



Interim Implementation Report 2019 of the CEI Plan of Action 2018-2020

Elaborated by the CEI-Executive Secretariat, the Interim Implementation Report 2019 of the CEI Plan of Action 2018-2020 is intended to present the standing point of the implementation of the document with regard to the two main chapters: I. CEI Strategic Approach to Regional Cooperation and II. CEI Agenda for 2018-2020.

Acronyms and abbreviations

AI	Adriatic and Ionian Initiative
ARFVG	Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
CEI	Central European Initiative
CEI-ES	Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat
CNC	Committee of CEI National Coordinators
CoE	Council of Europe
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUSAIR	The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
EUSALP	The EU Strategy for the Alpine Region
EUSDR	The EU Strategy for the Danube Region
KEP	Know-how Exchange Programme
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PoA	Plan of Action
RAI	Regional Anti-corruption Initiative
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
SWG RRD	Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development
TC	Technical Cooperation
WBF	Western Balkans Fund
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UN	United Nations
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UN HLPF	UN High-level Political Forum
UN SDGs	UN Sustainable Development Goals

Executive Summary

The CEI, celebrating its 30th Anniversary this year, has continued to play an important role in fostering its mission aimed at promoting European integration and sustainable development through effective regional cooperation.

In the increasingly challenging times for Europe, and also for the globe, regional cooperation has continued to prove to be one of the most efficient instruments for providing timely answers to complex issues. Current challenges do not stop at borders, they transcend them.

The CEI PoA 2018-2020 with its two far-reaching priorities - **strengthening connectivity** and **valorising diversity** in the region - as well as the related goals and objectives, has further served as a flexible and effective framework for tackling the challenges and for preparing the ground for new initiatives.

The number of traditional and new actions launched by the CEI throughout 2019 - in particular by the Italian Presidency and the Executive Secretariat – and aimed at: **intensifying the political dialogue; enhancing the parliamentary and economic cooperation; pursuing cooperation with the UN**, in the framework of the CEI's observer status in the UNGA; as well as **strengthening cooperation with the EU and other international and regional organisations**; are a clear indication in support of the above-mentioned.

Furthermore, the CEI has worked on enhancing its **project cooperation** through its funds and instruments. Out of its cooperation tools, the **CEI has organised, implemented and supported 90 projects and activities in 2019**, covering all the goals and objectives in the framework of the PoA, as follows:

- the CEI has engaged in actions in the field of **Good Governance** aimed at *processing and exchanging experience on large-scale migration* issues through the support of 3 projects and activities. It has also provided a platform for *promoting safe and secure e-Government solutions*, through the implementation and promotion of 3 projects and activities related in particular to the exchange of good practices related to eHealth. To *strengthen institutional capacities and promote effective anti-corruption measures and open data*, the CEI has organised, implemented and promoted 13 projects and activities;
- in the framework of **Economic Growth**, and in order to support the *strengthening of transport networks*, the CEI has organised, implemented and promoted 11 projects and activities, while 8 projects and activities have been implemented and promoted with the aim of *improving research and innovation systems*. The CEI has also launched and supported 5 projects and activities with the intention of *supporting transition to Circular and Bioeconomy and promoting Blue Growth*. As well, the CEI has worked on *strengthening rural and area-based development* by implementing or supporting 3 projects and activities;
- the CEI has undertaken and promoted a number of actions in the field of **Environmental Protection** aimed at *fostering adaptation to climate change* (4 projects and activities), *promoting sustainable energy and energy efficiency* (6 projects and activities) and *preserving natural capital, especially biodiversity* (1 project);
- the CEI has supported activities aimed at encouraging **Intercultural Cooperation**, in particular *promoting intercultural dialogue and preserving cultural diversity*, and this year 5 projects and activities have been promoted with the aim to achieve this objective. The *safeguarding of cultural heritage and the supporting of creative industries* have also been encouraged. In this context, 5 projects and activities have been supported. Moreover, 7 projects and activities aimed at *fostering cultural diplomacy* have been organised, implemented and promoted, while 2 projects and activities on *improving social integration of people from groups at risk of exclusion* have also been adequately tackled;
- the CEI has also supported activities fostering **Media Freedom**, especially for *promoting media pluralism, transparency and independence* (2 projects and activities) and for *enhancing quality journalism* (2 activities);
- finally, the CEI has promoted **Scientific Cooperation and Education & Training** by organising events and providing funding through its instruments aimed at *promoting international scientific cooperation and initiatives in support to science diplomacy* (4 projects and activities), *implementing life-long learning and developing competencies through mobility* (4 projects and activities) and *enhancing scientific literacy and technological knowledge and capacity* (2 projects and activities).

Introduction

The CEI Plan of Action 2018-2020 pays special attention to the real needs and proposals expressed by the CEI Member States for this three-year period, while also taking into account the evolving environment in the region.

It capitalises on the main strengths of the Organisation, based on its distinctive methodology for the promotion of regional cooperation through a combination of multilateral diplomacy and fund, programme and project management. While remaining a platform for political dialogue, in support of the European integration process and the sustainable development in the region, the CEI has developed a strong operational approach aimed at achieving these two strategic objectives.

