



The CEI Cooperation Fund

*A CEI approach
to migration
management*

PROJECTS BROCHURE



Mission of the Central European Initiative

The Central European Initiative (CEI), a regional intergovernmental forum open to change, is committed to supporting European integration through cooperation between and among its Member States and with the European Union (EU), other interested public institutions or private and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as international and regional organisations. In order to offer a solid contribution to European integration the CEI combines multilateral diplomacy and project management, both as donor and recipient, while also bridging European macro-regions.

[Find out more on the CEI website \(www.cei.int\)](http://www.cei.int)



Table of contents

<u>Foreword by the Secretary General</u>	5
<u>Unprecedented migration</u>	6
<u>CEI Cooperation Fund</u>	7
<u>Priorities in the CEI Campaign</u>	9
<u>Implemented activities in the field of migration</u>	10
<u>This is what they had to say</u>	18
<u>Outlook and activities in 2017</u>	20

Foreword

by the Secretary General



Giovanni Caracciolo di Vietri

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'G. Caracciolo di Vietri'.

The CEI has always stood by its tradition of meeting the needs of its Member States. Today's commitment in the area of migration management stems from the recommendations delivered by the CEI Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their meeting in Ohrid in June 2015. The CEI Secretariat immediately launched a first-of-its-kind extraordinary programme under its Cooperation Fund where the CEI was able to bring together pivotal actors dealing with asylum seekers, refugees and illegal migrants.

I, therefore, welcome this opportunity to address this important issue at a time when anti-immigration and anti-refugee sentiment has unfortunately become part of mainstream rhetoric in the international political and media debate.

During our campaign in 2016, state and local public administrations, private associations of the civil society, and international humanitarian agencies gathered within conferences and workshops to exchange know-how and best practices linked to the crisis of migration governance in Europe. Through these activities, ways to face the challenging tasks ahead were discussed and various aspects of the migratory crisis were covered, e.g. the role of local authorities, health care, migrants' entrepreneurship, unaccompanied children, brain drain and diaspora from South Eastern Europe, protection of human rights and European values, training for youth and security issues.

The CEI Secretariat provides dissemination, stocktaking, visibility of opportunities and partnership. It also strongly fosters cooperation with other international organisations in this field. MoUs have been signed with the CBSS, MARRI, the ICMPD, the IOM and initiatives shared with them and the OSCE, the UNDP

March 2017

and the Council of Europe.

Still, the migration and refugee crisis is complex. It is a global and long-lasting phenomenon where migrants tend to move from anywhere in the world to almost anywhere else.

We recognise that not all our Member States experience the same migratory pressure; that no country can face this task alone, and that managing the refugee crisis is not just a task for governments. Indeed, there is a need for more effective cooperation among public and non-governmental stakeholders starting from the empowerment of cities and municipalities.

CEI countries represent both transit and destination countries where the management of asylum seekers and migrants challenges budgetary, regulatory and social factors.

Longer-term solutions require a willingness to work with all these "country-types" to fine-tune sustainable pathways for migration, including education and integration in the labour market.

The CEI, in its spirit of dialogue, solidarity and cooperation, will continue to promote better knowledge of the features of migration flows; to disseminate skills for better assistance and integration of asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants in the transit and destination countries; and to rebuild confidence and trust of civil society and the public opinion in the potential of migrations for pushing resilience and growth of the communities concerned all over Europe.

This Brochure is a publication featuring different types of projects in the field of migration management that received co-financing from the CEI through its Cooperation Fund.* Only the event organised by the OBC and DG NEAR has a different origin.

These examples of activities and events highlight how the CEI support has been used to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by today's migration reality.

Unprecedented migration

More than one million migrants and refugees crossed into the EU by land and sea in 2015. 860,000 people impacted on the Balkan Route through Greece and severely affected the countries northern to it as follows:

Macedonia	388,233
Serbia	579,518
Hungary	411,515
Croatia	556,830
Slovenia	378,604

Over half of this flow concentrated in September, October and November 2015. Half of the total arrivals were from Syria. This fourfold rise compared to 2014 inflows to Europe posed major challenges to EU institutions, national authorities and the civil society of CEI Countries.

