



HUNGARIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



Session of the CEI-PD Parliamentary Assembly
24-26 September 2013, Budapest

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN INITIATIVE PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION

Budapest, 24 – 26 September 2013

FINAL DECLARATION

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Central European Initiative Parliamentary Dimension

Stressing that the specific feature of the CEI lies in its distinctive membership composition as well as the inherent cultural diversity and heritage that the CEI Member States represent;

Recognizing that Europe needs strong regions in order to get back on track from the years of the economic crisis;

Fully agreeing that cross-border cooperation strengthens good neighbourhood relations and brings local communities closer to each other;

Pointing out that the unique position of the CEI could be further utilised to link the existing macro-regional and other initiatives;

Acknowledging that although at different stages and in different forms, all the non-EU CEI Member States pursue ever closer relations with the European Union;

Supporting the European integration and rapprochement process of the non-EU Member States and being persuaded that regional cooperation is crucial for achieving this goal;

Congratulates Croatia for joining the European Union;

Welcomes the decision on the opening of the EU accession negotiations with Serbia and supports smooth EU integration process of the Western Balkan countries;

Looking forward to the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit of November 2013 with the hope that Ukraine will conclude the Association Agreement with the EU and new impetus will be given to this partnership process;

Supporting the resolution adopted by the CEI-PD Parliamentary Committee on 23-25 April 2013 in Budapest;

Relating to the regional policy and the key elements of the territorial cooperation in the context of the 2014-2020 budgetary period

- **Recalls** that territorial cooperation provides a coordinated response to mutually shared issues and that the different regional projects realised in CEI Member States proved to be beneficial since regional disparities diminished;

- **Underlines** that facilitation of the cross-border connections contributes significantly to the movement of people, capital, services leading thus to prosperity, job creation and reinforced people to people contacts;
- **Stresses** the need of a comprehensive policy aimed at fostering employment with a strong and effective strategy which should promote GDP growth and economic development in general;
- **Underlines** that the former paragraph should imply a strategy with the participation of the EU institutions and Member States with regard to a more effective implementation of TEN-T corridors;
- **Points out** that cooperation between the CEI Member States concerned regarding cross-border development projects is essential in aligning their development programs and funding sources;
- **Calls** upon CEI Member States to strengthen territorial cooperation with greater involvement and accountability of regional and local authorities in programming and funds management by utilising the possibilities envisaged under the new EU rules for the regional policy;
- **Highlights** that the projects of the next financial period should respect the principle that each euro cent is spent in the most effective way, which requires the exchange of experiences about the lessons learnt and best practices developed during the current budgetary framework;
- **Stresses** that the elaboration of the New Plan of Actions 2014-2016 should be in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy and the next multi-annual financial programme of the EU;
- **Urges** the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament to utilize the Connecting Europe Facility as a more effective strategy in the field of infrastructure as an appropriate financial scheme aiming at better funding of the connection between the infrastructure of the CEI region and the rest of Europe;
- **Recommends** to explore the creativity potential of the region in order to keep the young creative generation in their home countries;

Relating to the priorities and the state of play of the macro-regional strategies

- **Acknowledges** that existing macro-regional strategies provides an integrated framework for addressing common challenges of EU Member States and non-EU Member States situated in the same geographical area;
- **Welcomes** that the added value of the Danube region and Baltic sea macro-regional strategies was highlighted by the European Commission in its respective report since those are proper tools for exploiting in an integrated manner the potential of the regions;
- **Considers** that the implementation of the EU Strategies for the Baltic Sea as well as for the Danube Region shows promising results and that these initiatives could serve as a blueprint for a new strategy under preparation;
- **Points out** that the two existing macro-regional strategies include the vast majority of the CEI Member States, therefore the existing macro-regional strategies can build upon CEI experience and the CEI could contribute to the envisaged Adriatic and Ionian Region Strategy;
- **Appreciates** that macro-regional strategies are embedded in the Common Strategic Framework which will cover the coordination of the European Structural and Investment Funds from 2014;

- **Underlines** that transnational projects, – improving transport conditions and the completion of missing transport and energy interconnectors, as well as protecting the environment – contribute to the prosperity of the regions and bring people closer to each other;
- **Encourages** the better implementation of the programmes in certain challenging areas and the improvements to deliver added value in the most efficient and sustainable way;
- **Underlines** that education, vocational training and students' mobility should be supported as some of the most effective tools for the implementation of the macro-regional strategies;
- **Calls** upon the CEI Member States concerned to proceed by working together for the success of the macro-regional strategies on the basis of mutual interest;
- **Looks forward** to a future EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region being under preparation;
- **Invites** the incoming CEI presidencies to ensure the follow up of the cross-cutting issues of regional cooperation and development and the contribution to the macro-regional strategies;
- **Expresses** its full support to the incoming Austrian CEI presidency in promoting the objectives of the intergovernmental forum and to further strengthen the acknowledgement of CEI.