The goals and objectives of the document are relevant to all CEI Member States and are pursued through goal-oriented multilateral cooperation, going beyond a purely intergovernmental dynamics, thus involving collaborative, multi-stakeholder partnerships. They involve both governmental and non-governmental actors – including civil society, business actors, scientific communities, academia and media. Furthermore, partnerships with other organisations are considered a part of normal working practice.

The goals and objectives of the Plan of Action are also fully in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the EU Macro-Regional Strategies also affecting the CEI area. The goals are interlinked, interdependent and represent the main areas of interest of the CEI Member States, as outlined in the CEI Guidelines and Rules of Procedure.

In practical terms, the CEI's main goal through the implementation of the Plan of Action is to bring its Member States closer together in joint initiatives and encourage further regional cooperation in a structured and result-oriented manner, while committing the Organisation to a continuous improvement of its performance.

Indeed, following the current challenges, and for creating further positive perspectives for the Region, the CEI has focused a part of its activities on developing a Youth Agenda and a Local Dimension, as recommended by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in the "Trieste Declaration" of 12 June 2019.

Besides this new direction, the CEI is permanently working on the implementation of all goals and objectives included in the PoA 2018-2020, with focus on ensuring good governance, fostering climate resilience, promoting cultural values and scientific cooperation.

I. CEI Strategic Approach to Regional Cooperation

The CEI has been playing a key role in strengthening relations on various issues among its countries for already three decades. On its 30th Anniversary, the countries have reconfirmed their commitment to the CEI's mission as well as their determination to further develop the potential of the Organisation.

In particular, both the Italian CEI Presidency 2019 and the CEI-Executive Secretariat have pursued the goal of strengthening the CEI as a unique intergovernmental forum, with a varied membership and an agile structure suitable for facilitating political dialogue on many different topics. Thanks to its dynamism, the CEI has been promoted as a positive platform for exchange of experiences and good practices among its Member States, both in the context of European integration and in that of sustainable development, especially in the framework of multilateral international cooperation, starting with valuing the CEI Observer Status in the UN General Assembly.

These actions have been tackled through an intensified political dialogue and in cooperation with other international players, as well as through a strong project-oriented approach.

Intensified political dialogue

In line with the already established practice, the activities of the Italian CEI Presidency included: several meetings of the CNC, an annual formal [meeting of Foreign Ministers \(MFA Meeting\)](#), held in Trieste in June under the topic "Central European Initiative at thirty and towards the future: common vision, shared values, European standards, strong regional cooperation", an [informal MFA meeting](#), held at the outskirts of the UN General Assembly in New York in September, and a meeting of the Heads of Government (CEI Summit), held in Rome in December.

The Presidency has also provided a tangible contribution to the sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development in line with the PoA 2018-2020. In this context, it has worked on the promotion of regional dialogue and cooperation, among others, in the fields of connectivity, fight against corruption, scientific cooperation and research. Therefore, numerous events have been organised on these topics.

In addition, the Presidency, supported by the CEI-Executive Secretariat, and in line with the recommendations by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in the "Trieste Declaration" of 12 June 2019, has launched new actions related to the Youth Agenda and the Local Dimension.

The important outcomes and significant inputs gained from the MFA Meetings, Summit, CNC gatherings, high-level and expert conferences, events, forums, have contributed to significantly stepping forward cooperation towards European integration and sustainable development within the CEI Member States and on the challenges occurred throughout the year.

At the same time, the CEI-Executive Secretariat – under the new leadership composed of the Secretary General Roberto Antonione from Italy, the Alternate Secretary General Antal Nikoletti from Hungary and the Deputy Secretaries General Nina Kodelja from the Republic of Slovenia and Zoran Jovanovic from the Republic of Serbia – have also undertaken actions for promoting the CEI. In this regard, visits in almost all CEI Member States have been organised and meetings with a number of high-level government officials, high level members of Parliaments as well as representatives of Chambers of Commerce have taken place. The main aim of the visits was twofold: to present the new leadership of the CEI-Executive Secretariat and the CEI programmes and activities, and to listen to the views from the capitals on the future strategies of the Organisation. The meetings took place as follows:

CEI Member State	High Level Meetings	Date and Place
Czech Republic	Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Lukáš Kaucký and Aleš Chmelař (European Section); Rudolf Jindrák from the Office of the President; and President of the CEI Parliamentary Delegation, Petr Dolínek.	21 January 2019, Prague

