

## *Joint Statement*

On 19 December 2020, the Foreign Ministers of Italy, Croatia and Slovenia met in Trieste to discuss operational modalities and priority areas for enhancing a trilateral cooperation in the Adriatic Sea. Building up on the coordination mechanisms already in place, Ministers had a very fruitful exchange of views on the perspective of further consolidating their cooperation, also in view of the information shared by Italy and Croatia on their intention to proclaim an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the Adriatic Sea.

The Adriatic Sea, as a semi-enclosed sea with intensive maritime transport and vulnerable ecosystem, needs an integrated approach to safeguarding the environment, preventing risks and assuring sustainable development. As States bordering the same sea, Italy, Croatia and Slovenia share the vision of the Adriatic Sea as a bridge that unites all peoples in the region and as a source of wealth and prosperity for all. The Ministers agreed to continue their discussions in a trilateral format on common cooperation opportunities in key areas, including economic development, connectivity, blue economy and comprehensive protection of the Adriatic Sea. To this aim, the three Countries will establish mechanism for enhanced cooperation, at political and expert level.

In this context, the Italian and the Croatian sides shared information on the progress of their respective initiatives for proclaiming EEZs. Italy and Croatia reiterated that such a step will be taken in full compliance with the principles of international law, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the EU law.

All three States remain committed to enhancing cooperation in a true European spirit in order to protect the Adriatic and the wider Mediterranean region, to bring closer people on the shores of our Sea and to transform together our common space of coexistence.

The Ministers agreed to organize a next trilateral meeting in the first quarter 2021.