The CEI Cooperation Fund

A CEI approach to migration management

PROJECTS BROCHURE

CENTRAL EUROPEAN INITIATIVE
Mission of the Central European Initiative

The Central European Initiative (CEI), a regional intergovernmental forum open to change, is committed to supporting European integration through cooperation between and among its Member States and with the European Union (EU), other interested public institutions or private and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as international and regional organisations. In order to offer a solid contribution to European integration the CEI combines multilateral diplomacy and project management, both as donor and recipient, while also bridging European macro-regions.

Find out more on the CEI website (www.cei.int)
A CEI approach to migration management

Giovanni Caracciolo di Vietri

Foreword
by the Secretary General

The CEI has always stood by its tradition of meeting the needs of its Member States. Today’s commitment in the area of migration management stems from the recommendations delivered by the CEI Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their meeting in Ohrid in June 2015. The CEI Secretariat immediately launched a first-of-its-kind extraordinary programme under its Cooperation Fund where the CEI was able to bring together pivotal actors dealing with asylum seekers, refugees and illegal migrants.

I, therefore, welcome this opportunity to address this important issue at a time when anti-immigration and anti-refugee sentiment has unfortunately become part of mainstream rhetoric in the international political and media debate.

During our campaign in 2016, state and local public administrations, private associations of the civil society, and international humanitarian agencies gathered within conferences and workshops to exchange know-how and best practices linked to the crisis of migration governance in Europe. Through these activities, ways to face the challenging tasks ahead were discussed and various aspects of the migratory crisis were covered, e.g. the role of local authorities, health care, migrants’ entrepreneurship, unaccompanied children, brain drain and diaspora from South Eastern Europe, protection of human rights and European values, training for youth and security issues.

The CEI Secretariat provides dissemination, stocktaking, visibility of opportunities and partnership. It also strongly fosters cooperation with other international organisations in this field. MoUs have been signed with the CBSS, MARRI, the ICMPD, the IOM and initiatives shared with them and the OSCE, the UNDP and the Council of Europe.

Still, the migration and refugee crisis is complex. It is a global and long-lasting phenomenon where migrants tend to move from anywhere in the world to almost anywhere else.

We recognise that not all our Member States experience the same migratory pressure, that no country can face this task alone, and that managing the refugee crisis is not just a task for governments. Indeed, there is a need for more effective cooperation among public and non-governmental stakeholders starting from the empowerment of cities and municipalities.

CEI countries represent both transit and destination countries where the management of asylum seekers and migrants challenges budgetary, regulatory and social factors.

Longer-term solutions require a willingness to work with all these “country-types” to fine-tune sustainable pathways for migration, including education and integration in the labour market.

The CEI, in its spirit of dialogue, solidarity and cooperation, will continue to promote better knowledge of the features of migration flows; to disseminate skills for better assistance and integration of asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants in the transit and destination countries; and to rebuild confidence and trust in civil society and the public opinion in the potential of migrations for pushing resilience and growth of the communities concerned all over Europe.

March 2017
This Brochure is a publication featuring different types of projects in the field of migration management that received co-financing from the CEI through its Cooperation Fund.* Only the event organised by the OBC and DG NEAR has a different origin. These examples of activities and events highlight how the CEI support has been used to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by today’s migration reality.

Unprecedented migration

More than one million migrants and refugees crossed into the EU by land and sea in 2015. 860,000 people impacted on the Balkan Route through Greece and severely affected the countries northern to it as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>388,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>579,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>411,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>556,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>378,604</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over half of this flow concentrated in September, October and November 2015. Half of the total arrivals were from Syria. This fourfold rise compared to 2014 inflows to Europe posed major challenges to EU institutions, national authorities and the civil society of CEI Countries.

Even if the figure decreased in 2016 to 388,000 arrivals (over 5,000 did not reach final destination since record-ed as dead along the way) the issue remains a long-term structural factor with regard to the governance of assistance, integration and resilience in the communities involved.

Emergency humanitarian responses have brought about extraordinary stories of solidarity and dedication. Nevertheless, consensus from the citizens in the transit and destination countries can only be raised by further upgrading the migration management system: not only effective recipient and registration services, but stronger synergies between national and local administrations; further enhancement of public partnership with civil society organisations; visible measures for cultural and labour inclusion.