Even if the figure decreased in 2016 to 388,000 arrivals (over 5,000 did not reach final destination since recorded as dead along the way) the issue remains a long-term structural factor with regard to the governance of assistance, integration and resilience in the communities involved.

Emergency humanitarian responses have brought about extraordinary stories of solidarity and dedication. Nevertheless, consensus from the citizens in the transit and destination countries can only be raised by further upgrading the migration management system: not only effective recipient and registration services, but stronger synergies between national and local administrations; further enhancement of public partnership with civil society organisations; visible measures for cultural and labour inclusion.

 (Source: IOM Compilations of Available Data and Information 2015 and 2016 at <http://migration.iom.int/europe>)

* Extraordinary Call Migration 2015 and regular Calls

The CEI Cooperation Fund

The CEI Cooperation Fund

Thanks to the CEI Cooperation Fund, financed by annual contributions from all Member States, the CEI succeeds in implementing a large number of small and medium-sized projects such as seminars, workshops, conferences, training courses, fostering mobility and people-to-people contacts in line with the priorities set in the CEI Plan of Action.

Since its inception in 2002, about 980 activities have been co-financed with around 9 million EUR and an overall value of about 57 million EUR. It is estimated that around 5,000 participants take part in the events every year.

In August 2015, the Cooperation Fund launched an Extraordinary Call for Proposals in the field of migration alone. The initial contribution amounted to 50,000 EUR. It was immediately doubled to 100,000 EUR in order to support all the eligible applications.

Find out more on the CEI website (www.cei.int)

CEI-ES

The CEI Executive Secretariat (CEI-ES) was inaugurated in Trieste under the Austrian CEI Presidency in 1996 and since then has been financed by Italy. It operates with the legal status of an International Organisation, based on a Headquarters Agreement concluded between the Italian Government and the CEI Presidency and ratified by the Italian Parliament.

The seat in Trieste, via Genova 9, was made available to the CEI by the Italian Government through the Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) Autonomous Region, free of charge and ties, under terms described in a Protocol concluded between the CEI Secretariat and the FVG Autonomous Region, signed in Trieste on 20 December 1999.



Understand
migration flows and trends in CEI and neighbouring countries



Know-how exchange
on assistance and integration of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants



Enhance
the role and capacity of Municipalities in managing emergency to long-term placement

Priorities in the CEI campaign



Raise
awareness on the protection of women's and unaccompanied children's rights



Encourage
cross-border cooperation of Public Authorities and CSOs in combating trafficking in human beings, migrant exploitation and related crime



Respond
to migration issues across CEI countries (brain drain, abandoned children, freedom of movement)

Implemented Activities in the field of migration

1. Migration and refugee flows in transit countries: security implications

Institute for Geo-strategic Research & Foreign Policy (MFA) - Macedonia

2. Combating illegal migration and illicit human trafficking

Ivano-Frankivsk Law University in Ukraine

3. Acting together in migration management- enhancing coordination between local and central level

Migration, Asylum, and Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) - Macedonia

4. Scattering reception: spreading the reception culture and promoting real integration for refugees and asylum seekers

ICS Consorzio Italiano di Solidarietà - Ufficio Rifugiati, Onlus

5. First annual meeting of the Western Balkans Migration Observatory

Center for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) - Albania

6. Refugee crisis management and EU accession process along the Balkan Route

Observatory Balkans & Caucasus (OBC Trento) - Italy

7. WELCOMING: Wanting Europe as Leverage for Cooperation on the Migratory Insertion Governance

European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA) - Macedonia

8. MUNSC Salient - youth conference on global matters

United Nations Association of Slovenia (UNAS)