Slovak Republic	State Secretary, Lukáš Parížek; Director General for Economic Cooperation, Dušan Matulay; President of the CEI Parliamentary Delegation, Irén Sárközy; and Secretary General of the Slovak Chamber of Commerce, Martin Hrivík.	22 January 2019, Bratislava
Hungary	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Péter Szijjártó; State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Gabor Gion; and President of the CEI Parliamentary Delegation, Richárd Hörcsik.	23 January 2019, Budapest
Republic of North Macedonia	Prime Minister, Zoran Zaev; Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrej Žernovski; Speaker of the Macedonian Parliament, Talat Xhaferi; Minister of Education and Science, Arbër Ademi; Minister of Culture, Asaf Ademi; Minister of Transport, Goran Sugareski; President of the Parliamentary Delegation, Fadil Zandeli.	5 February 2019, Skopje
Republic of Bulgaria	Deputy Prime Minister for Judicial Reform and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ekaterina Zaharieva; Deputy Minister for Education, Denitsa Satcheva; President of the Parliamentary Delegation, Nikolay Aleksandrov; and President of the Chamber of Commerce, Tsvetan Simeonov.	6 February 2019, Sofia
Republic of Serbia	Minister of Education, Science and Technological Development, Mladen Šarčević; Foreign Policy Advisor of the Prime Minister, Đorđe Milošević; Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for the EU, Dejan Ralević; President of the Parliamentary delegation, Ljubiša Stojmirović.	7 February 2019, Belgrade
Republic of Slovenia	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Miro Cerar; State Secretary, Simona Leskovar; State Secretary at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Jernej Štromajer; President of the National Assembly, Dejan Židan; Head and members of the Slovene delegation to the CEI Parliamentary Dimension; and General Manager of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sonja Šmuc.	19 February 2019, Ljubljana
Montenegro	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Srdjan Darmanović; Minister of Science, Sanja Damjanović; President of the Parliament of Montenegro, Ivan Brajović; Vice-President of the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro, Ivan Saveljić.	4 March 2019, Podgorica
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Igor Crnadak; Assistant Minister, Almir Šahović; Vice-President of the Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ahmet Egrlić.	5 March 2019, Sarajevo
Republic of Croatia	State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Zdravka Bušić; Assistant Minister, Miroslav Papa; Deputy Director of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce, Ivan Barbarić.	6 March 2019, Zagreb
Republic of Poland	State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Szymon Szykowski vel Sęk; representatives of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and representatives of the Public and Culture Diplomacy Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; President and other representatives of the CEI Parliamentary Dimension, Bogdan Rzońca and Vice-President of the National Chamber of Commerce, Marek Kłoczko.	2 April 2019, Warsaw
Republic of Belarus	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vladimir Makei; President of the State Committee for Science and Technology, Alexander Genadiyevitch Shumilin; President of the CEI Parliamentary Dimension, Irina Starovoitova; President of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Vladimir Ulakhovich.	3 April 2019, Minsk
Republic of Albania	Acting Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Gent Cakaj; Vice-President of the Albanian Parliament, Vasilika Hysi; Deputy Minister of Education, Sports and Youth, Redi Shtino	6 May 2019, Tirana

The discussions touched upon issues on how to further strengthen cooperation in the CEI framework by enhancing the political dialogue and through multilateral projects and activities with particular regard to the challenges currently faced by the region. In particular, Member States confirmed their commitment to continue their cooperation in the framework of the CEI. On many occasions, it was clearly mentioned that the CEI EU countries were ready to assist their non-EU CEI partners in achieving European integration objectives. Launching an agenda for the youth, as youth and their perspective is a common denominator for the future of societies in the entire CEI region, and including the local and regional authorities in the CEI activities, as they are closest to everyday life of the citizens, were underlined as possible new directions. Furthermore, an interest in getting more involved in science diplomacy, in particular in view of ESOF (Euro Science Open Forum) to be held in Trieste

in July 2020, was expressed. Finally, the high representatives highlighted the effectiveness of deeper cooperation among all international and regional actors in the Region.

The CEI activities have also included cooperation among parliaments. The Italian CEI Presidency organised the meeting of the [CEI Parliamentary Committee](#), chaired by the President of the Italian CEI Parliamentary Delegation and entitled “Strengthening the local dimension of the Central European Initiative”, held in Trieste in May. Under the leadership of the Bulgarian Chairman, the meeting of the [General Committee on Political and Home Affairs](#) of the CEI Parliamentary Dimension was held in Sofia in February. The main topics of the meeting were linked to the European perspective of the Western Balkans region, analysing synergies and perspectives of the integration processes, and exploring how to further increase cooperation among all CEI Member States. Furthermore, the meeting of the [General Committee on Cultural Affairs](#) of the CEI Parliamentary Dimension was held in Budapest in March, under the leadership Hungarian Chairman, and discussed a comprehensive tourism policy to stimulate the competitiveness of the economy in a sustainable manner, preserving natural and environmental values for future generations in the CEI Member States. Finally, the [Parliamentary Assembly of the CEI Parliamentary Dimension](#), also chaired by the President of the Italian CEI Parliamentary Delegation, took place in Rome in November, where the discussion focused on the main topic “Developing Infrastructures for more Competitive Businesses in the CEI Area”.

A [CEI Business and Experts Forum](#) was held in Milan in November and focused on the connectivity issue under the tile “Infrastructural and multimodal connectivity as factor of development and integration”. The event, promoted by the Italian CEI Presidency in the framework of the CEI Economic Dimension, aimed at advancing the economic cooperation in the region.

