



## **Central European Initiative**

# **Guidelines and Rules of Procedure<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted by the CEI Summit of the HoG in 2007 in Sofia and amended by the HoG through a written procedure in April 2008.

## I. Principles and objectives

1. The Central European Initiative (CEI) is a regional forum for co-operation and consultation among and between its Member States.

Member States of the CEI are: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

2. The Member States of the CEI are guided by the principles of the UN Charter, of all the documents of the Helsinki process/OSCE. They are guided as well by final declarations and documents of the meetings of the Heads of Government and the Foreign Ministers of the CEI (including those of the predecessor initiatives: Quadrilateral, Pentagonal, Hexagonal).

3. The CEI, as a part of the European integration process, endeavours to co-operate with European organisations and institutions, in particular with the European Union, the Council of Europe and the OSCE as well as with other regional co-operation initiatives in areas of mutual interest.

The CEI also co-operates with the UN system and with other relevant international organisations, in particular the UNECE, the OECD as well as with international financial institutions, especially the EBRD.

4. The strategic goals of the CEI are:

- a) to work for cohesion of a united Europe, without dividing lines, a Europe with shared values, embracing all countries, regions, peoples and citizens of the continent;
- b) to focus co-operation within the framework of the CEI in particular on assistance to strengthen the capacities of the least advanced member countries and of those having the greatest need for accelerated economic development or recovery.

5. The co-operation within the framework of the CEI shall aim at the following principal objectives:

- a) strengthening co-operation among Member States, and in particular on the European agenda, as an added value without prejudice to further EU enlargement.
- b) supporting all interested Member States in their endeavours to move towards further European integration.
- c) strengthening its cooperation with the European Union by taking part in and facilitating the implementation of applicable EU programmes.
- d) promoting the development of the civil society known to be a catalyst in the democratic transformation processes.

6. The co-operation within the framework of the CEI shall include, inter alia, the following areas:

- consultations on political matters of mutual interest,
- economic and technical co-operation,
- development of infrastructure in transport, energy, telecommunication, agriculture,
- strengthening the democratic institutions and observance of human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities as well as humanitarian matters,
- protection of human environment,
- co-operation in the field of science and technology, media, culture, education, youth exchange, tourism
- cross-border and interregional co-operation.

## II. Membership and participation in the CEI

7. The CEI can invite any interested third State, regional entity and international organisation to participate in CEI activities, events, programmes and projects.

The CEI can also confer the status of special guest or other forms of partnership as appropriate.

8. The CEI shall promote co-operation with NGOs, professional associations, academic and other institutions willing to co-operate on matters of mutual interest.

9. Any Member State of the CEI which has seriously violated the principles referred to in Art. 2 of the present Guidelines may be suspended from its rights of representation by the Foreign Ministers. If such Member State persists in these violations, the Heads of Government may decide that it has ceased to be a Member of the CEI. The decision on that matter should be taken following the rule of consensus minus one.

### III. Organisation and structure

10. The CEI operates in a flexible manner through several bodies.

11. The Governmental Dimension of the CEI consists of the following bodies:

- Meeting of the Heads of Government (CEI Summit),
- Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs (MFA Meeting),
- Meeting of the Political Directors of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of CEI Member States (PoD Meeting)
- Committee of National Co-ordinators (CNC),
- Working bodies (Networks of Focal Points, Project Implementation Groups, ad hoc Task Forces, etc.)
- Executive Secretariat (CEI-ES) and
- as specialised instrument the Secretariat for CEI Projects (CEI/EBRD Secretariat)<sup>2</sup>.

12. The Parliamentary Dimension of the CEI functions according to its structure and rules of procedure. It consists of the following bodies:

- The Conference of the Speakers of Parliaments
- The Parliamentary Assembly
- The Parliamentary Committee
- Working bodies (Ad Hoc Committees etc.).

13. The Business Dimension of the CEI, which functions according to its own modalities, consists of the following bodies:

- the Annual Presidents' Conference of the Central European Chambers of Commerce Initiative (CECCI)
- the Secretariat of the Annual Presidents' Conference of CECCI.

14. The Meeting of the Heads of Government (CEI Summit) shall be convened once a year in autumn. The following matters shall be decided by the CEI Summit:

- principles and objectives of the CEI,
- amendments to the "CEI Guidelines and Rules of Procedure",
- political and economic orientation for the co-operation within the framework of the Initiative, including adoption of the Plan of Action,
- membership (admission, suspension),
- approval of the Annual Report of the CEI-ES SG.

15. The Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs (MFA Meeting) shall be convened once a year at the time and under modalities proposed by the CEI Presidency. The MFA Meeting shall decide upon specific issues of the CEI co-operation, including:

- political co-operation,
- participation in CEI activities, as referred to in Art. 7,
- the organisational structure, areas and ways of co-operation,
- matters concerning the establishment and the operational structure of the working bodies,
- the formula of the annual contributions, annual budget and scale of contributions of the CEI Co-operation Fund,
- the appointment and recall of the CEI-ES Secretary General, the CEI-ES Alternate Secretary General and the CEI-ES Deputy Secretary General.

