

CEI PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION

Meeting of the Parliamentary Committee

**10 - 12 June 2014
Vienna**

Education as Foundation of Prosperity

FINAL DOCUMENT

Within the framework of the Austrian CEI Presidency in 2014 a meeting of the CEI – PD Parliamentary Committee Meeting was held in the Austrian Parliament in Vienna from 10 - 12 June 2014. The subject of the meeting was "Education as foundation for prosperity".

The CEI-PD Parliamentary Committee meeting was chaired by Ms Susanne Kurz, President of CEI-PD and Head of the Austrian Delegation to the CEI-PD.

The meeting was attended by national delegations representing the Parliaments of Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

The CEI - PD Parliamentary Committee

- celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Central European Initiative, founded in 1989 in Budapest;
- highlighting the achievements of this oldest and largest regional organisation;
- stressing the Central European Initiative's important role in strengthening political dialogue and enhancing regional cooperation;

- acknowledging the significant contribution of the Central European Initiative in the process of European integration;
- taking note of the progress of the non-European Union member states on the path to integration in the European Union;
- underlining the relevance of EU macro-regional strategies as a new opportunity for cross-border cooperation between member and non-member states of the European Union;
- stressing the importance of the Central European Initiative composition as an regional forum grouping both EU Member States as well as non-EU countries;
- highlighting the project-oriented form of cooperation which made the Central European Initiative a successful model for regional cooperation;
- recognizing that the CEI provides an excellent framework for the exchange of experience and best practices in the vast area of education;
- welcoming programmes such as the CEI University Network which contribute to the promotion of mobility of students and teaching staff;
- reiterating the important role of Parliamentarians and the Central European Initiative – Parliamentary Dimension in enhancing cooperation in the area of the Central European Initiative;
- welcoming the foundation of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly which took place in Bucharest on 10 May 2014 and commends the current Romanian Chairmanship-in-Office for this important step towards closer regional cooperation;
 - encourages the continuous development of all forms of cooperation between the Member States of the Central European Initiative in the various fields of education;
 - supports the measures that enhance the mobility of students and teaching staff in line with the "Mobility for better learning. Mobility strategy 2020 for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)" and the EU "European higher education in the world" strategy;
 - supports steps that aim at bringing national education systems closer to the highest European standards;
 - underlines the necessity of promoting education and training for innovation, economic growth and job creation;

- encourages measures to enhance employability of specific susceptible groups, especially young people;
- agrees that vocational training is a good means of providing young persons with a sound basis for their professional lives and of avoiding youth unemployment;
- supports the elimination of barriers to adult learning;
- stresses the importance of increasing investment in human capital through better education and skills;
- endorses the Central European Initiative's efforts to bridge the education gap between countries within and outside the European Research Area;
- calls for the highest possible coordination between the three Dimensions of the Central European Initiative in the interest of closer integration of the region;
- calls for the acceleration of the accession process of the Western Balkans to the European Union and invites all interested parties to include additional efforts in order to fulfill all the necessary conditions for membership.
- points to the importance of good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation in the Western Balkans, especially in the context of creating the necessary conditions for economic development and integration into the European Union.