



ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA



CEI PD PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Skopje, 10 December 2015

FINAL DECLARATION

Aware that the 18 member countries members of the CEI include a geographical area bigger than the Western Balkans but considering also that West Balkan countries are one of the hotbeds of Europe's migration emergency and are positively engaged in the stabilization process and the path to EU integration;

Considering that the focus of this session of the plenary Parliamentary Assembly is on the Balkans, while later sessions will be devoted to other CEI regions;

Underlining the importance of the CEI strategic approach to regional cooperation and support of CEI Member States in all aspects of their European integration and its bridging function to help overcome all existing difficulties that hinder their European integration process;

Emphasizing that cross-border cooperation improves good neighborly relations, thus bringing government authorities and people closer, and that regional cooperation and good neighborly relations are a pre-requisite for a full European integration;

Recalling that in this delicate and fragile period the turbulent situation in Middle East provoked unprecedented flow of refugees and migrants along the Eastern-Mediterranean -Western Balkans route that can not be solved through national actions only, and in this regard reminding that unilateral action may trigger a chain reaction;

Having regard to the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Convention for the status of refugees from 1951, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Resolution;

Reiterating the solidarity with the Ukrainian people on their way towards building a stable, democratic and prosperous country and the strong commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all CEI Member States, together with the full respect of the key principles of International Law;

Acknowledging the debate on migration and refugees in European Parliament on the session held in September and the Operational measures by the European Commission to be implemented in particular in the CEI countries mostly affected of the Balkans migrants route;

Facing a phenomenon of peoples' displacements that our modern era has never known before and acknowledging the efforts to find the most effective and unified response are needed;

Underlining the added value of macro-regional strategies as an integrated framework including EU member and non-member states aimed to increase the economic, social and territorial cohesion and to assist participating candidates and potential candidate countries for EU membership;

Expressing the need for a continuous financial support by EU in boosting accelerated reforms and additional infrastructure investment on key corridors in Western Balkans, so that a greater connectivity between the countries from the Western Balkans and EU member states can be established;

Considering the continuous development of the transport infrastructure with special focus on the Corridors IV, X and VIII that intersect the CEI countries and also being one of the priorities of the Macedonian CEI Presidency;

Recalling the Final Declaration of the CEI -PD Parliamentary Committee from 20th May 2015 in Skopje;

Welcoming the main inputs resulted from the General Committees on Cultural, Political and Economic Affairs on 2nd November 2015 in Rome and on 9 November 2015 in Trieste respectively.

The CEI PD Parliamentary Assembly:

Holds it essential that all member States should be adequately committed in the protection of human rights by promoting equality and equal opportunities for all and should take action in order to overcome gender-based discrimination and the integration of minorities;

Holds it essential to promote cultural and educational integration of the young generations, by supporting exchange programmes in CEI countries based on the Erasmus model and the mutual recognition of educational qualifications;

Believes that, in addition to the EU perspective, the goal of some of the West Balkan countries to be part of NATO may also contribute to further stabilize the region and to its European integration; praises the existing partnership and cooperation (EAPC) between NATO and non-NATO Balkan countries; appreciates the West Balkan countries that, irrespectively of the EU accession process, would decide to be part of the Euro-Atlantic family, which is not mandatory;

Evaluates positively the spirit of the Berlin process and the proposals of the Western Balkans Summit in Vienna of 27 August;

Welcomes the EU decision to appoint two coordinators for the extension of multi-modal corridors into the Balkan region, in full awareness that this new EU policy is a new challenge for the States in the region. The common vision for land and sea transportation routes that Balkan countries are called to develop in order to implement the corridor policy is the prerequisite for the financial support of European institutions;

Welcomes the efforts of the European states and civil society groups and individuals who have mobilized in large scale to welcome and provide aid to refugees and migrants at border lines, as an engagement of humanitarian response to refugee crisis;

Commends the efforts and actions taken by the Government authorities of the Republic of Macedonia and other affected CEI Member States in managing the refugee flow, protecting the life and health of migrants, combating the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking;

Appeals for a proactive approach of all parties involved to support the effective use of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism for all participating states and assisting the countries in an urgent need mostly affected by the migrant crisis;

Having in mind that the migrants crisis has to be considered not only as a regional or European problem, but as well as a global problem, EU members states and governments have to raise awareness of taking concrete measures,

which consider the difference between refugees and migrants escaping from bad economic conditions and share the responsibility through a coordinated cross - border approach in a European spirit of solidarity, as the only possible solution for a collective and permanent action; in this regard recalls the 17 Points Action Plan adopted on 25th October 2015 in Brussels;

Being aware that the migrants crisis negatively affects the stability of the Western Balkans' region, urges the EU and NATO member states and the whole international community to reinforce their role in migrants crisis resolution and to find sustainable political solution for a full integration of the region in the EU and in NATO for those countries who wish to join;

Calls upon the EU institutions and other international organizations for a close cooperation with the CEI, in helping countries to share the responsibilities in facing the migrants challenge and human rights violations;

Supports the role of parliaments of CEI member states in facilitating the implementation and promotion of EU macro-regional strategies that represent a unique mechanism for promoting cooperation among countries and people;

Takes into consideration the role of European funds to develop infrastructure projects in Central and South Eastern Europe which would make a significant contribution for a better interconnectivity in the region; in this context welcomes the cooperation with the EBRD aimed to assist CEI Member States and calls for greater use of the CEI EBRD Fund, and welcomes the establishment of the European Commission Connecting Europe Facility, as an instrument to promote growth, jobs and competitiveness through target-oriented infrastructure investments in Europe;

Taking note that the membership of all CEI countries in the EU macro-regional strategies has to be considered as a corner-stone in these dynamic processes and future developments, **calls upon** the institutions of the EU to support their full integration in these strategies;

Considers that present geopolitical developments call the CEI to thoroughly consider dialogue and cooperation and to invite Turkey at the CEI PD Parliamentary Assembly as a guest;

Stresses the fact that infrastructure investments have big impact on overall economic activity, productivity and employment, both on local and national level, which is of utmost importance for all countries of the CEI region in order to ensure greater economic growth;

Appreciates the efforts made by all WB countries in implementing projects for a construction of road and railway sections along the Corridors 8 and 10 and encourages the governments to continue with these activities, which will result in increased connectivity and mobility;

Calls upon all CEI Member States and their national parliaments to contribute with qualitative proposals and to facilitate harmonization with EU legislation and smooth adoption of the transport-related legislation that will put on track the envisioned governmental projects, as well as with the implementation of the common European asylum system, in facing the challenges of migrants crisis;

Believes that energy is an important aspect of economic development and integration policies and considers that it will be useful for the Parliamentary Assembly or its committees to organize in 2016 opportunities for thorough consideration of Trans-Adriatic and Trans-Alpine energy policies;

Congratulates the Macedonian presidency on its leadership during its term in office;

Expresses full support to the incoming Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency, to continue with the implementation of the envisioned CEI priorities in the CEI Action Plan 2014-2016 that foster European integration and to further promote its visibility of actions in 2016.