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<sup>2</sup> The CEI/EBRD Secretariat is functioning on the basis of the *Secretariat Agreement* of 21 July 1998, concluded between the CEI and the EBRD and the *Fund Agreement* concluded between the Government of Italy and the EBRD on a CEI Fund. The Fund Agreement was concluded on 14 April 1992 and amended on 23 July 1997.

16. The Meeting of Political Directors of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of CEI Member States (PoD) shall be convened at least once a year. As a rule, it will take place in Rome. Additional meetings can be convened on an ad hoc basis in response to specific situations that might arise in the CEI region or within the organisation.

17. The Committee of National Co-ordinators (CNC) is the key body responsible for the management of CEI co-operation and the implementation of CEI programmes and projects through appropriate structures. The CNC shall, as a rule, meet six times annually, namely in January, March, May, September, October and November, to discuss and to co-ordinate co-operation within the various bodies of the CEI as well as in relation with other international organisations and regional groupings. It remains up to the CEI Presidency, in consultation with the CEI Executive Secretariat, to convene additional CNC meetings as required.

The CNC, assisted by the CEI-ES, shall prepare the documents to be approved by the CEI Summit or by the MFA Meeting.

The CNC shall discuss and review the activities of the CEI working bodies and shall provide appropriate guidance to them.

The CNC, in consultation with the Secretary General of the CEI-ES, shall decide upon the structure and the staff of the CEI-ES.

18. In case of need the CNC can entrust specific tasks to a committee with reduced membership, dealing, inter alia, with questions relating to technical and financial aspects of CEI activities including those concerning co-operation with the EU/EC and other international organisations and financial institutions.

The CEI-Executive Secretariat and the Secretariat for CEI Projects shall participate in the meetings of this committee.

19. The Chairmanship of the CEI (Presidency) shall rotate annually at the beginning of the calendar year based on the alphabetical order of the English names of CEI Member States, unless decided otherwise.

The Chairman-in-office shall be supported by the former and the next Chairman, which form the Troika of the CEI.

The Presidency shall convene the meetings of the Heads of Government, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Political Directors and the CNC. The meetings of the CNC may be convened also in other countries. In case of impediment of the Chairman-in-office meetings of the CNC shall be chaired, at the discretion of the Presidency, by one of the Troika members or by the CEI-ES Secretary General.

20. The principles and objectives of CEI co-operation shall be accomplished through appropriate activities of a flexible structure of working bodies, meetings on expert, high official or ministerial level. They shall be assisted by the CEI-ES and by the Secretariat for CEI Projects in performing their duties.

Meetings of the working bodies shall be convened upon the initiative of the CEI Presidency or the CEI Executive Secretariat, as appropriate. Unless other arrangements apply, these meetings shall be chaired by the CEI Presidency or the CEI Executive Secretariat.

21. The CEI - Executive Secretariat (CEI-ES) is located in Trieste, Italy, and shall be headed by a Secretary General.

The CEI-ES, as permanent CEI body, shall provide continuous administrative and conceptual support to both the decision-making and operational structures of the CEI and shall take any appropriate initiatives aimed at promoting the realisation of the CEI co-operation objectives.

The tasks of the CEI-ES shall comprise, inter alia, the following areas:

- information and documentation
- organisation, preparation and follow-up of meetings
- participation in CEI meetings and other CEI-related events
- CEI programmes and projects.

The CEI-ES shall also fulfil other tasks assigned to it by the CEI Summit, MFA Meeting, the Chairman-in-office and the CNC.

The structure and staff of the CEI-ES shall be decided by the CNC in consultation with the Secretary General. The CEI-ES structure and activity, especially in the field of personnel and finance should be consistent with the law of the receiving state.

In performing its duties the CEI-ES shall co-operate with National Co-ordinators, Focal Points designated by the Member States, and other persons and subjects which are involved in CEI activities.

The authorities of the receiving state shall finance activities of the CEI-ES as well as the staff's salaries. Any Member State designating any official of the staff (including the Secretary General, the Alternate Secretary General<sup>3</sup> and the Deputy Secretary General) shall cover the respective costs. Any CEI Member State can voluntarily allocate financial and material resources for the CEI-ES activities.

22. The CEI-ES Secretary General (CEI-ES SG) shall be selected among candidates nominated by the CEI Member States and shall be appointed/recalled by the MFA Meeting upon recommendation of the CNC. His/her term shall last three years with the option of a one time renewal of up to three more years.

The CEI-ES SG shall participate in the CEI Summit, MFA Meeting, PoD Meeting, CNC meetings, meetings at ministerial level, the Steering Committee of the Secretariat for CEI Projects and in other major CEI events.

In co-ordination with the Chairman-in-office the CEI-ES SG or his/her representative shall participate on behalf of the CEI in relevant activities of other European and international organisations and institutions.