9. Breaking down or re-building the walls. Migration crisis, refugees and security in South-East Europe

Istituto per l'Europa Centro-Orientale e Balcanica (IECOB) - Italy

10. European values and security facing migrant crisis: a perspective from the civil society

European Movement in the Republic of Macedonia

11. Gender sensitive labour migration

OSCE Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) - Moldova

12. Health implications of the mass-movement of people

KNOW HOW CENTER - Serbia

13. Challenges and opportunities of migration in and from South-East Europe

Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) - Austria

14. Promoting good practices in protecting migrants and asylum seeking children, in particular unaccompanied children

Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) - Sweden

1

Migration and refugee flows in transit countries: security implications

The gathering witnessed the participation of 200 representatives of ministries of foreign and internal affairs, civil society, international organisations and embassies from over 50 countries. They shared experiences and policy approaches in order to counter the escalation of illegal migration and human trafficking.

Necessary measures were agreed upon: better knowledge management, strengthen border control cooperation, enhance collaboration between central and local authorities and CSOs, raise awareness of recipient communities, improve regional cooperation along the Balkan Route.

link to CEI webpage

Organiser	<i>Institute for Geo-strategic Research & Foreign Policy (MFA)</i>
Period	<i>16 December 2015</i>
Place	<i>Skopje, Macedonia</i>
Project Funding	<i>Total budget: €18,000 CEI contribution: €9,000</i>
Further info	https://tinyurl.com/mogzawl https://tinyurl.com/kre28qe

2

Combating illegal migration and illicit human trafficking

This symposium focused on the state of combating illegal migration and human trafficking by detecting and investigating around these problems. It has developed recommendations for better counteractions and protection of human rights.

60 participants came from Belarus, Croatia, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, and Georgia. The event gathered employees from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, migration services, the Public Prosecutor Office; judges and NGO representatives (La Strada, Caritas, UHSPL, Nexus); practitioners, graduates, and students from universities and research centres.

link to CEI webpage

Organiser	<i>Ivano-Frankivsk Law University</i>
Period	<i>11-12 March 2016</i>
Place	<i>Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine</i>
Project Funding	<i>Total cost: €25,810 CEI contribution: €6,800</i>
Further info	http://en.iful.edu.ua/

3

Acting together in migration management-enhancing coordination between local and central level

Over 80 representatives of central and local authorities from European countries and territories and international organisations gathered to exchange experiences and best practices.

Panellists from Austria, Croatia and Italy discussed with representatives of interior ministries, ministries of labour and social affairs and municipalities from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Kosovo*. Special attention was paid to obtaining stronger support from the international community in the European integration process of the Western Balkans, by strengthening regional capacities in managing migration.

Conclusions on the enhancement of the role of local authorities were adopted and necessary measures were agreed upon: further upgrade regional coordination mechanisms aimed at supporting regional, central and local authorities; horizontal and vertical networking; permanent consultations in defining national policies; continued assessment at local level and the role of international donors in supporting overall capacity building.

**This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence*

[link to CEI webpage](#)

Organiser	Migration, Asylum and Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS)
Period	17 March 2016
Place	Skopje, Macedonia
Project Funding	Total cost: €31,330 CEI contribution: €12,600
Further info	http://marri-rc.org.mk http://www.nalas.eu/ https://tinyurl.com/kregs7v

4

Scattering reception: spreading the reception culture and promoting real integration for refugees and asylum seekers

Over 30 representatives from NGOs in Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, and the ICS staff attended the workshop aimed at networking and building cooperation among associations of neighbouring countries facing the migratory flows and the obligations for refugee reception policies.

In order to spread reception culture and capacity with decent hosting standards, a system jointly implemented by local administrations and NGOs is needed. The topics of asylum procedure and accommodation were benchmarked on the Italian system of decentralised accommodation (called SPRAR).