(Source: IOM Compilations of Available Data and Information 2015 and 2016 at http://migration.iom.int/europe)
The CEI Cooperation Fund

Thanks to the CEI Cooperation Fund, financed by annual contributions from all Member States, the CEI succeeds in implementing a large number of small and medium-sized projects such as seminars, workshops, conferences, training courses, fostering mobility and people-to-people contacts in line with the priorities set in the CEI Plan of Action.

Since its inception in 2002, about 980 activities have been co-financed with around 9 million EUR and an overall value of about 57 million EUR. It is estimated that around 5,000 participants take part in the events every year.

In August 2015, the Cooperation Fund launched an Extraordinary Call for Proposals in the field of migration alone. The initial contribution amounted to 50,000 EUR. It was immediately doubled to 100,000 EUR in order to support all the eligible applications. Find out more on the CEI website (www.cei.int).

CEI-ES

The CEI Executive Secretariat (CEI-ES) was inaugurated in Trieste under the Austrian CEI Presidency in 1996 and since then has been financed by Italy. It operates with the legal status of an International Organisation, based on a Headquarters Agreement concluded between the Italian Government and the CEI Presidency and ratified by the Italian Parliament.

The seat in Trieste, via Genova 9, was made available to the CEI by the Italian Government through the Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) Autonomous Region, free of charge and ties, under terms described in a Protocol concluded between the CEI Secretariat and the FVG Autonomous Region, signed in Trieste on 20 December 1999.

Priorities in the CEI campaign

- Understand migration flows and trends in CEI and neighbouring countries
- Know-how exchange on assistance and integration of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants
- Enhance the role and capacity of Municipalities in managing emergency to long-term placement
- Raise awareness on the protection of women’s and unaccompanied children’s rights
- Encourage cross-border cooperation of Public Authorities and CSOs in combating trafficking in human beings, migrant exploitation and related crime
- Respond to migration issues across CEI countries (brain drain, abandoned children, freedom of movement)

A CEI approach to migration management
A CEI approach to migration management

1. Implemented Activities in the field of migration

1. Migration and refugee flows in transit countries: security implications
   - Institut für Geo-strategic Research & Foreign Policy (MFA) - Macedonia

2. Combating illegal migration and illicit human trafficking
   - Ivano-Frankivsk Law University in Ukraine

3. Acting together in migration management: enhancing coordination between local and central level
   - Migration, Asylum and Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) - Macedonia

4. Scattering reception: spreading the reception culture and promoting real integration for refugees and asylum seekers
   - ICS Comenius, Călărași and Sălaj County - Office for, Orășul

5. First annual meeting of the Western Balkans Migration Observatory
   - Center for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) - Albania

6. Refugee crisis management and EU accession process along the Italian Route
   - Observatory Balkans & Caucasus (OBC) - Italy

7. WELCOMING: Wanting Europe as Leverage for Cooperation on the Migratory Insertion Governance
   - European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA) - Macedonia

8. MUNSC Salient - youth conference on global matters
   - United Nations Association of Slovenia (UNAS)

9. Breaking down or re-building the walls. Migration crisis, refugees and security in South East Europe
   - UNESCO Centre for the Mediterranean (UNESCO) - Italy

10. European values and security facing migrant crisis: a perspective from the civil society
    - European Movement in the Republic of Macedonia

11. Gender sensitive labour migration
    - IRECE Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities (IRECE) - Moldova

12. Health implications of the mass-movement of people
    - Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) - Austria

13. Challenges and opportunities of migration in and from South East Europe
    - Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) - Albania

14. Promoting good practices in protecting migrants and asylum seeking children, in particular unaccompanied children
    - Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) - Sweden

Further info
- https://tinyurl.com/mogzawl
- http://en.iful.edu.ua/

Migration and refugee flows in transit countries: security implications

The gathering witnessed the participation of 200 representatives of ministries of foreign and internal affairs, civil society, international organisations and embassies from over 50 countries. They shared experiences and policy approaches in order to counter the escalation of illegal migration and human trafficking.

Necessary measures were agreed upon: better knowledge management, strengthen border control cooperation, enhance collaboration between central and local authorities and CSOs, raise awareness of recipient communities, improve regional cooperation along the Balkan Route.

Combating illegal migration and illicit human trafficking

This symposium focused on the state of combating illegal migration and human trafficking by detecting and investigating around these problems. It has developed recommendations for better counteractions and protection of human rights.

60 participants came from Belarus, Croatia, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, and Georgia. The even gathered employees from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, migration services, the Public Prosecutor Office, judges and NGO representatives (La Strada, Caritas, UHSPL, Nexus), practitioners, graduates, and students from universities and research centres.

