



## **Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Central European Initiative**

*Trieste, 12 June 2019*

### **TRIESTE DECLARATION**

*12 JUNE 2019*

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Central European Initiative, gathered in Trieste on 12 June 2019,

**Celebrating** the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Central European Initiative (CEI), which has proved to be an effective answer to the necessity to promote constructive dialogue and enhance cooperation among today's 17 Member States with a common vision of shared objectives, while belonging to different geo-political contexts;

**Recognizing** the necessity to reinvigorate the specific added value of the CEI, by making its cooperation mechanisms more efficient and by defining ambitious targets that respond to our citizens' expectations;

**Acknowledging** the need to join our efforts in order to ensure security, respect for the principles of international law, including the guiding principles of the OSCE, notably the territorial integrity, and adequate promotion of a sustainable development for all its Member States;

**Underlining** the resilience of the CEI's flexible format as based on close consultations, common initiatives and shared best-practices, as well as of its project-oriented activities, to be further strengthened by exploring new strategies, in addition to the CEI's traditional instruments and funds:

**1. ACKNOWLEDGE** that the CEI constitutes a consolidated forum for dialogue and platform for operational cooperation , in the context of which the CEI's Member States can agree on innovative projects and actions, in order to tackle common challenges and reach common objectives;

**2. UNDERLINE** the positive cooperation between the European Union (EU) and the CEI, recognize the importance of a greater coordination between them and welcome the opening of a CEI's Representation Office in Brussels as a tangible evidence of the will to reinforce mutual ties. In this context, welcome the progress made in the framework of the Eastern Partnership and the enhancement of political association and economic integration between the EU and its Partners concerned; confirm the importance of EU enlargement to the Western Balkan region; support the advancement of the accession negotiations to the EU of Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia; welcome the Prespa Agreement between Skopje and Athens as well as the Friendship Treaty between Skopje and Sofia, and the extent of reforms carried out by the Republic of Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia in view of the opening of accession negotiations with the two countries; encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina in its way towards achieving the candidature status for the EU membership.

**3. REAFFIRM** that the CEI shall maintain a thorough relation and coordinate its actions properly with other relevant Regional Organizations and formats operating in the same geographical area. In this frame, welcome the recent signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the CEI and the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative;

**4. STRESS** the opportunity to intensify the CEI's activities targeting the challenges to our security, notably international terrorism and organized crime, and recommend an enhanced cooperation within the CEI in the field of anti-corruption;

**5. AGREE** on further consolidating the position of the CEI in the regional and international arena, notably by using the CEI's observer status at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, as well as by organizing ad hoc side meetings on the occasion of other international or regional fora, in order to put forward joint CEI views on relevant issues. Commend the organization of a specific CEI event within the forthcoming UN High Level Forum on Sustainable Development;

**6. IDENTIFY** the need for reforms as one of the bases for enhanced cooperation among the CEI's Member States, and commit to develop a deeper reflection on: guaranteeing the rule of law; ensuring social protection; promoting sustainable development and safeguarding the environment and the cultural heritage; promoting industrial and agricultural productive standards, in order to improve the quality of products and consumer protection; strengthening scientific research and innovation through academic cooperation, exchange programs and joint ventures;

**7. HIGHLIGHT** the importance of strategic cooperation and joint investments in infrastructural projects for the sustainable development of CEI Member States. In this respect, call on the CEI-Executive Secretariat to present proposals for regional cooperation in specific sectors, notably the development of transport and energy networks. Furthermore, agree on the opportunity to reinforce the CEI Business Dimension, in order to promote trade and investments in the region;

**8. RECOGNIZE** the importance of maintaining the CEI open to future enlargements, as well as to structured co-operation with relevant third countries and international organizations. The introduction of an "observer status" within the CEI may also be considered. Task the CEI-Executive Secretariat and the CEI's Committee of National Coordinators to elaborate a proposal on the above;

**9. CONSIDER** the CEI Parliamentary Dimension as one of the main features of the Initiative, and favor a strengthened co-operation between the CEI Governmental and Parliamentary Dimensions. Furthermore, take positive note of the document adopted in May 2019 by the CEI's Parliamentary Committee and the invitation to consider the establishment of a CEI Local Dimension, and task the CEI-Executive Secretariat to develop a structured proposal on this matter, aimed at facilitating cooperation on a local level;

**10. UNDERLINE** that the future of our societies largely depends on the perspectives of young citizens, who deserve special attention and protection, and call for the CEI-Executive Secretariat, together with the CEI's Member States, to develop a "CEI's Agenda for Youth", through instruments already at the CEI's disposal, as well as through new activities;

**ENTRUST**, therefore, the CEI Presidency from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020 to Montenegro, pledging full cooperation and support, and thank Italy, the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region and the City of Trieste for the excellent organization ensured and for the warm hospitality offered on the occasion of the current Ministerial Meeting.