[link to CEI webpage](#)

Organiser	ICS Consorzio Italiano di Solidarietà – Ufficio Rifugiati, Onlus // Italian Consortium for Solidarity – Refugees Office NGO
Period	17 – 19 March 2016
Place	Trieste, Italy
Project Funding	Total cost: €14,442 CEI contribution: €7,115
Further info	www.icsufficiorifugiati.org

5

First annual meeting of the Western Balkans Migration Observatory

The workshop - gathering key local stakeholders including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Members of the Parliament and local offices of international organisations - brought about the establishment of the new Western Balkans Migration Network (<http://wb-mignet.org/>) focused on the brain drain affecting the region and on how to reverse it into brain gain and diaspora support to WB recovery.

The WB-MIGNET founding think-tanks are: Centre for Economic and Social Studies - CESS (AL); Center for Development Evaluation and Social Science Research - CDESS (BiH), also the network coordinator; Institute of Economics (HR); Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses - ISSP (MN); the South East European University - SEEU (MK); Group 484 (RS); and a group of independent researchers from Kosovo*.

The WB-MIGNET Advisory Board who met after the event finalised the Plan of Action of the network.

**This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence*

[link to CEI webpage](#)

Organiser	Center for Economic and Social Studies (CESS)
Period	15 - 16 April 2016
Place	Tirana, Albania
Project Funding	Total cost: €16,970 CEI contribution: €6,330
Further info	http://wb-mignet.org https://tinyurl.com/lov3ckx

6

Refugee crisis management and EU accession process along the Balkan Route

The event attended by CSOs and local administration representatives focused on the implications for the EU enlargement process resulting from the current migration and refugee flows through the Western Balkans.

DG NEAR illustrated the increasing commitment of the European Commission, the financial support and the assistance to capacity building of the candidate and potential candidate countries. Representatives of the IOM and of NGOs from Italy, Serbia and Macedonia described the pros and cons of current practices for migration management.

The CEI Secretariat hosted the 40 participants at the event and co-financed the initiative in the framework of the DG NEAR programme for raising awareness on the opportunities of the accession of the WB to the EU.

[link to CEI webpage](#)

Organiser	Observatory Balkans & Caucasus (OBC Trento)
Period	6 May 2016
Place	Trieste, Italy
Project Funding	Total cost: €5,290 CEI contribution: €1,110
Further info	www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng



7

WELCOMING: Wanting Europe as Leverage for Cooperation on the Migratory Insertion Governance

On World Refugee Day, ALDA Skopje, a branch of the European Association for Local Democracy, gathered 25 partners from 9 countries (7 CEI MS) and more than 50 participants to exchange experience and debate the migration management of local authorities and civil society organisations.

Thematic working groups drafted Recommendations by topic respectively:

- Policies on migration emergency management;
- Integration of migrants: the role of CSOs, local authorities, citizens;
- Public perception of migrants: how to influence it in a positive way and build intercultural dialogue.

[link to CEI webpage](#)

Organiser	European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA)
Period	20 – 21 June 2016
Place	Skopje, Macedonia
Project Funding	Total cost: €30,338 CEI contribution: €10,000
Further info	www.alda-europe.eu/newSite/



8

MUNSC Salient - youth conference on global matters

50 students and young graduates from 10 CEI Member States together with other young people worldwide attended the event. "Deconstructing Contemporary Inequalities" was the topic addressed with traditional Model United Nations (MUN) simulations, i.e. the participants assumed the role of state representatives within the UN Security Council (addressing youth radicalisation), the European Council (tackling multiculturalism and European order in the migration era) and the UN Human Rights Council (discussing the Rights to International Solidarity).

Three resolutions were adopted respectively on combating radicalisation, on integration of third-country nationals and on international solidarity features.

[link to CEI webpage](#)

Organiser	United Nations Association of Slovenia (UNAS)
Period	11–15 July 2016
Place	Ljubljana, Slovenia
Project Funding	Total cost: €41,208 CEI contribution: €7,000
Further info	www.unaslovenia.org



9

Breaking down or re-building the walls. Migration crisis, refugees and security in South-East Europe

40 scholars and young researchers from Croatia, Italy, Slovenia, and Greece, gathered with high-level lecturers from academia and private research institutes to reflect upon new analytical approaches to the complex trends enacted in Europe by the Migration Crisis.

