



## CEI PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

*Rome, 7-8 November 2019*

### ***DEVELOPING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR MORE COMPETITIVE BUSINESSES IN THE CEI AREA***

#### **Final declaration**

**At the end of the Italian presidency** and in celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Central European Initiative (CEI), which took place on 11 November 1989;

*convinced* that the CEI remains a forward-looking concept whose value lies in its ability to ensure constant and solidarity-based support and understanding among its member states;

*aware* that the European Union is based on decisions, policies, and legislation that require an integrated approach to be designed and implemented through, among other things, **cooperation between parliaments**, which represent the peoples of Europe, and that in this regard the CEI shall continue to provide a flexible structure to prepare the future accession to the Union for those countries that request it;

*in the conviction* that the CEI provides the ideal framework for **specific forms of cooperation on a regional basis**, in order to improve homogeneity, manage diversity, and prepare reference platforms for all member states;

*emphasising* the CEI's role as an essential **element in achieving greater integrated connectivity** in infrastructure and trade between the European Union and its partners from the Eastern Neighborhood;

*recalling* the contents of the final document adopted by the CEI Parliamentary Committee during its meeting of 29 May 2019 in Trieste, especially with respect to **the role of local and regional authorities** in the integrated management of the sectoral policies which have a major impact on the economic development of the CEI region, such as transport and infrastructure;

*considering* that the Central European Initiative provides a valuable platform to facilitate the expansion of economic and infrastructural inter-connectivity, especially in the

transport and logistics sector, in order to facilitate and incentivise **trade flows** between countries of the CEI area;

*recalling* the contents of the treaty instituting the **Transport Community**, signed on 12 July 2017 in Trieste, whose aim is to contribute to bringing the countries of South-Eastern Europe ever closer to the EU by establishing a fully integrated transport network, and aligning transport standards and policies in said countries with those of the EU, in order to stimulate economic growth, competitiveness, and employment;

*recalling*, moreover, that within this framework an extension to the TEN-T network has been approved, to which completion specific EU financing instruments such as the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) can be dedicated;

*referring* to the previous meetings of the bodies of the CEI Parliamentary Dimension, such as the meetings of the General Committee on Economic Affairs in Warsaw in 2018 and in Trieste in 2015, which were dedicated to infrastructure and energy projects in the CEI region, with a special focus on the Via Carpathia road construction project at the former meeting and the Central European – Mediterranean corridor at the latter;

*acknowledging* the **Trieste Declaration** that concluded the meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs of **the member states of the CEI of 12 June 2019**, which takes stock of the positive collaboration between the EU and the CEI, as evidenced by the opening of a CEI Representation Office in Brussels; in addition to underlining **the importance of strategic cooperation with a view to investing in infrastructure projects** in the CEI area and calling on the Executive Secretariat to submit proposals for regional cooperation in the transport and energy sector, we agree on the need to strengthen the CEI's Business Dimension in order to promote trade and investment in the region;

#### **the CEI Parliamentary Assembly:**

*invites* the **national parliaments of the member states** to play an active role in drafting adequate legislation to concretely achieve the objectives set in the above-mentioned Declaration;

*urges* the governments of the member states of the Central European Initiative to act and collaborate in all appropriate fora for the **elimination of legal and regulatory hindrances in the energy market** in view of the future inclusion of all CEI member states within the framework of a common energy policy, while improving the competitiveness of businesses and boosting trade flows;

*underlines* the importance of adopting **an effective approach to infrastructure policy in CEI countries** in order to overcome any communication gaps at the intergovernmental level that may hinder the implementation of a comprehensive agenda for infrastructure connectivity in the region;

*underlines* at the same time the need for the governments of the member states of the Central European Initiative to cooperate in achieving the common objectives set out in this document in relation to infrastructure connectivity, keeping in mind the priority goal of creating **greater business and employment opportunity, also with regard to the role of small and medium enterprises**;

*recognises* the desirability of continued and strengthened **cooperation with international and European financial institutions** such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the World Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and other European investors to promote and implement infrastructure interconnectivity projects aiming to facilitate and enhance trade flows between all CEI member states;

*underlines* the **role of the Business Dimension** of the Central European Initiative as a key instrument to promote the competitiveness of businesses in the CEI area;

*tasks* its President with submitting this final document to the next **Summit of Heads of State** due to take place in Rome, on 19 December 2019;

*extends* its best wishes to the upcoming presidency of the Central European Initiative, which will be held by Montenegro in 2020.