

## ***CEI/EBRD Conference “Supporting Local Enterprises and SMEs along China’s Belt and Road Initiative in South Eastern Europe”, 19 May 2016, Trieste (Italy)***

### ***Background***

*The Government of China has recently focused on a comprehensive investment programme to strengthen the logistical infrastructure for moving goods and services from China to Europe, the BRI (formerly the Silk Road or One Belt, One Road Initiative). The plan is for a comprehensive, multimodal infrastructure corridor that will span from mainland China across central Asia to Europe, including road, railway, and ports infrastructure. The purpose of the proposed corridor is to substantially increase the trade opportunities along the countries on its route. The investment plans also include pipelines to transport gas and oil as well as ITC infrastructure to ensure connectivity across the infrastructure corridor.*

*Advanced plans are being made along the SEE route of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). A number of Chinese institutions and multilateral institutions are engaged in the funding of the BRI including: the Silk Road Fund, China Development Bank, China Exim Bank, CITIC Group, the BRICS New Development Bank and AIIB. The World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the EBRD will also play a key role. Some investments are already taking place, with an estimated \$100 billion invested by China in BRI projects so far (from Pakistan, to Central Asia and SEE) and investments of \$1 trillion planned over the next ten years.*

*The southern arm of the BRI Road is expected to be routed through South Eastern Europe, both in its maritime as well as – eventually – in its terrestrial route. This branch of the logistical corridor will link the Asian part of the route into Europe. Chinese investment in the region has already started and, over the next few years, it has the potential to increase significantly in light of the BRI project.*

*At this stage, these plans, and in particular the route through the Western Balkans, are still to be fully developed. The exact route of the corridor, its modal components (rail, road, maritime routes, etc.), the level and typology of investment, are still to be defined.*