Further info
- jojo@ifs.edu/uk
### Organiser: Migrations, Asylum and Refugees Regional Initiative (MARR) Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS)

**Period:** 17 March 2016

**Place:** Skopje, Macedonia

**Project Funding:** Total cost: €31,330

**Further info:** http://www.nalas.eu/

### Project Funding

**Organiser:** Italian Consortium for Development, Humanitarian and Social Action - For Social Action - Refugees Office NGO (ICS)

**Period:** 17-19 March 2016

**Place:** Trieste, Italy

**Project Funding:** Total cost: €14,442

**Further info:** www.icsufficiorifugiati.org

### Project Funding

**Organiser:** CEI Secretariat

**Period:** 15-16 April 2016

**Place:** Tirana, Albania

**Project Funding:** Total cost: €16,970

**Further info:** www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng

### Project Funding

**Organiser:** CEI Secretariat

**Period:** 6 May 2016

**Place:** Trieste, Italy

**Project Funding:** Total cost: €5,290

**Further info:** www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng

### Project Funding

**Organiser:** Center for Economic and Social Studies (CESS)

**Period:** 15-16 April 2016

**Place:** Trieste, Italy

**Project Funding:** Total cost: €21,330

**Further info:** www.cesr.mx

### Project Funding

**Organiser:** Observatoire Balkans & Caucasus (OBC Trento)

**Period:** 8 May 2016

**Place:** Trieste, Italy

**Project Funding:** Total cost: €4,250

**Further info:** www.oabc.org/it

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**Acting together in migration management: enhancing coordination between local and central level**

Over 80 representatives of central and local authorities from European countries, international and regional organisations gathered to exchange experiences and best practices.

Panellists from Austria, Croatia, Italy and Montenegro discussed with representatives from 15 South-Eastern European countries and municipalities from Albania, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro Serbia and Kosovo.* Special attention was paid to obtaining stronger support from the International community in the European integration process of the Western Balkans, to strengthening regional capacities in managing migration.

Conclusions on the enhancement of the role of local authorities were adopted and necessary measures were agreed upon: further upgrade regional coordination mechanisms aimed at building cooperation among regional, central and local authorities; horizontal and vertical networking; permanent consultations in defining national support for regional, central and local authorities; horizontal and vertical networking; permanent consultations in defining national support for regional, central and local authorities; horizontal and vertical networking; permanent consultations in defining national support policies; continued assessment at local level and the role of international donors in supporting overall capacity building.

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**Scattering reception: spreading the reception culture and promoting real integration for refugees and asylum seekers**

Over 30 representatives from NGOs in Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, and the IOM staff attended the workshop aimed at networking and building cooperation among associations of neighbourhoods facing the migratory flows and the obstacles for refugee reception policies.

In order to spread reception culture and capacity with decent hosting standards, a system jointly implemented by local administrations and NGOs is needed. The topics of asylum procedure and accommodation were benchmarked on the Italian system of decentralised accommodation (called SPRAR).

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**First annual meeting of the Western Balkans Migration Observatory**

The workshop – gathering key local stakeholders including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Members of the Parliament and local offices of international organisations - brought about the establishment of the new Western Balkans Migration Network (http://wb-mignet.org/) focused on the brain drain affecting the region and on how to reverse it into brain gain and diaspora support to WB recovery.

### Project Funding

**Organiser:** Balkans Migration Observatory

**Period:** 15-16 April 2016

**Place:** Tirana, Albania

**Project Funding:** Total cost: €5,290

**Further info:** www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng

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**Refugee crisis management and EU accession process along the Balkan Route**

The event attended by CSOs and local administration representatives focused on the implications for the EU enlargement process resulting from the current migration and refugee flows through the Western Balkans.

DG NEAR illustrated the increasing commitment of the European Commission, the financial support and the assistance to capacity building of the candidate and potential candidate countries. Representatives of the IOM and of NGOs from Italy, Serbia and Macedonia described the lessons of current practices for migration management.

The CEI Secretariat hosted the 40 participants at the event and co-financed the initiative in the framework of the DG NEAR programme for raising awareness on the opportunities of the accession of the Western Balkans to the EU.
A CEI approach to migration management

40 scholars and young researchers from Croatia, Italy, Slovenia, and Greece, gathered with high-level lecturers from academia and private research institutes to reflect upon new analytical approaches to the complex trends enacted in Europe by the Migration Crisis.

