



**19th CEI International Summer School  
Managing Diversities. Democratic Challenges for a Plural Society on the Way to a European  
Citizenship**

*12 – 13 SEPTEMBER 2013  
BERTINORO, FORLÌ*

*By Amb. Giovanni Caracciolo di Vietri, CEI Secretary General*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues and friends,

I wish to express my gratitude to our host for the warm hospitality and excellent organisation of this year's 19<sup>th</sup> CEI International Summer School, under this thematic course on "Managing Diversities. Democratic Challenges for a Plural Society on the Way to a European Citizenship".

I feel very privileged to be able to participate in one of CEI's long-lasting Feature Events and would like to thank, in particular, the coordinators of the school, **Prof. Stefano Bianchini and Prof. Francesco Privitera**, who every year succeed in choosing a topic of high political relevance and in gathering excellent experts, professors and young motivated students. Special thanks also to the **Forlì Campus of the University of Bologna**, and to the **Istituto per l'Europa Centro-Orientale e Balcanica - the Europe and the Balkans International Network** for giving students from the Balkans the possibility to discuss issues related to the transition of their countries, the war and the prospects of dialogue and reconciliation, while looking towards the European integration process.

At the seat of the CEI in Trieste, we are proud of our fruitful cooperation with the **Istituto per l'Europa Centro-Orientale e Balcanica** and the **University of Bologna**. The CEI International Summer School has been co-financed by the CEI **since 2002** both through our **Cooperation Fund** and through the **CEI University Network** with a **total contribution of around 180.000 EUR**. Our organisation has invested in this cooperation by establishing even stronger relations between and among the universities of the CEI University Network. It has successfully acted as the focal point, bringing together professors and experts from Central and South Eastern Europe.

I wish to point out that this year's event is ever more special since this workshop has been especially included in the programme in order to have it coincide with this year's decision taken by our **National Coordinators** to support a scientific evaluation of the **CEI Instrument for the Protection of Minority Rights** and at eventually producing an updated edition of the book on "Minorities and the Central European Initiative" originally printed on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CEI Instrument (1994-2004). Thank you Prof. Bianchini for including a session dedicated to this very topic.

Just a few words about the CEI: it is the oldest **regional forum for intergovernmental cooperation** established in November 1989 by Italy, Austria, Hungary and Yugoslavia. It has become the largest regional initiative comprising **18 Member States** of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. **The current CEI Membership, including 10 EU and 8 non-EU countries, puts the CEI in a privileged position** to act as a bridge between EU and non-EU Member States. And since its inception the CEI has successfully adapted to major historical changes in Europe and has become a champion of Regional Cooperation for European integration. Therefore, the European perspective of its Member States remains the CEI core mission.

The Central European Initiative however, also serves as a bridge between macro-regions: the Baltic, the Danube, the Adriatic and the Black Sea. It connects the macro-regions of Europe. And we are more and more prepared and eager to contribute to the existing and emerging regional strategies such the Danube Strategy (EUSDR) and the Adriatic-Ionian strategy respectively. As a matter of fact, the CEI has been mentioned in the EUSDR action plan and holds regular consultations with its priority area coordinators.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to highlight that right from the very beginning CEI Member States have devoted special attention to issues related to national minorities. The CEI has made great efforts to support actions aimed at countering cultural, linguistic and ethnic divisions as well as enabling people to deal with different identities - constructively and democratically - on the basis of shared values.

Over the past 25 years, the CEI has supported various initiatives with the ultimate aim to enhance regional cooperation and further contribute to the EU integration process. Its member countries have benefitted from the CEI financial instruments and other cooperation tools such as: **a) the CEI Cooperation Fund** (a multilateral financial facility, funded by all Member States, for small scale regional projects such as seminars, workshops or short training courses); **b) the Italian Trust Fund at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development - EBRD** (funding technical assistance assignments setting the ground for EBRD investments) **c) the Know-How Exchange Programme KEP** (funding capacity building and transfer of good practice to non-EU CEI Member States). CEI countries also benefit from the **CEI Science & Technology Network**

(supporting mobility of researchers across the CEI area) and the **CEI University Network** (promoting cooperation at academic level). Most activities supported through the CEI Cooperation Fund in particular, cover the CEI Area of Activity **Intercultural Cooperation including Minorities**. Since the establishment of the Fund in 2002, **202** cooperation activities covering this priority area have been supported (**180 in the field of culture, 22 covering minority issues**) with a total **CEI contribution of around 2 million EUR**.

Moreover, the former Working Group on Minorities (dissolved as all WGs in 2007 with the CEI repositioning) was actively involved in drafting the **CEI Instrument for the Protection of Minority Rights**. It was opened for signature in 1994 and so far has been **signed by 13 CEI Member States** (Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia) and translated into 10 languages. **Although not a legally-binding document, the Instrument introduced an innovative approach to the issue and provided the CEI with a benchmark for regular overviews of the state of protection of minority rights in its member countries.**

The current **Plan of Action (2010-2013)** includes three priority issues under this area:

- Intercultural Dialogue and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (including storage, protection and renewal of audiovisual heritage)
- Know-how Transfer in the Field of Cultural Management
- “Diversity Management” including Protection and Promotion of Minority Languages and Cultures

We are currently elaborating the new **CEI Plan of Action 2014-16** past achievements and upcoming challenges are being evaluated in order to reach a common strategy able to

guide us in the near future, increase the impact of our activity and streamline the whole CEI structure for the benefit of our Member States.

Furthermore, I wish to inform you that in order to honour and encourage initiatives and activities of talented and often young people from the CEI Member States, several CEI Awards are offered, in particular in the cultural, areas. For example:

- CEI Award at the Trieste Film Festival
- CEI Award in the framework of the International Design Contest “Trieste Contemporanea”
- CEI Fellowship for Writers in Residence
- CEI Award for Outstanding Merits in Journalism

Even within the framework of the **13th edition of the CEI International Summer School held in Cervia in 2007**, the CEI offered an award of **2000 EUR** to **Ms. Biljana Avramovska** for the best paper on “Prospects for Foreign Direct Investment in Bulgaria”.

I wish to stress that the CEI competitive advantage relies on its long-standing knowledge of, and involvement in, multilateral regional cooperation in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, as well as on its project-oriented approach - through the involvement in different EU funded projects. Our expertise in the implementation of EU projects gives us an added value where coordination and synergies towards good neighbourly relations are encouraged and cross-border, transnational and interregional issues addressed.

As already mentioned, the CEI has been able to do adapt to the changing circumstances of the European political landscape during its 25 years of life and I firmly believe that further efforts are needed in order to fully exploit our potential and make our organisation

an even more flexible, innovative and practical tool for a result-based and project-oriented regional cooperation.

May I conclude by informing you that after our coffee break today, you will have the opportunity to watch a documentary entitled **How do I see my neighbour?** It was produced within one of our EU-co-funded projects, namely **the SRC SEE Project on Improving Cooperation in South –East Europe by actions for strengthening of the RCC**. It is financed by the IPA Regional Programme 2010 and implemented by the CEI Secretariat. In the framework of this project, the CEI assigned grants for the realization of a this documentary entitled “How do I see my neighbour?” Under the direction of the EAPSM (European Association of Public Service Media in South East Europe). The documentary was produced by young directors from nine national broadcasters from the region with the aim to stimulate understanding and dialogue, reconciliation and good neighbourly relations. This work represents the first joint production made by the members of the Association, namely by the national televisions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, Vojvodina and Turkey.

I do hope you enjoy it.

Thank you for your attention