Cooperation with other international players

The Italian CEI Presidency highlighted the CEI role as a facilitator of political dialogue and an accelerator of reforms, both at the European level and at a wider global arena. The CEI Observer Status in the UNGA was particularly valued. To this aim, on the occasion of the UN HLPF on Sustainable Development 2019, the Italian CEI Presidency, through the Italian Permanent Mission to the UN, and the CE-ES organised a side-event on [“The contribution of regional cooperation and partnerships to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda: the experience of the Central European initiative \(CEI\)”](#). The event, held at the UN Headquarters, aimed at exchanging knowledge and experiences with all relevant stakeholders regarding best practices of regional partnerships, such as the CEI, for the attainment of the UN Agenda 2030 in general, and the SDGs in particular. Furthermore, on the occasion of the informal MFA Meeting at the outskirts of the UNGA in September, the Ministers agreed on the establishment of a regular format of interaction between the Permanent Missions of the CEI Member States to the United Nations with the aim to better coordinate the actions within the UN.

Cooperation with the EU, and in particular with the EC, has always been one of the main priorities, in particular related to the perspectives for those CEI countries aspiring EU membership or establishing closer ties with the EU. With this aim, the [CEI has opened a Representation Office in Brussels](#) in order to increase the CEI visibility, thus strengthen ties with the EU institutions. EU representatives participated in several CEI meetings during the year at both political and project level. Moreover, a fruitful meeting between the CEI National Coordinators, Permanent Representations and high level officials of the EC and the European Parliament was held in Brussels in May. In addition, cooperation with various Directorates General of the Commission continued in the framework of the CEI EU-funded projects. Presentations of the [COME-IN! Final Conference and Award Ceremony](#) and of the NAMIRG Project were also held at the European Parliament in Brussels in September and December, respectively. Moreover, the CEI further enrolled in the implementation of the EU Macro-Regional Strategies and actively participated in a number of events in the context of the EUSDR, EUSAIR and EUSALP.

Particular attention was paid to enhancing synergies with other international and regional organisations active in the region. It aimed at establishing common actions and identifying joint projects. In this context, the CEI had explored the possibilities for joint activities in the field of anti-corruption, local dimension, youth & culture, in a [meeting with the CoE](#), comprising a presentation at the Group on External relations (CoE GR-EXT) and bilateral

meetings with CoE's high officials. Furthermore, a [Memorandum of Understanding between the CEI and the AII](#) was signed in Budva in May, aiming at fostering regional cooperation and sustainable development and moving further steps for preparation and implementation of joint activities. A Memorandum of Understanding was also signed with the RAI Secretariat in Rome in November to further cooperation between the two counterparts on the topic of anti-corruption. A project of BSEC on inter-basin cooperation on marine litter, with a focus on the Danube River and the Black Sea, was supported by the CEI and implemented in Sofia in April. In addition, focusing on possibilities for synergies and cooperation with other regional players, a [CEI-WBF meeting](#) was held in Trieste in February, aimed at exchanging information about respective programmes and activities in the Western Balkans. A [CEI-RCC meeting](#) was also held in Trieste in March. Cooperation with the European Training Fund (ETF) high-level representatives, who paid a visit to the CEI-ES in September, was also explored. ETF's high expertise on human capital development and related opportunities offered thereby to a large portion of CEI Member States, represent an important potential for a successful cooperation between the two Organisations. Finally, in Barcelona in November, the CEI-ES took part in the Coordination Meeting of Regional Organisations organised by the UfM Secretariat, with the aim to exchange information and create synergies among the regional organisations (AII, BSEC, CBSS, CEI and UfM) as well as to explore the possibilities of cooperation as regards the Climate Action. Besides these activities, cooperation has been pursued through a regular reciprocal participation of partners in various events and activities, including with the OSCE.

CEI project-oriented approach

In 2019 the CEI, and in particular the CEI-ES, continued the project cooperation through its operational instruments of cooperation:

- **Cooperation Activities** (co-financed out of the CEI Cooperation Fund, contributed by all CEI Member States) – the activities mainly promote networking and people-to-people contacts, such as conferences, seminars, workshops, festivals, cultural and youth exchanges, educational and science meetings, media events, etc. on topics where smaller amounts make an effective impact. The utility of this instrument is demonstrated by the fact that a large number of applications for co-financing requests have been submitted this year.
- **Advanced Training Programme for Young Professionals** (fully financed out of the CEI Cooperation Fund) – the CEI is strongly promoting learning-at-workplace activities. In this context, throughout 2019 it has engaged several young professionals in the area of liaison and external relations, communication and project management (from the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Montenegro and the Republic of North Macedonia). After their training period, they are expected to return to their countries and apply the knowledge gained during their stay at the Executive Secretariat in Trieste.
- **Feature Events and Prizes** – the CEI has further promoted its “Feature Events”. They are events, which are recurrent in nature and highly contribute to enhancing the CEI visibility. These events either carry the name of the CEI in their title or dedicate a special segment to the CEI, providing valuable opportunities for networking, training and mobility in the fields of media, intercultural cooperation and life-long education and training. Moreover, in order to honour and encourage initiatives and activities of talented and often young people from CEI Member States, several Prizes have been offered, in particular in the fields of culture and media.
- **KEP** (financed out of the CEI Fund at the EBRD funded by Italy) – the CEI has paid special attention to the promotion of joint projects between the EU and non-EU CEI Member States related to transfer of know-how, exchange of experience and capacity building, such as trainings, study visits, etc. Indeed, this specific Programme, has proven to be the most efficient and stimulating mechanism for the transmission of best practices in all areas of activity. As an outcome of this year's Call, 8 KEP Italy projects were approved with 270,075 EUR (CEI Grant).
- **TC Programme** (financed out of the CEI Fund at the EBRD, entirely funded by Italy) – through this Programme the Fund offers grant-type assistance in support of specific components of investments and operations of the EBRD. TC operations include support for feasibility and pre-feasibility studies, sector and environmental engineering, management training, capacity building, pre-loan audits. The CNC has recently approved the financing of five TC projects by the CEI Fund at the EBRD. These projects will target all the non-EU CEI Member States in priority sectors such as energy, transport and capacity building for a total cumulative cost of 675,000 EUR.

