this request, the Commission extensively consulted stakeholders. On 17 June 2014, it adopted the EUSAIR Communication¹.

As a result, the Council endorsed the EUSAIR in its conclusions of 24 October 2014² and ‘called on all relevant actors to implement it without delay’. The Addendum to the EUSAIR Communication (COM(2020) 132 final of 2 April 2020) formally included the Republic of North Macedonia in the EUSAIR.

The general objective of the EUSAIR is to promote sustainable economic and social prosperity in the region by:

- creating growth and jobs;
- improving the region’s attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity;
- preserving the environment; and
- ensuring healthy and balanced marine and coastal ecosystems.

The EUSAIR also aids the EU enlargement process. It enables five Western Balkans countries to cooperate on a par with Member States while promoting the implementation of certain EU policies and strategies at macro-regional level.

To achieve its objectives, the governments of the EUSAIR participating countries³ commit to align their priorities and to mobilise relevant EU and national funding to carry out the action plan⁴. This action plan aims to make the EUSAIR operational by identifying specific priorities (pillars and topics) and actions for the wider region.

The EUSAIR remains open to other partners in the region. The Adriatic and Ionian Council / EUSAIR ministerial meeting⁵ of 11 May 2021 responded positively to the Republic of San Marino’s request to join the EUSAIR. The meeting’s Izola Declaration invited the Council to take all necessary steps to include San Marino in the EUSAIR as the tenth participating country. On 15 June 2021, the four EU Member States participating in the EUSAIR sent a letter to the Portuguese Presidency of the Council backing this request.

In its conclusions of 18 November 2021, the Council welcomed and accepted the request by the countries participating in the EUSAIR. It invited the Commission to take the necessary steps to include San Marino in the EUSAIR, to amend the strategy accordingly and to submit it to the Council⁶.

¹ COM(2014) 357 final of 17.6.2014.

² Conclusions of the European Council of 23 and 24 October 2014 (EUCO 169/14).

³ Four EU Member States (Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia) and five Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia).

⁴ SWD(2014) 190 final.

⁵ The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the participating countries’ authorities responsible for EU funds represent the EUSAIR and the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative at political level. As of the first EUSAIR annual forum (Dubrovnik (Croatia), 2-13 May 2016), they form the Adriatic and Ionian Council / EUSAIR Ministerial meeting.

⁶ General Affairs Council of 18 November 2021.

2. INCLUSION OF SAN MARINO IN THE EUSAIR

1. Political background

San Marino is a close neighbour and partner of the EU and shares its core values. EU-San Marino relations, established in 1983, are based on a range of bilateral agreements. They cover areas such as customs, the taxation of private savings income and monetary issues. Since 2015, the EU has been negotiating association agreements (AAs) with Andorra, Monaco and San Marino. Under such an AA, the three countries would be able to participate in the single market and cooperate with the EU on flanking policies.

Given its dimension and geographical location in the Adriatic region, the territory of San Marino overlaps with the area where the EUSAIR carries out its projects, actions and activities. The government of San Marino fully shares the objectives of the EUSAIR and the principle of multilevel and multi-stakeholder cooperation.

2. San Marino's participation in the EUSAIR

This Addendum to the EUSAIR Communication sets out the roles and responsibilities of San Marino in the multilevel governance of the EUSAIR and its relation with other participating countries.

For San Marino, participation in the EUSAIR entails cooperating and coordinating with other countries in the region in planning national, EU and other sources of funding to carry out its action plan.

With its inclusion in the EUSAIR, San Marino will have the right to participate in the EUSAIR governance structures including its political, coordination and operational levels⁷.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The inclusion of San Marino in the EUSAIR will step up cooperation in the Adriatic and Ionian region. It will also strengthen the EUSAIR partnership and the relations between San Marino and the EU.

Participation in the EUSAIR, on a level playing field with all participating countries, will enable San Marino to become better acquainted with the governance mechanisms of an EU macro-regional strategy. At the same time, San Marino will gain experience and involvement in implementing EU policies.

A new map of the EUSAIR countries is enclosed.

⁷ Ministerial meetings (political level), EUSAIR governing board (coordination level) and thematic steering groups (operational level).

MAP OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE EU STRATEGY FOR THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN REGION

