Sarajevo, September 26th 2016

**Informal meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of CEI in New York**

On September 22nd 2016 in New York Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina Igor Crnadak hosted informal meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Central European Initiative (CEI), within B&H Chairmanship-in-Office. The meeting was held on the margins of the 71st United Nations General Assembly with presence of all ministers, deputy ministers and representatives from seventeen CEI member states (all CEI member states representatives except Italy).

Minister Crnadak updated fellow colleagues from CEI member states and informed about plans of Bosnia and Herzegovina Chairmanship-in-Office by the end of 2016, highlighting the CEI Prime Ministers Summit planed for December, wood industry and furniture manufacturing business forum planed for December 26 in Sarajevo. Cultural event is scheduled for the same date – philharmonic concert from Trieste at the National Theatre in Sarajevo as well as expert group meeting and conference on energy efficiency which B&H will organize together with the Republic of Macedonia.

Minister Crnadak stressed that negotiations about adopting the Resolution of the UN General Assembly on cooperation between UN and CEI are undergoing. Informal consultations will be held in organization of the Permanent Mission of B&H to UN in New York. It is a Resolution which is being adopted every second year, and the last one was adopted in 2014.

Minister Crnadak informed that the first out of three planned meetings of group of experts was held in Trieste on September 16th treating issues that are specific for the work of CEI such as CEI mission, organization and structure, filed of activity, financial requests, members contributions etc. On this occasion, Minister invited all member states to present their proposals, remarks and suggestions. CEI members representatives expressed their conviction that the group of experts will improve the work of this regional initiative through concrete proposals.

In his introduction, Minister Crnadak thanked once again to his fellow colleagues for participating in ministerial CEI conference held in Banja Luka on June 16th this year and invited the present members to keep discussing all topics related to the region, migration crises, Brexit impacts on future of EU.

CEI member states representatives discussed up-to-date challenges such as migration and terrorism and stated that a solution to problem should be found in unique response and that difficult situations should be solved in dialogue. Regional cooperation was highlighted as the key factor for improvement and stability of the region. As stated, the Western Balkans countries made visible progress on their path to European integrations and CEI is a useful platform for intensification of European integrations of EU candidate countries and EU aspirant countries. It was highlighted that Brexit is not going to influence the Western Balkans countries aspiration towards EU membership. The upcoming period should be used
to intensify bilateral cooperation between CEI member states within CEI and to have all EU and non-EU members work together in order to have stable and coherent Europe.

Informal meeting participants in New York highlighted their full support to the work and activities of CEI Secretariat in Trieste and welcomed adoption of the *Plan of Action 2017/2020*.

CEI member states representatives congratulated B&H on previous successful chairmanship and commended the text of the final document of the ministerial meeting in Banja Luka, Communiqué, highlighting that the upcoming Summit will be successful.