The political and cultural dynamics involving the refugee crisis and security issues in drawing national (and all European) borders from a South Eastern European perspective were compared with the contradictions of the migration policies implemented by the different political actors who allowed the rise of the 'Balkan Route' or the 'corridor of convenience'.

[link to CEI webpage](#)

Organiser	Istituto per l'Europa Centro-Orientale e Balcanica (IECOB)
Period	16 September 2016
Place	Bertinoro (Forlì), Italy
Project Funding	Total cost: €47,707 CEI contribution: €8,000
Further info	https://tinyurl.com/lzq2bbm http://iecob.net



10

European values and security facing migrant crisis: a perspective from the civil society

Over 100 representatives of the European Movement and CSOs from 9 CEI Member States participated in the event. Germany, Greece and Turkey, highly concerned with the migrant crisis, were also present. High-level panellists dealing with the refugee situation discussed different topics from the perspective of human rights. They exchanged views, experiences, good practices and models, thus strengthening their cooperation networks. Security issues were also debated.

Conclusions recalled how the migrant and refugee crisis is a long-term phenomenon, which implies lasting cooperation and synergy between the civil society and public authorities, at national level and within the international community as a whole.

[link to CEI webpage](#)

Organiser	European Movement in the Republic of Macedonia (EMRM)
Period	19–20 September 2016
Place	Skopje, Macedonia
Project Funding	Total cost: €28,051 CEI contribution: €7,000
Further info	http://europeanmovement.eu https://tinyurl.com/m4t92sh

11

Gender sensitive labour migration

A better understanding of the gender aspects of migration management was the aim of this train - the - trainers workshop. Migration can be an empowering experience for individuals: supporting entrepreneurship and employment of migrant women is an opportunity to contribute to their individual growth as well as to their family and community development.

17 high-level officers from the public administrations of Belarus, Bulgaria, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Ukraine attended the training, starting the operational cooperation between the CEI and the OSCE. Experts from IOM, ILO, CEI and OSCE lectured the audience and led group exercises of the attendees, who counted also on a large participation from international offices seated in Chisinau and Moldovan NGOs.

[link to CEI webpage](#)

Organiser	OSCE Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA)
Period	21-23 November 2016
Place	Chisinau, Moldova
Project Funding	Total cost: €41,831 CEI contribution: €15,000
Further info	www.osce.org/eea www.osce.org/secretariat/283646

12

Health implications of the mass-movement of people

60 participants and lecturers from Serbia, Croatia and Macedonia together with lecturers from Australia, Italy, Norway and Switzerland met within three sessions to:

- exchange information on housing and sanitary conditions in detention centres for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers;
- discuss challenges and problems related to the impact of mass migration on general and mental health in the WB region and
- make recommendations to governments, agencies and civil society organisations.

The workshop was a kick-off event for the 10th Conference of the International Society for Health & Human Rights (ISHHR), taking place in Novi Sad in September 2017 under the title "Mental health, mass displacement and ethnic minorities".

[link to CEI webpage](#)

Organiser	KNOW HOW CENTER
Period	24 November 2016
Place	Novi Sad, Serbia
Project Funding	Total cost: €17,705 CEI contribution: €8,000
Further info	www.cpvz.org https://tinyurl.com/kal7awb

13

Challenges and opportunities of migration in and from South-East Europe

24 young scholars from 17 CEI Member States, preselected by IDM, presented their research and held discussions in four different panels:

- Brain Drain or Brain Circulation – highly qualified migration;
- Liquid migration – split households, split identities;
- Return migrants and remittances – impact and empirical facts;
- Emigration and expectations – what do we know?

The Forum also held a special panel on „Migrant Deaths Along The Romanian Border During Communism and the STASI's Hand In Them" chaired by the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO).