The CEI-ES SG shall prepare an annual report on activities of the CEI-ES including financial aspects, which shall be subject to acceptance by the Meeting of the Heads of Government upon recommendation of the CNC.

23. The CEI-ES SG is supported by an Alternate Secretary General (CEI-ES ASG) and a Deputy Secretary General (CEI-ES DSG). The SG, the ASG and the DSG represent the Executive Level of the CEI-ES.

One of the posts of the Executive Level will be filled by the host country of the organisation. The ASG and DSG shall be selected among candidates nominated by the CEI Member States and shall be appointed/recalled by the MFA Meeting upon recommendation of the CNC. The term of office of the ASG and DSG shall last three years with the option of a one-time renewal of up to three more years.

24. For the duration of the Agreements on which it is based, the Secretariat for CEI Projects (CEI/EBRD Secretariat) is assuming tasks aimed primarily at investment projects and, i.a., the following areas:

- economic co-operation
- CEI Fund management and mobilisation of financial resources,
- investment project promotion, identification, and preparation assistance
- technical support for investment projects
- system development and institutional programme support (e.g. organisation of international events, training, advisory services, and information systems).

The Secretariat for CEI Projects is linked institutionally to the CEI-ES and is located in the CEI-ES Headquarters in Trieste, Italy, maintaining also a permanent office at the EBRD, London.

The CNC together with the Directors representing Member States in the Board of Directors of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development form the Steering Committee of the Secretariat for CEI Projects.

25. The co-operation between the Governmental and Parliamentary Dimensions will be guided, i.a., by the following modalities:

- A joint session of the enlarged CEI Troika<sup>4</sup> at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the enlarged Troika of the CEI Parliamentary Committee will be organised on the occasion of the MFA Meeting to permit a general debate on the strategic goals and challenges of the CEI as well as on the contributions of the Parliamentary Dimension to the overall work of the organisation.
- The Presidency of the CEI Parliamentary Dimension will be invited to participate in all high-level meetings organised by the CEI with the right to take part in the debate.
- Under no circumstance will the enhanced co-operation with the Parliamentary Dimension entail any financial commitments of the Governments of the CEI Member States or the CEI Secretariats.

<sup>3</sup> In accordance with the relevant decision adopted by the Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in May 2007.

<sup>4</sup> The enlarged CEI Troika consists of the CEI Troika plus the host country.

26. The co-operation between the Governmental and Business Dimensions will be guided, i.a., by the following modalities:

- The Presidency of CECCI will be invited to participate in all high level meetings organised by the CEI and in other meetings to CECCI's interest.
- The Presidency of CECCI will be invited to participate in specific missions of the CEI Presidency or Troika as appropriate.
- The structures of CECCI in CEI Member States shall actively co-operate in the promotion and organisation of the CEI Summit Economic Forum (SEF) by marketing activities of the SEF at national level, organisation of SEF sessions, parallel events and networking receptions.
- Under no circumstances will the enhanced co-operation with CECCI entail any financial commitments of the Governments of the CEI Member States or the CEI Secretariats.

#### **IV. Decision making procedure**

27. Subject to the provisions of Art. 9 and 18 the decisions within the CEI are taken by consensus as a general rule.

Consensus shall be understood to mean the absence of any objection expressed by a Member State and submitted by it as constituting an obstacle to the taking of the decision in question.

Questions arising under procedural matters shall be decided by a simple majority of Member States.

#### **V. Signing of Agreements**

28. CEI Agreements to be concluded with third parties shall be signed on behalf of the CEI by the CEI Presidency and the CEI-ES SG.

#### **VI. Financing**

29. Each Member State is responsible for financing its own expenses connected with CEI activities.

The costs incurred for the organisation of meetings shall, as a rule, be borne by the host country.

Member States shall facilitate the implementation of CEI programmes and projects through annual financial contributions to the CEI Co-operation Fund. The formula of the annual contributions, annual budget and scale of contributions of the CEI Co-operation Fund shall be decided by the MFA Meeting.

In order to facilitate the participation of all Member States in CEI and CEI-sponsored events assistance can be provided for covering travel and accommodation expenses through the Solidarity Fund managed by the CEI-ES in accordance with the Guidelines of the Solidarity Fund approved by the CNC.

#### **VII. Flag and language**

30. The CEI flag represents a blue field with the official CEI logo in the middle. The CEI logo consists of the block letters "CEI" with a block transcription "CENTRAL EUROPEAN INITIATIVE", surrounded by a semicircle composed by 10 yellow stars.

31. The working language of the CEI is English. CEI documents are produced in English. If a participant in a CEI event wishes to use another language the translation has to be provided by himself.

## **VIII. Amending the CEI Guidelines**

32. Any amendment proposed by a Member State shall be examined by the CNC. If agreed upon, the CNC shall submit a recommendation to the Meeting of the Heads of Government for approval.