The political and cultural dynamics involving the refugee crisis and security issues in drawing national (and all European) borders from a South Eastern European perspective were compared with the contradictions of the migration policies implemented by the different political actors who allowed the rise of the "Balkan Route" or the "corridor of convenience".

On World Refugee Day, ALDA Skopje, a branch of the European Association for Local Democracy, gathered 25 partners from 9 countries (7 CEI MS) and more than 50 participants to exchange experience and debate the migration management of local authorities and civil society organisations.

Thematic working groups drafted Recommendations by topic respectively:

- Policies on migration emergency management;
- Integration of migrants: the role of CSOs, local authorities, citizens;
- Public perception of migrants: how to influence it in a positive way and build intercultural dialogue.

Over 100 representatives of the European Movement and CSOs from 9 CEI Member States participated in the event. Germany, Greece and Turkey, highly concerned with the migrant crisis, were also present. High-level panellists dealing with the refugee situation discussed different topics from the perspective of human rights.

Security issues were also debated.

Conclusions recalled how the migrant and refugee crisis is a long-term phenomenon, which implies lasting cooperation and synergy between the civil society and public authorities, at national level and within the international community as a whole.

Breaking down or re-building the walls. Migration crisis, refugees and security in South-East Europe

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Join to CEI webpage
Organiser: European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA)
Period: 20–21 June 2016
Place: Skopje, Macedonia
Project Funding: Total cost: €30,338
CEI contribution: €10,000
Further info: www.alda-europe.eu/newSite/

Organiser: United Nations Association of Slovenia (UNAS)
Period: 11-15 July 2016
Place: Ljubljana, Slovenia
Project Funding: Total cost: €41,208
CEI contribution: €7,000
Further info: www.unaslovenia.org

Organiser: Istituto per l’Europa Centro-Orientale e Balcanica (IECOB)
Period: 16 September 2016
Place: Bertinoro (Forlì), Italy
Project Funding: Total cost: €47,707
CEI contribution: €8,000
Further info: https://tinyurl.com/lzq2bbm

Organiser: European Movement in the Republic of Macedonia (EMRM)
Period: 19–20 September 2016
Place: Skopje, Macedonia
Project Funding: Total cost: €28,051
CEI contribution: €7,000
Further info: http://europeanmovement.eu

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Gender sensitive labour migration

A better understanding of the gender aspects of migration management was the aim of this train-the-trainers workshop. Migration can be an empowering experience for individuals: supporting entrepreneurship and employment of migrant women is an opportunity to contribute to their individual growth as well as to their family and community development.

Health implications of the mass-movement of people

60 participants and lecturers from Serbia, Croatia and Macedonia together with lecturers from Australia, Italy, Norway and Switzerland met within three sessions to:

- exchange information on housing and sanitary conditions in detention centres for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers;
- discuss challenges and problems related to the impact of mass migration on general and mental health in the WB region and
- make recommendations to governments, agencies and civil society organisations.

The workshop was a kick-off event for the 10th Conference of the International Society for Health & Human Rights (ISHHR) held in November 2017 under the title “Mental health, mass displacement and ethnic minorities”.

Challenges and opportunities of migration in and from South-East Europe

24 young scholars from 17 CEI Member States, preselected by IDM, presented their research and held discussions in four different panels:

- Brain Drain or Brain Circulation – highly qualified migration;
- Liquid migration – split households, split identities;
- Return migrants and remittances – impact and empirical facts;
- Emigration and expectations - what do we know?

The Forum also held a special panel on “Migrant Deaths Along The Romanian Border During Communism and the STASI’s Hand In Them” chaired by the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO).

Promoting good practices in protecting migrants and asylum seeking children, in particular unaccompanied children

Over 50 state administration and NGO representatives from 16 CEI countries met with their colleagues from 10 Northern Europe countries to share experience on the reception of unaccompanied children and their respective needs. The subject was not only about children inflow from third-countries, but the fact that several CEI Member States still originate migrating minors and register abandoned children.