[link to CEI webpage](#)

Organiser	Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM)
Period	1 - 3 December 2016
Place	Vienna, Austria
Project Funding	Total cost: €35,600 CEI contribution: €7,000
Further info	www.idm.at

14

Promoting good practices in protecting migrants and asylum seeking children, in particular unaccompanied children

Over 50 state administration and NGO representatives from 16 CEI countries met with their colleagues from 10 Northern Europe countries to share experience on the reception of unaccompanied children and their respective needs. The subject was not only about children inflow from third-countries, but the fact that several CEI Member States still originate migrating minors and register abandoned children.

The proceedings illustrated why and how children and minors need protection to access their status in line with the UN Convention on the Right of the Child. The Conclusions of the conference will guide the CBSS and CEI cooperation in promoting the interests of children in cross-border cases. A web portal on child protection has recently been issued by the Children at Risk Unit of the CBSS (SEE BELOW).

[link to CEI webpage](#)

Organiser	Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)
Period	8-9 December 2016
Place	Stockholm, Sweden
Project Funding	Total cost: €89,839 CEI contribution: €15,000
Further info	www.childrenatrisk.eu https://tinyurl.com/mu5wlej

This is what they had to say...

The CEI PD Parliamentary Assembly:

Welcomes the efforts of the European states and civil society groups and individuals who have mobilized in large scale to welcome and provide aid to refugees and migrants at border lines, as an engagement of humanitarian response to refugee crisis;

Commends the efforts and actions taken by the Government authorities of the Republic of Macedonia and other affected CEI Member States in managing the refugee flow, protecting the life and health of migrants, combating the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking; [...]

Having in mind that the migrants crisis has to be considered not only as a regional or European problem, but as well as a global problem, EU members states and governments have to raise awareness of taking concrete measures, which consider the difference between refugees and migrants escaping from bad economic conditions and share the responsibility through a coordinated cross-border approach in a European spirit of solidarity, as the only possible solution for a collective and permanent action; in this regard recalls the 17 Points Action Plan adopted on 25th October 2015 in Brussels; [...]

◆ FINAL DECLARATION: CEI Parliamentary Dimension - Parliamentary Assembly (Skopje, 10 December 2015)

The CEI PD Parliamentary Assembly:

Strongly supports the cooperation of the CEI with the other international organizations on all issues of importance for CEI Member States, including sustainable development, strengthening security as well as the fight against terrorism, transnational organized crime and corruption;

Emphasizes the significance of the close cooperation within CEI region related to the challenges of refugees and migrants and of addressing to their main causes; [...]

Urges the European Union and international organizations to step up its role as a coordinator in the management of the migration crisis, particularly with a view to revising the Dublin agreement;

Underlines the need to ensure that migrants and refugees, and especially unaccompanied foreign children, enjoy living conditions complying with fundamental human rights;

Welcomes the initiatives and projects in the field of migration developed by the CEI Secretariat in Trieste. [...]

◆ FINAL DECLARATION: CEI Parliamentary Dimension - Parliamentary Assembly (Sarajevo, 5-7 December 2016)

The Ministers reviewed the situation in the CEI Region within a wider international context. They agreed that there were two principal challenges with major consequence for the Region, i.e. on the one hand the migration crisis and on the other the growing threat of terrorism and the foreign terrorist fighters phenomena. The Ministers stressed their willingness to support policies and actions against these threats, contributing to a strong, united and peaceful Europe. At the same time, the Ministers declared their readiness to continue and strengthen their efforts in combating organised crime, especially in the area of trafficking of human beings and arms, as well as any form of corruption which undermine the progress of their countries towards stable and resilient democracies. [...]

They also agreed that the CEI should foster regional cooperation and cross-border contacts by strengthening cooperation among governmental and non-governmental actors and continue providing a viable forum for the exchange of experience, people-to-people contacts, capacity building and enhanced policy dialogue. [...]

Furthermore, the Ministers fully agreed on the need to strengthen concerted efforts also in the framework of the CEI aimed at countering international terrorism, combating organized crime, with special attention to human trafficking, illegal migration and corruption, which greatly affect the lives and well-being of the citizens of the Region. They welcomed CEI activities in tackling these issues, such as the Extraordinary Call on migration and security issues feeding an on-going campaign of networking events, and agreed that the next CEI Plan of Action 2017-2020 should reflect these challenges as well.

