



ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA



CEI PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Skopje, 20 May 2015

FINAL DECLARATION

Highly respecting the CEI as the most authentic and the oldest initiative in the region that gathers EU member states and countries in the EU accession process and crucial role it has played for the past 26 years to foster political dialogue, regional cooperation and EU integration among its member states;

Acknowledging EU integration as one of the CEI's main objectives to give visibility to the problems of EU integration of the Western Balkans in the "non-enlargement" period until 2020 and the willingness of participating EU member states to provide support to the accession countries through sharing best models in identified priority areas;

Strongly emphasizing the importance of the CEI as a forum promoting the further enlargement of the EU and as a strong partner in fostering regional integration and macro-regional cooperation in Europe;

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;

Recalling the Council Conclusions from 29 September 2014 and the Council Conclusions from 9th October 2014;

Taking note the fact that Republic of Macedonia is the only CEI country that is not recognized as a part of the EU macro-regional strategies,

The CEI PD Parliamentary Committee:

Calls upon the EU institutions and other international organizations for a close cooperation with the CEI, in helping countries to achieve EU standards and enhancing the effectiveness of macro-regional strategies;

Supports the CEI Plan of Action 2014 to 2016 as a concise and ambitious tool to streamline and focus the activities of the CEI and supports the strong links to EU-policies;

Commends the EU Heads of State and Governments for endorsing the new EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) at their last summit at the end of October 2014;

Takes into consideration the role of European funds to develop infrastructure projects in Central and South Eastern Europe in reaching a Western European level of diversification, which would in turn make a significant contribution to the overall energy security of Europe; **welcomes** the signature of the Joint Declaration on the Strengthening of Energy Cooperation last month in Budapest;

Supports CEI role to enhance better connectivity of the region with the rest of the Europe through strong infrastructural projects;

Acknowledges the role of parliaments of CEI member states in the implementation of relevant legislation related to EU macro-regional strategies that are an opportunity for increased cross-border cooperation;

Taking note that the macro-regional strategies are dynamic processes and remain open to future developments, **calls upon** the institutions of the EU, other international organizations and the CEI to invite Republic of Macedonia to be fully integrated in both Adriatic-Ionian and Danube strategies, as a further step towards the effectiveness of macro-regional strategies;

Stresses that EUSAIR and EUSDR are of the interest to all EU member states and have the capacity to contribute to further integration of the internal market, to the stability of the area, to foster cooperation between EU and non-EU countries, especially in view of assisting participating enlargement countries on their path towards the EU;

Strongly supports the high level cooperation among CEI members states in solving common challenges as well as using opportunities for better implementation of main objectives, such as: preserving and managing eco-systems, increasing connectivity in the region, and promoting sustainable economic growth, jobs and business opportunities;

Welcomes the fact that the CEI has acquired expertise in administering EU projects and EU funds and that it is becoming a valuable institution for implementing EU projects; in this regard, **calls for** greater coordination of existing EU instruments and funds for implementation of the priorities outlined in the strategies;

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

Supports the ambition to strengthen the Business Dimension of the CEI as a further tool to promote regional cooperation, to increase the competitiveness of SMEs and to look into a close cooperation with EBRD;

Acknowledges the importance of further deepening cooperation in the field of research and innovation in order to raise awareness of new technologies in all CEI Member States;

Points out that vocational training can be the right answer to high unemployment rates amongst young people as well as using the possibilities of mobility of young people in EU countries;

Stresses that territorial sovereignty and security issues are key factors in business climate and investment attractiveness improvements, and implementation of regional development strategies;

Acknowledges the need to further strengthen the coordination between the different components of the CEI, namely the parliamentary and the governmental components, in order to streamline activities and to achieve maximum impact, as well as with the EU institutions and other relevant organizations.