The proceedings illustrated why and how children and minors need protection to access their status in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The conclusions of the conference will guide the CBSS and CEI cooperation in promoting the interests of children in cross-border cases. A web portal on child protection has recently been issued by the Children at Risk Unit of the CBSS (SEE BELOW).
The Ministers reviewed the situation in the CEI Region within a wider international context. They agreed that there were two principal challenges with major consequence for the Region, i.e. on the one hand the migration crisis and on the other the growing threat of terrorism and the foreign terrorist fighters phenomena. The Ministers stressed their willingness to support policies and actions against these threats, contributing to a strong, united and peaceful Europe. At the same time, the Ministers declared their readiness to continue and strengthen their efforts in combating organised crime, especially in the area of trafficking of human beings and arms, as well as any form of corruption which undermine the progress of their countries towards stable and resilient democracies. […] Furthermore, the Ministers fully agreed on the need to strengthen concerted efforts also in the framework of the CEI aimed at countering international terrorism, combating organized crime, with special attention to human trafficking, illegal migration and corruption, which greatly affect the lives and well-being of the citizens of the Region. They welcomed CEI activities in tackling these issues, such as the Extraordinary Call on migration and security issues feeding an on-going campaign of networking events, and agreed that the next CEI Plan of Action 2017-2020 should reflect these challenges as well.

The Ministers called for a continued assistance to countries of the Western Balkans most affected by the migration crisis. Moreover, they welcomed the signing of Memoranda of Understanding with specialised organisations such as the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). […]
A CEI approach to migration management

The recognition of the CEI’s role in terms of supporting the capitalisation of knowledge and experience of both public and private, national and international actors, especially with regard to the ongoing migration management, calls for a further commitment by the CEI Secretariat in this field.

In addition to the new activities co-financed for 2017, and in order to face the increasing importance of the Northern Route of the migration flows, migration remains a topic for policy dialogue and capacity building of the CEI constituency. Even if the current priority seems to be the establishment of effective return mechanisms, the potential for growth enshrined in the immigration flows still has to be regarded as a common, actual interest. This is especially true when taking into account the demographic challenge of an ageing Europe.

This is also connected to the need to recover human capital due to brain-drain in the Western Balkans, where 43% of the active population is deemed to be leaving abroad seeking for better jobs.

Since 2015, mainstreaming migration into all policies and programmes of the European Union has set the changing framework for redirecting priorities of all players of transnational cooperation, including financial institutions. The CEI will also promote these new features in its Member States.

Outlook and activities in 2017

- SIMPLE migration practice. Sharing best knowledge and EU practice on integration of migrants and existing challenges in Balkan countries through Italian and Austrian models and best practices. Asylum Protection Center in Serbia (Belgrade, March)
- Youth Forum: Refugees and Migrants in the New Media in Central-East Europe. Mladiinfo Skopje, Macedonia (Skopje, March)
- Second Annual Meeting of the Western Balkans Migration Network (WB-MIGNET). Center for Development Evaluation and Social Science Research in BiH (Sarajevo, April)
- 23rd CEI International Summer School “Envisioning Moving Frontiers: Migration Management, Minority Protection and the Enhancement of Territorial Cooperation”. RCCB Institute for Central Eastern Europe and the Balkans, Italy (Bertinoro, September)
- XIV Central European Forum of Aquileia EuroRegion “Migrations – Integration – Revolutions EUROPE TREMBLES”. Mitteleuropa Association, Italy (Udine, October)
- Regional Youth Forum for Local Democracy: “Inclusive Society: Intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity.” ALDA Skopje, Macedonia (Skopje, October)

Updated Calendar information is available on the CEI website: www.cei.int

The current refugee crisis is a litmus test for the European Union but also for this region and put regional co-operation to the test. In that context I welcome the activities of The Central European Initiative in bringing expertise from around the region together to discuss and share experience in migration and human trafficking. On our side, we have invested a lot of efforts to support countries bearing the heaviest burden of the refugee crisis linked to the continuing Syrian conflict and we will continue to do so.

The Western Balkan/Eastern Mediterranean route is closed and contributed together with the EU-Turkey agreement to manage the migration pressure. But the migration situation in Libya and Egypt is of increasing concern with potential negative spill overs. That is why, in addition to the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, the EU Trust Fund for the Syrian crisis and the Compacts under preparation with Jordan and Lebanon are such important tools.

The Africa Trust Fund is also up and running now. It addresses the root causes of migration in countries of origin of sub-Saharan Africa. Overall, our assistance to better manage migration flows is aimed at saving the lives of migrants and refugees and tackling irregular migration and trafficking.

I look forward to the continued commitment of the Central European Initiative to deepening our cooperation on this and other major issues across the region.

Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the CEI Member States (Banja Luka, 16 June 2016)
18 MEMBER STATES

10 EU MS
Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

8 non-EU MS
Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine.

CEI STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Support CEI Member States on their path towards European integration
- Promote the alignment of CEI Member States to EU standards
- Implement small and medium-sized projects.

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