The Ministers called for a continued assistance to countries of the Western Balkans most affected by the migration crisis. Moreover, they welcomed the signing of Memoranda of Understanding with specialised organisations such as the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). [...]

◆ FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ: Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the CEI Member States (Banja Luka, 16 June 2016)

Outlook and activities in 2017

The recognition of the CEI's role in terms of supporting the capitalisation of knowledge and experience of both public and private, national and international actors, especially with regard to the ongoing migration management, calls for a further commitment by the CEI Secretariat in this field.

In addition to the new activities co-financed for 2017, and in order to face the increasing importance of the Northern Route of the migration flows, migration remains a topic for policy dialogue and capacity building of the CEI constituency. Even if the current priority seems to be the establishment of effective return mechanisms, the potential for growth enshrined in the immigration flows still has to be regarded as a common, actual interest. This is especially true when taking into account the demographic challenge of an ageing Europe.

This is also connected to the need to recover human capital due to brain-drain in the Western Balkans, where 43% of the active population is deemed to be leaving abroad seeking for better jobs.

Since 2015, mainstreaming migration into all policies and programmes of the European Union has set the changing framework for redirecting priorities of all players of transnational cooperation, including financial institutions. The CEI will also promote these new features in its Member States.

- *SIMPLE migration practice. Sharing best knowledge and EU practice on integration of migrants and existing challenges in Balkan countries through Italian and Austrian models and best practices*
Asylum Protection Center in Serbia (Belgrade, March)
- *Youth Forum: Refugees and Migrants in the New Media in Central-East Europe*
Mladiinfo Skopje, Macedonia (Skopje, March)
- *Second Annual Meeting of the Western Balkans Migration Network (WB-MIGNET)*
Center for Development Evaluation and Social Science Research in BiH (Sarajevo, April)
- *23rd CEI International Summer School "Envisioning Moving Frontiers: Migration Management, Minority Protection and the Enhancement of Territorial Cooperation"*
IECOB Institute for Central Eastern Europe and the Balkans, Italy (Bertinoro, September)
- *XIII Central European Forum of Aquileia EuroRegion "Migrations – Integrations – Revolutions EUROPE TREMBLES"*
Mitteleuropa Association, Italy (Udine, October)
- *Regional Youth Forum for Local Democracy "Inclusive Society- Intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity"*
ALDA Skopje, Macedonia (Skopje, October)

Updated Calendar information is available on the CEI website: www.cei.int



The current refugee crisis is a litmus test for the European Union but also for this region and put regional co-operation to the test. In that context I welcome the activities of The Central European Initiative in bringing expertise from around the region together to discuss and share experience in migration and human trafficking. On our side, we have invested a lot of efforts to support countries bearing the heaviest burden of the refugee crisis linked to the continuing Syrian conflict and we will continue to do so.

The Western Balkan/Eastern Mediterranean route is closed and contributed together with the EU-Turkey agreement to manage the migration pressure. But the migration situation in Libya and Egypt is of increasing concern with potential negative spill overs. That is why, in addition to the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, the EU Trust Fund for the Syrian crisis and the Compacts under preparation with Jordan and Lebanon are such important tools.

The Africa Trust Fund is also up and running now. It addresses the root causes of migration in countries of origin of sub-Saharan Africa. Overall, our assistance to better manage migration flows is aimed at saving the lives of migrants and refugees and tackling irregular migration and trafficking.

I look forward to the continued commitment of the Central European Initiative to deepening our cooperation on this and other major issues across the region.

◆ Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the CEI Member States (Banja Luka, 16 June 2016)



18 MEMBER STATES

10 EU MS

Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

8 non-EU MS

Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine.

CEI STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- **Support** CEI Member States on their path towards European integration
- **Promote** the alignment of CEI Member States to EU standards
- **Implement** small and medium-sized projects.

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March 2017



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