



B&H Presidency of the



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## CEI PD PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**Sarajevo, December 5 – 7, 2016**

### FINAL DECLARATION

**Highly respecting** the CEI as a long-standing and authentic initiative in the region, which brings together EU Member States as well as countries involved in the EU accession process, and the important role that the CEI played during the last 27 years in strengthening political dialogue, regional cooperation and European integration between its member states;

**Confirming** the European integration as one of CEI main goals in order to reflect the problems of the EU integration of the Western Balkans in the „non-enlargement“ period by 2020, and the willingness of EU member states that participate in this organization to provide support to accession countries by sharing the best models in identified priority areas;

**Particularly emphasizing** the importance of CEI as a body for promoting further enlargement of the EU and a strong partner in strengthening regional integration and macro-regional cooperation in Europe;

**Stressing** the added value of macro-regional strategies as an integrative framework that includes EU and non-EU Member States in order to increase economic, social and territorial cohesion and to assist candidate and potential candidate countries that are CEI members to join the EU;

**Underlining** the significance of the overall cooperation within the CEI region, the EU member states, the countries that are at different stages of the EU integration process, as well as those states that do not have EU-integration on their agenda, and **emphasizing** the importance of the Eastern partnership in all the activities of CEI.

**Recognizing** the migration crisis, the growing threat of terrorism in the region, and other challenges of the modern world.



**Noting** that political and economic conditions at the root of migration have not improved and that consequently the flow of migrants has not decreased, but remains too challenging a problem for many CEI countries to manage by themselves;

**Reiterating** that, in the face of the terrorist threat, it is necessary to implement all possible measures to ensure the security of citizens:

**Especially highlighting** the need of raising the level of infrastructure development of CEI Member States as a very important component in the process of modernization and development as well as European integration;

**Welcoming** the decision of CEI Member States to work comprehensively in the following period on the reform of structure, guidelines, work methods and rules of the CEI organization.

#### **The Parliamentary Assembly of the CEI PD:**

**Calls** EU institutions and other international organizations on closer cooperation with the CEI in order to assist the enlargement/CEI countries to reach EU standards and strengthen the effectiveness of macro-regional strategies;

**Calls** on CEI Member States that are already in the EU to continue to promote the importance of maintaining the EU perspective and to provide full support to countries aspiring to the EU membership; also through specific enlargement – related activities during Slovakia’s EU Council Presidency strongly emphasizing that without the Western Balkan region the EU is not complete in any case;

**Also expresses** awareness that Western Balkan countries aspiring to join the European Union are expected to adopt and implement convincing reform programs in order to meet EU accession criteria and to develop effective bilateral and multilateral cooperation among themselves and with all EU member countries, in a spirit of communality which is typical of the European common home;

**Welcomes** the engagement of the European Union and of important multilateral programs such as the “Berlin Process” focusing on the Western Balkans. Such policies will be extremely useful also in view of the pre-accession actions they envisage. Such policies, the implementation of which should be speeded up and focused mainly on connectivity (power grids, road and railway infrastructure, maritime transport and ports, telecommunications) will require convincing EU financial support and equally convincing general program sharing by all States involved;



**Believes** that, for the purposes of the above mentioned shared programs, the overall approach of the connectivity master plan (power grids, road and railway infrastructure, maritime transport and ports, telecommunications) should be promptly defined for the Alpine Adriatic-Balkan area and that the countries involved, with possible support of the CEI Secretariat and European corridor coordinators, should promptly submit to the European Commission a joint draft master plan for co-funding purposes;

**Supports** the CEI Action Plan for period 2014 - 2016 as a concise and ambitious instrument for guiding and focusing the activities of the CEI and encourages the efforts for developing a new modern CEI Action Plan for period 2017 - 2020, taking into account all the new challenges that the region faces, in particular the EU Development Plan by 2020;

**Takes into consideration** the role of the European funds for development of energy infrastructure projects in Central and Eastern Europe in order to achieve Western European level of diversity, which would make a significant contribution to overall energy security of Europe; and **particularly emphasizes** the importance of supporting green energy projects;

**Supports** the role of the CEI in strengthening better integration of the region with the rest of Europe through strong infrastructure transport projects;