- **EU-funded Projects** – the CEI, through its Executive Secretariat, makes use of EU funding programmes as a valuable tool for the attainment of one of its strategic objectives - the promotion of regional cooperation for European integration – as well as for the implementation of its tri-annual Plan of Action. The CEI-Executive Secretariat is currently involved in 17 EU-funded projects with a total amount of about 31 million EUR of which about 3.2 million EUR administered by the CEI-Executive Secretariat in a number of areas such as transport, energy, research and innovation, judicial cooperation, environmental protection, bioeconomy, social innovation, culture. Additional 3 EU-funded projects were finalized during 2019.

II. CEI Agenda for 2018-2020

The Agenda, covering a three-year period (2018-2020), represents a focused and project-oriented roadmap aimed at promoting regional cooperation on various issues related to the implementation of the CEI's mission, with two main denominators, i.e. strengthening connectivity and valorising diversity in the region. It is also capitalising on the main strengths of the Organisation, based on its distinctive methodology of combining multilateral diplomacy through intense political dialogue, and operational approach through fund, programme and project management.

The activities dedicated to the goals and objectives established within the PoA, address the core challenges and opportunities for CEI Member States reflecting a common vision of the economic, social and environmental prosperity of the region attained through joint actions. In this context, the CEI has launched, supported and organised a high number of actions in close cooperation with stakeholders from the CEI Member States (Governments, Ministries, Expert groups, Regional organisations and institutions, NGOs).

I. Strengthening Connectivity

Goal 1: Good governance

In 2019, the CEI continued to foster good governance aimed at preserving long-term stability and security, by exchanging experience on large-scale migration issues, promoting digital services, in particular in the health sector, and encouraging accountable institutions, in particular regarding the promotion of effective anti-corruption measures, fair public procurement, improved investment climate and encouraging a favourable environment for SMEs. The following activities have been implemented:

1.1. Processing and exchanging experience on large-scale migration

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
The 3rd International symposium «Combating of illegal migration and illicit human trafficking»	Cooperation Activity	King Danylo University, Ukraine	12-13 April 2019
Conference “Rights and Protection of Children Left Behind by Parents Migrating for Labour”	Cooperation Activity	ChildPact, Romania	17-18 April 2019
Going local – ground-up support for diversity, integration, social care of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants	Cooperation Activity	Asylum Protection Center APC/CZA, Serbia	4-6 December 2019

1.2. Promoting safe and secure e-Government solutions

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
DIGITAL HEALTH EUROPE - support to enabling the digital transformation of health and care in the Digital Single Market	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES subcontractor)	01/01/2019 – 31/12/2020
IX Spring School on “IoT, economic and management challenges for e-health integration in the enlarged Europe”	Cooperation Activity	Higher Education in Clinical Engineering, University of Trieste, Italy	13-16 May 2019
Support to the South East Europe Economic Digital Transformation (EDITA) Project	Cooperation Activity	Amplitudo d.o.o., Montenegro	26 September 2019

1.3. Strengthening institutional capacities and promoting effective anti-corruption measures and open data

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
Conference on Anti-corruption “Curbing Corruption: learning from the decade behind us and looking into the decade ahead”	CEI Presidency Event	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, CEI-ES and National Authority for Anti-corruption (A.N.A.C.)	26 November 2019
“Public Health Alliance - Central Eastern Europe (PHACEE) Summit”	CEI Presidency Event	Italian Higher Institute for Health (Istituto Superiore di Sanità – ISS)	17-18 December 2019
Cooperation with the Ministry of Justice of Italy	Institutional Activity	CEI-ES signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Justice of Italy - Department of Penitentiary Administration - Triveneto Office	3 May 2019
Cooperation with RAI	Institutional Activity	CEI-ES signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the RAI Secretariat	26 November 2019
Assessing impact and performance of preventive measures on EU Directives and Framework Decisions (PRE-RIGHTS)	EU-funded Project	Coordinator (Lead Partner)	01/10/2019 – 30/09/2021
CEI Support to Small Business Initiative: Expansion of Origination and Execution Capacity Program for SME Direct Finance and Risk Sharing in Belarus – Phase 2	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	
Enhancing Public Procurement Professionalism Capacity Building Programme	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	
Investment Climate and Governance Expert for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	
Capacity Building for Implementing Innovative EU Monitoring Tools for Good Governance and Anti-Corruption	KEP Italy Project	Center for the Study of Democracy, Bulgaria	January 2019 – 13 December 2020
BE.ST. (BEst practices exchange to Stimulate Serbian SMEs growth)	KEP Italy Project	INSME – The International Network for SMEs	February 2019 - September 2019
Capacity building program for extension services in the Western Balkans to support participation in IPARD calls	KEP Italy Project	Area Science Park (AREA), Italy; SWG RRD	March 2019 - April 2020
Conference “From arbitration legislation reform to enhancing the business climate”	Cooperation Activity	Economic Chamber of Macedonia	28-29 March 2019
Forum of best practices for Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities cooperation (Forum of best practices for CSOs-LAs cooperation)	Cooperation Activity	Association of the Local Democracy Agencies in Skopje – ALDA Skopje	11-12 June 2019

