PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN INITIATIVE-PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION

Bucharest, 3-4 November 2026

FINAL DECLARATION

Expressing our concern over the growing global uncertainty and rising geopolitical tensions, including Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the deteriorating security situation in the Middle East, and other regional instabilities affecting international peace and security, energy markets and migration flows;

Reaffirming that the enlargement of the European Union remains a strategic instrument for strengthening peace, stability and resilience across Europe, while generating tangible benefits for all actors involved;

Emphasizing the CEI's contribution to strengthening democratic processes, fostering the economic and social development of its Member States, and enhancing the region's international profile;

Recognising the CEI as a unique platform for dialogue, cooperation, and European integration across Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe commended for its flexibility and capacity to adapt rapidly to diverse situations and emerging needs, reflecting its regional character;

Welcoming the priorities of the 2026 Romanian CEI Presidency, under the motto "*Closer in the Region, Stronger in Europe*", aimed at *advancing EU integration, strengthening connectivity, resilience and democratic processes,* and *empowering local communities and youth*, with a view to fostering stronger regional cooperation and a more cohesive, resilient and prosperous Europe;

Congratulating the CEI Executive Secretariat on the occasion of its 30th anniversary, and for the meeting that took place in Trieste on 17 March 2026 under the theme *"Thirty Years of Cooperation and Commitment: Turning Policy into Action"* marking three decades of dedicated service and reflecting on its evolution into a multifaceted catalyst for regional development, cooperation and European integration, while building enduring bridges of dialogue, partnership and mutual understanding among its Member States, aspiring to become a central interlocutor with the EU institutions;

We, the representatives of the Central European Initiative – Parliamentary Dimension, participating in the Parliamentary Assembly held in Bucharest on 4 November 2026:

Call upon all Member States to capitalize on the current momentum and intensify their efforts to accelerate the European integration process of the candidate countries, making full use of the CEI's instruments and mechanisms to support gradual integration, including enhanced access to the European Single Market and the progressive realization of the free movement of goods, services, capital and people;

Reaffirm our commitment to the European perspective of the partners aspiring to join the European Union and recognise European integration as key contribution to peace, stability, prosperity and sustainable development in the Central, Southern and Eastern European region. We support the continuation and acceleration of the merit-based EU enlargement process on the basis of the advancement of the necessary reforms and alignment with the EU acquis and Common Foreign and Security Policy by the candidate countries and aspiring partners;

Underline the importance of strengthening economic convergence and facilitating the gradual integration of EU candidate countries into the European economic space. In this regard, we welcome cooperation with relevant regional frameworks, including Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), aimed at facilitating trade, supporting regulatory convergence and contributing to the gradual integration of candidate countries and aspiring partners into the Single Market;

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

Acknowledge the vital role of parliamentary diplomacy in advancing and accelerating the European Union's enlargement as a geopolitical imperative, while strengthening regional security through enhanced connectivity and economic resilience. We further underscore the importance of building resilience against disinformation and hybrid threats, which increasingly challenge the stability, security and democratic foundations of our region, especially attempting our electoral system;

Recognize the important role of the members of parliaments in coordinating national and regional regeneration policies, fostering the implementation of transformative projects and facilitating access to the necessary financial support. We further emphasize the value of establishing a platform for the exchange of views, experiences and best practices on the regeneration and revitalisation of degraded spaces;

Hold it essential to promote cultural and educational integration of the young generations, by supporting exchange programmes in CEI countries based on the Erasmus model and the mutual recognition of educational qualifications and recognise the essential role of local communities, young people, universities, research institutions and civil society in strengthening regional cohesion and bringing the European integration process closer to citizens;

Encourage the CEI Member States to empower local communities and young people to actively contribute to building a European future based on common values, truth, mutual understanding, solidarity and respect for fundamental rights;

Acknowledge the CEI Action Plan 2024–2026 as a focused and ambitious framework guiding the CEI's activities, and supporting efforts to develop a new, forward-looking CEI Action Plan for 2027–2030, reflecting the evolving challenges facing the region and aligning with the EU Strategic Plan 2025–2029;

Reiterate their commitment to strengthening cooperation within the Central European Initiative and to developing joint initiatives in support of European integration and regional economic cooperation;

Extend their best wishes to Ukraine for a successful CEI Presidency in 2027 and express their full support for its endeavours.