**Underlines** the significance of the greater orientation of CEI towards various projects of economic, cultural and social character, and in that sense of stronger connection with the international financial organizations;

**Affirms** the role of national parliaments of CEI Member States in the implementation of the appropriate legislation relating to the EU macro-regional strategies which provide opportunity for greater cross-border cooperation;

**Notes** that macro-regional strategies are a dynamic process and remain open for future events; **calls on** EU institutions as well as other international organizations and the CEI to invite the Republic of Macedonia to be fully integrated into the Adriatic-Ionian and the Danube strategy, which is an additional step towards the effectiveness of macro-regional strategies;

**Emphasizes** that the EUSAIR and EUSDR are of interest to all EU Member States and have the capacity to contribute to further integration of the internal market, the stability of the region, and the strengthening of cooperation between EU and non-EU Member States, especially in terms of supporting the countries in the enlargement process on their path towards EU;

**Strongly supports** high-level cooperation between CEI Member States in addressing common challenges as well as exploiting opportunities for better implementation of the main objectives



such as: protecting and managing of ecosystems, improving connectivity in the region, promoting sustainable economic development and creating business and employment opportunities;

**Strongly** supports the cooperation of the CEI with the other international organizations on all issues of importance for CEI Member States, including sustainable development, strengthening security as well as the fight against terrorism, transnational organized crime and corruption;

**Emphasizes** the significance of the close cooperation within CEI region related to the challenges of refugees and migrants and of addressing to their main causes;

**Welcomes** the fact that the CEI has the expertise for the management of EU projects and funds and became a valuable institution for implementation of EU projects; and in this regard, calls upon enhanced cooperation between existing instruments and EU funds in the implementation of the priorities emphasized in the strategies;

**Welcomes** and further encourages a strong cooperation of the CEI with EBRD, Chinese and other EU investors and non-EU investors, aimed to better infrastructure development dynamics of CEI Member States; in this respect, **expresses** the satisfaction for holding the CEI meeting with EBRD and Chinese officials in Trieste on May 19, 2016, as well as the Summit of prime ministers of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and China (16+1);

**Strongly** supports further enhancing the Eastern Partnership in the spirit of mutual interest, better relations, understanding and cooperation in economic, cultural, scientific and technical field;

**Calls upon** all CEI Member States and their national parliaments to contribute to the improvement of legislation related to better business environment, easier access to public services and avoidance of double taxation;

**Supports** the efforts for enhancing the CEI business dimension as an additional instrument for promoting the regional cooperation, increasing the competitiveness of SMEs, and expects the closer cooperation with EBRD;

**Confirms** the importance of deepening cooperation in the field of research and innovation in order to increase awareness of new technologies in all CEI Member States;



**Points out** that professional training can be the right solution to address the high unemployment rate among young people, as well as the use of opportunities for youth mobility in the EU Member States.

**Confirms** the need for further strengthening the cooperation between various components of the CEI, particularly the Parliamentary and Governmental component, in order to direct the activities and achieve the maximum effect as well as the cooperation with the EU institutions and other appropriate organizations;

**Pledges** to focus on the Northern and Baltic region of the CEI, with respect to the forthcoming working session of the parliamentary dimension “and proposes Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania to join CEI Parliamentary Assembly as observers since the start of Belarusian chairmanship. The commitment to focus CEI activity on the North Eastern range of its constituency is to be considered a long term program which complements the equally long term pledge for South Eastern Europe.”

**Strongly supports** the ongoing reform process of CEI that would take into consideration current best practices, lessons learned, and the experience from the previous work so as to ensure that the organization may respond in the best way to modern day challenges concerning the CEI region.

**Urges** the European Union and international organizations to step up its role as a coordinator in the management of the migration crisis, particularly with a view to revising the Dublin agreement;

**Underlines** the need to ensure that migrants and refugees, and especially unaccompanied foreign children, enjoy living conditions complying with fundamental human rights;

**Welcomes** the initiatives and projects in the field of migration developed by the CEI Secretariat in Trieste.

**Expresses** its gratitude for the authoritative chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina and welcomes the oncoming chairmanship of Belarus.