Goal 2: Economic growth

The CEI's tangible approach towards economic growth in 2019 mainly consisted in fostering the infrastructural connectivity, in particular regarding the transport links, and in improving the entrepreneurial environment and innovation delivery as well as in promoting the research. It also consisted in supporting the blue growth and promoting bioeconomy as a viable way of up-taking innovative technologies in the field of bio-based products and energy. Assisting rural areas to further stimulate the economy, thus help the competitiveness of the disadvantaged regions especially through the promotion of social enterprises, was also tackled this year. The following activities have been implemented:

2.1. Strengthening transport networks

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
Business and Expert Forum - Infrastructural and maritime connectivity as factor of development and integration	CEI Presidency Event	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport of Italy, CEI-ES	15 November 2019
Seminar on the Adriatic Ports facilitation and logistics: how to unlock the potential of inter-modality in the Western Balkans	Institutional Activity	CEI-ES, Transport Community	4-5 December 2019
Sustainable Urban Logistics Planning To Enhance Regional freight transport (SULPiTER)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/06/2016 - 01/06/2019
Sustainable Urban Mobility in MED port cities (SUMPORT)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Lead Partner)	01/02/2017 - 31/12/2019
Improved rail connections and smart mobility in Central Europe (CONNECT2CE)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Lead Partner)	01/06/2017 - 31/05/2020
Cross-border institutional cooperation for Port Cyber-security Enhancement (SECNET)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/10/2017 - 31/03/2019
Integrating multimodal connections in the Adriatic-Ionian region (ADRIPASS)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Lead Partner)	01/01/2018 – 30/06/2020
Intermodality Promotion and Rail Renaissance in Adriatic – Ionian Region (INTER-CONNECT)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/01/2018 – 30/06/2020
Intermodal Connections in Adriatic-Ionian Region to Upgrowth Seamless solutions for passenger (ICARUS)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/01/2019 - 30/06/2021
SILK2FVG plus	Project funded by the ARFVG	CEI-ES implementing partner	01/05/2018 - 30/04/2021
Preparation of a Corporate Plan for the organisational strengthening of Public Enterprise for State Roads	TC Projects	EBRD/CEI	

2.2. Improving research and innovation systems

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
Innovation in Health and Care for All (ITHACA)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES subcontractor)	01/01/2017 - 31/12/2021
ACcelerating SmE innovation capacities with a Living Lab approach (ACSELL)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/08/2019 – 31/07/2023

SAFEMEAT – developing a system for easy and accurate monitoring of gas in meat products during storage and distribution	KEP Italy Project	National Research Council – Institute of Photonics and Nanotechnologies, Italy	February 2018 – December 2019
Training in dietary assessment and sharing platforms for monitoring population food consumption habits in a long term perspective (TRAIN-DIE)	KEP Italy Project	Council for Agricultural Research and Economics (CREA), Italy	January 2019 - December 2019
Conference on Radiation and Applications in various Fields of Research	Cooperation Activity	RAD Association, Serbia	10-14 June 2019
Supporting ICT industry from Western Balkans to take part in HORIZON 2020	Cooperation Activity	EUTA - European Training Academy, Serbia	September 2019
Trends in Medicinal and Pharma Biotechnologies in Europe: Towards Strengthening Regional Cooperation Including CEE Countries - Med-Pharm BT in EU/CEE	Cooperation Activity	Faculty of Natural Sciences of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Slovakia	2-4 June 2019
Enhancing the CEE Collaboration and Know-how Transfer in Biotechnology and Biosecurity	Cooperation Activity	The Institute of Genetics and Cytology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus	18-20 September 2019

2.3. Supporting transition to Circular and Bioeconomy and promoting Blue Growth

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
Boosting the innovation potential of the triple helix of Adriatic-Ionian traditional and emerging BLUE growth sectors clusters through an open source/knowledge sharing and community based approach (BLUE BOOST)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/01/2018 – 30/04/2020
Empowering the 4 helix of MED maritime clusters through an open source/knowledge sharing and community-based approach in favour of MED blue growth (4helix+)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/02/2018 – 31/07/2020
Central European Leaders of bioeconomy network (CELEBIO)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Lead Partner)	06/2019 - 06/2020
Sustainable Approach to Managing Construction and Demolition Waste (SAMCODE)	KEP Italy Project	Department of Physics And Earth Sciences, University of Ferrara, Italy	January 2018 – August 2019
International high-level conference on inter-basin cooperation on marine litter in Danube River and Black Sea held in Sofia	Cooperation Activity	BSEC and International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)	4 April 2019

