

Skopje, 10 December 2015

CEI PD PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY MEETING HELD IN SKOPJE

Within the frames of the Macedonian Presidency with the CEI Parliamentary Dimension, a meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly was held in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, chaired by the acting President and Head of the Macedonian CEI PD Delegation, Ms. Julijana Siljanovska. The topics of the meeting were: "Migration crisis as global problem and challenge: How realistic is only a regional solution? (Europe, CEI and Western Balkans)" and "Inter-connectivity in the EU context of the CEI region." At the beginning, Ms. Siljanovska underlined that despite numerous regional initiatives in the region, CEI manages to maintain and fulfil its priorities and to give support to its members on their path towards EU integration.

The President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Trajko Veljanoski, pointed out that recent events have proved once again that only through regional cooperation on a higher institutional level, we can solve our common problems. Solidarity is a principle on which modern Europe is based and we should not forget that peace and security are indivisible categories, said President Veljanoski. The CEI Alternate Secretary General, Ms. Margot Klestil - Loeffler, stated that we are in exceptionally difficult times for Europe faced with a number of challenges. However, CEI continuously follows traditional values regarding newly emerging challenges and possibilities that CEI Member States face with. Mr. Erik Csernovitz, CEI Deputy- Secretary General, outlined that during this year, issues concerning the migration process, climate change problems made us realize that the searching for solutions to these challenges cannot be postponed anymore, they need to be addressed immediately. In order to confront the new challenges and to meet the needs of its Member States, the CEI is continuing to be flexible and ready to adapt to the sweeping changes. To this end, its mission is ever more focused on regional cooperation for European integration and on acting as a bridge between macro-regions, said Mr. Csernovitz. The Deputy-National CEI Coordinator, Mr. Draganco Apostolosvki concluded that parliamentary cooperation gives additional value to the regional cooperation. He mentioned various events dedicated to macro-regional strategies as one of the priority topics of the Macedonian CEI Presidency and the willingness of the Republic of Macedonia to take part in these strategies. Also, business forum and climate change events draw attention towards greater cooperation in the region and project-oriented activities in future.

The Minister of Interior of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Oliver Spasovski, elaborated that the state is faced with a wave of refugees unseen before, having in mind that more than half a million refugees passed through the state this year. The migrant crisis is managed highly ethical and professionally, and with respect of international law. The coming of winter brings greater responsibilities and the state will try to response the challenges only for short-term shelter of those in need. Cooperation with neighboring and EU member states is crucial in coping with this problem, said Minister Spasovski. EU Affairs Committee Chair, Ms. Ermira

Mehmeti, referring to the migrant crisis, stated that the Republic of Macedonia successfully coped with a number of migrant crisis in the 90-ties. As initiator of the first public debate on migrant crisis, Ms. Mehmeti underlined that the phenomenon is concerning and that the state does it utmost to help the refugees and migrants on their way to the final destination, and the EU should provide financial support to the Republic of Macedonia.

During the debate, Members of CEI National Parliaments concluded that integration may further stabilize the region and since migrant crisis negatively affects the stability of the region, EU and NATO member states should find a sustainable solution and integrate the whole region in the EU, and in NATO- only for those countries who wish to join. They also asked for a proactive approach and effective use of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism for states mostly affected by the migrant crisis, and for awareness raising by EU member states and governments on the difference between refugees and migrants escaping from bad economic conditions. A joint conclusion is that countries need to share responsibilities through a coordinated cross -border approach in a European spirit of solidarity. Regarding macro-regional strategies, MPs supported the role as parliaments to facilitate their promotion and called on the institutions of the EU to support their full integration in these strategies. EU funds were welcomed for development of infrastructural projects, since infrastructure investments have big impact on overall economic activity, productivity and employment that ensures greater economic growth.

At the end of the meeting, a Final Declaration was adopted.