CONCLUSIONS
Of the International Conference “European Integration through Regional Cooperation – Perspectives of the EU Macro-Regional Strategies”, Skopje, 21 May 2015

The participants:

1. Welcomed the Macedonian CEI Presidency initiative for organizing an International Conference on these important topics and praised the support of CEI-Executive Secretariat and Visegrad Fund in the realization of the initiative.

2. Underlined the importance of the EU Macro-Regional Strategies (MRC) and stressed the need of further reflection on several important points, such as the lack of all-inclusiveness, effectiveness and value-added in the context of the regional cooperation in the CEI region and the efforts of the CEI member states involved in the EU accession process.

3. Praised the readiness of the CEI and its Executive Secretariat to serve as platform for bridging the existing and incoming EU MRC and to play a key role in their implementation.

4. Taking into account that not all of the CEI member states from the region of South-East Europe are part of the EU MRC, but also the flexibility and the openness of the MRC to future developments, emphasized the need of achieving all-inclusiveness of the relevant MRC, in particularly those on the Danube Region and on the Adriatic-Ionian Region. In this respect, acknowledged the interest of Macedonia to establish functional and working relations with the relevant MRC in its geographical vicinity and welcomed the invitation of the Coordinator of the Priority Area 10 of the Danube Strategy made to Macedonia to join this area in the capacity of permanent guest.

5. Suggested that additional efforts should be invested to ensuring better synergy, cooperation and coordination between different regional fora such as the CEI, RCC, Visegrad Fund, W. Balkans Six, Berlin Process etc. in the process of practical implementation of concrete result-oriented activities of the relevant EU MRS. Appropriate tools in this respect could be sharing of information, doing joint planning, pooling resources and efforts, ensuring proper publicity about the goals and value-added of the MRC as platforms for the benefit of the citizens etc.

6. Agreed that MRS go beyond traditional forms of regional cooperation and therefore an inclusive involvement of all relevant stakeholders on local, national and regional level, as well as the social partner organizations, private sector and civil society could contribute substantially to the success of the MRC.

7. As the macro-regional cooperation follows geographically a functional territorial approach and that the macro-regional partnerships could functionally differ from subject to subject or from policy to policy, suggested that this possibility could be extended beyond the given borders of the macro-regions.

8. Agreed to forward these Conclusions to the incoming meeting of the MFA of the CEI member states to be held on 15 June 2015 in Ohrid.