2.4. Strengthening rural and area-based development

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
SENTINEL Advancing and strengthening Social Enterprises to maximize their impact in the economic and social sector of Central European countries	EU-funded project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/06/2017 – 31/05/2020
SMART RIVER GOVERNANCE 2.0	KEP Italy Project	Alta Scuola, Ecoazioni, Italy	January 2018 – March 2019
10th CEI Regional Forum for Wellness & Spa Industry	Cooperation Activity	Cluster of Health, Wellness and SPA Tourism, Serbia	22 October 2019

Goal 3: Environmental Protection

This year, the CEI has continued with its actions regarding environmental protection, focused on tackling the climate change issue, especially related to the prevention of natural and human kind activities, and its mitigation. With regard to the latter, the use of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency and their use was, thus, further promoted. The promotion also included an activity concerning the protection of biodiversity (fertile soils, forests, clean water and air), through participatory-based environment management aimed at providing access to ecological biodiversity and water data. The following activities have been implemented:

3.1. Fostering adaptation to climate change

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
NAMIRG – North Adriatic MIRG (Maritime Incident Response Group)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Lead Partner)	01/01/2018 – 31/12/2019
INNOVA.tion to prevention and protection from natural and environmental RISKS: experiences in the mirror between civil protection and emergency management from Italy to Moldova (INNOVA.RISKS)	KEP Italy Project	Civil Protection Department, Umbria Regional Administration; Municipality of Orvieto, Alta Scuola; Italy	January 2019 - March 2020
Geosciences applied to solve humanitarian problems all over the world	Cooperation Activity	AGES Association of Geophysicists and Environmentalists of Serbia	22-24 May 2019
How to mitigate agricultural droughts impact in the CEI countries? (AgriDro)	Cooperation Activity	Faculty of Agriculture, University of Novi Sad, Serbia	22 November 2019

3.2. Promoting sustainable energy and energy efficiency

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
European Technology and Innovation Platform Bioenergy - Support of Renewable Fuels and Advanced Bioenergy Stakeholders 2 (ETIP-B-SABS-2)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/09/2018 – 31/08/2021
Green Economy Transition. Project Preparation and Implementation Framework	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	
Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings. Autonomous Province of Vojvodina	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	

Miravci Wind Power Project. Project preparation and technical study	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	
CEI Support to Strengthening Energy Regulatory Authorities in the Western Balkans – Second Phase	KEP Italy Project	Regulatory Authority for Energy, Networks and Environment, Gestore dei Mercati Energetici, Terna Spa, Italy	January 2019 - December 2019
Composite persistent materials for solar concentrators	KEP Poland Project	University of Palermo (UNIPA), Italy	1 January 2019 - 31 December 2019

3.3. Preserving natural capital, especially biodiversity

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
We4Nature & Nature4us: valorisation of ecosystem services of Moldovan-Ukrainian borderland	KEP Poland Project	Development Policy Foundation (DPF), Poland	January – July 2019

II. Valorising Diversity

Goal 4: Intercultural cooperation

Promoting intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity – in the sense of respect for diversity as well as strengthening core values such as mutual understanding and involvement of all groups of society in cultural life - was further pursued by the CEI in 2019. The preservation of cultural heritage and supporting creative industries and the dynamic creative sectors was also tackled as well as the promotion of cultural diplomacy. With regard to the latter, and since the CEI region has a great potential in terms of cultural treasures, values and artistic creations, numerous activities supporting mobility of artists, writers in residence programme, film directors, art curators, have been implemented. Social integration – aimed at strengthening interethnic, intercultural and intergenerational solidarity, as well as solidarity and cooperation with disabled people and other vulnerable groups across the region, has also been actively promoted. The following activities have been implemented:

4.1. Promoting intercultural dialogue and preserving cultural diversity

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
“From Theatre towards Myself – from Myself towards Theatre”	Cooperation Activity	Plavo pozorište, Serbia	7-20 July 2019
FNE CEI Cultural Innovation Forum 2019	Cooperation Activity	Film New Europe (FNE) and Warsaw Kids Forum (WKFF), Poland	25-27 September 2019
Crossing Borders: Conference on Audience Development in Theatres	Cooperation Activity	Slovene National Theatre Maribor (SNG Maribor), Slovenia	14-16 October 2019
XV Central European Forum of Aquileia Euroregion: Nostalgia for the Future. The Reawakening of Mitteleurope	Cooperation Activity	Mitteleuropa Association, Italy	18 October 2019
The European Union and its Eastern Partners: Strengthening cooperation, building up resilience? Eastern Partnership Reflection Forum	Cooperation Activity	Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe	21-23 October 2019

4.2. Safeguarding cultural heritage and supporting creative industries (CCIs)

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
tARTini Promoting cultural heritage and musical tourism in name of Giuseppe Tartini, the great musician from Piran/Pirano (SI)	INTERREG VA IT-SLO EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	1/10/2017 - 31/12/2019
HERITAGE FIRST AID: cultural tourism in support of Heritage Conservation	KEP Italy Project	Archaeological Service of Central Italy-s.r.l.; University of Urbino - Conservation and Restoration's School, Italy	February 2018 - February 2019
Docu Rough Cut Boutique module Sofia (Docu RCB) - A professional training workshop focused on documentary projects in post-production stage from the region of Southeast Europe	Cooperation Activity	Balkan Documentary Center, Bulgaria	30 June - 6 July 2019
International Conference "Fortresses of Tomorrow": balance between cultural heritage safeguarding and entertainment	Cooperation Activity	INBOX Art Associations, Serbia	29-31 August 2019
SEE Mosaics Meeting V: "Conservation of mosaic bedding layers - how to preserve"	Cooperation Activity	Central Institute for Conservation-ClK, Serbia	1-4 October 2019

4.3. Fostering cultural diplomacy

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
Trieste Film Festival	CEI Feature Event	Trieste Film Festival, Italy	17-22 January 2019
Vilenica Literary Festival - CEI Round-Table Discussions at Vilenica	CEI Feature Event	Slovene Writers' Association	11 September 2019
CEI Prize at the Trieste Film Festival	CEI Prize	Trieste Film Festival, CEI-ES	2019
CEI Fellowship for Writers in Residence	CEI Prize	Slovene Writers' Association, CEI-ES	2019
WHEN EAST MEETS WEST Co-production Forum – WEMW	Cooperation Activity	FVG Audiovisual Fund and the Trieste Film Festival, Italy	20-22 January 2019
9th CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art Curators "Effervescible. Seeking ongoing relevancy"	Cooperation Activity	Trieste Contemporanea Committee, Italy	9 May 2019
FESTIVAL IDENTITY 2019 – workshops for film professionals from across Europe	Cooperation Activity	DOC.DREAM Services, s.r.o., Czech Republic	26-28 October 2019

4.4. Improving social integration of people from groups at risk of exclusion

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
COME-IN! Cooperating for Open Access to Museums – towards a wider inclusion	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Lead Partner)	01/07/2016 - 30/09/2019
Towards an Alpine Age - Friendly Environment (T.A.A.F.E)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/10/2019-30/06/2022

Goal 5: Media freedom

The CEI has remained committed to further supporting and promoting media freedom, quality reporting and freedom of expression. In this context, this year it has supported activities that stimulate networking and exchange of experience among media owners, journalists' associations, universities, NGOs and other competent institutions, also in view of monitoring media developments in the region. The following activities have been implemented:

5.1. Promoting media pluralism, transparency and independence

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
CEI – ANSA panel discussion on journalism and media in the CEI region	Institutional Activity	CEI-ES and News Agency ANSA, Italy	8 July 2019
South East Europe Media Forum (SEEMF)	CEI Feature Event	South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)	4-5 November 2019

5.2. Enhancing quality journalism

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
Balkan Science Journalism workshops	Cooperation Activity	Center for Ethics in Science and Journalism (CESJ)	5 April 2019
CEI SEEMO Award for Outstanding Merits in Investigative Journalism	CEI Prize	CEI-ES, South East Europe Media Organisation	2019

Goal 6: Scientific cooperation and education & training

Scientific cooperation is emerging as a useful tool to build bridges and strengthen relations. To this end, CEI actions in 2019 included: promotion of international scientific cooperation and initiatives for supporting science diplomacy. Furthermore, in order to increase employability, special attention was paid to life-long learning and mobility of young people, including brain drain. Particular attention was paid to youth involvement in the decision-making processes as well as to youth unemployment as a growing problem the CEI region is facing. The following activities have been implemented:

6.1. Promoting international scientific cooperation and initiatives in support to science diplomacy

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
Meeting of CEI Ministers on Science and Research	CEI Presidency Event	Ministry of Education, University and Research, OGS - National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics, Italy; CEI-ES	13 December 2019
"Both Ways" - art and science beyond borders	Institutional Activity	CEI-ES	15 March 2019
Advanced Training on Sustainable Blue Growth in the Mediterranean and Black Sea countries ("Summer School")	Cooperation Activity	OGS, Italy	17 – 21 June 2019

OGS-Fellowships to Master in Sustainable Blue Growth	Cooperation Activity	OGS, University of Trieste, Italy	2019
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6.2. Implementing life-long learning and developing competencies through mobility

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
Advanced Training Programme for Young Professionals from non-EU CEI Member States	Institutional Activity	CEI-ES	2019
CEI Dialogue Forum on Youth	CEI Presidency Event	Istituto Affari Internazionali and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy	10-11 October 2019
XX Anniversary Summer Seminar for Young Public Policy Professionals from South Eastern Europe and the Black Sea Region	Cooperation Activity	Economic Policy Institute (EPI), Bulgaria	3-7 June 2019
European Union and Legal Reform Summer School 2019	Cooperation Activity	Center For Constitutional Studies and Democratic Development (CCSDD)	7 – 13 July 2019

6.3. Enhancing scientific literacy and technological knowledge and capacity

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date
International Conference DisCo 2019: e-learning - unlocking gate to education around the globe	Cooperation Activity	Centre for Higher Education Studies and West Bohemia University, Czech Republic	20 – 21 June 2019
Adolescent Parenting and Educational Programs for Future Digital World / Adolescent Parenting and Educational Programs	Cooperation Activity	Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus	30-31 July 2019