



CEI Plan of Action 2018-2020

Elaborated by the CEI-Executive Secretariat, in cooperation with the CEI Member States, the CEI Plan of Action 2018-2020 is conceived as a flexible and dynamic tool to enable the CEI to quickly adapt to the evolving European landscape. It complements the CEI Guidelines and Rules of Procedure - the regulatory charter of the Organisation.

Acronyms and abbreviations

AII	Adriatic and Ionian Initiative
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
CEI	Central European Initiative
CEI-ES	Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat
CNC	Committee of CEI National Coordinators
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
EUSAIR	The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
EUSALP	The EU Strategy for the Alpine Region
EUSBSR	The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
EUSDR	The EU Strategy for the Danube Region
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KEP	Know-how Exchange Programme
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
SEECF	South-East European Cooperation Process
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
TC	Technical Cooperation
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Introduction

The new Plan of Action has been developed as a focused and project-oriented roadmap for the period 2018-2020. Special attention has been paid to the real needs and proposals expressed by the CEI Member States, while also taking note of the evolving environment in the Region. Efforts have been made towards prioritisation and streamlining, aimed at avoiding dispersion of resources and at concentrating on actions where the CEI's expertise and working methodology represent a genuine added value.

It is composed of two parts: Part 1 highlights the CEI's mission, strategic objectives and working methodology. Part 2 comprehensively outlines its goals and objectives. The latter also includes a set of tangible actions elaborated by taking into account the results achieved in the recent past, thus ensuring coherence and follow-up.

This document intends to capitalise on the main strengths of the Organisation, based on its distinctive methodology for the promotion of regional cooperation through a combination of multilateral diplomacy and fund, programme and project management. While remaining a platform for political dialogue, in support of the European integration process, the CEI has developed a strong operational approach aimed at fostering cohesion and integration between EU and non-EU countries. Thanks to its broad membership covering Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the CEI is in the position to play a bridging role between macro-regions, thus making a contribution to the removal of existing barriers and divisions hindering European integration.

In practical terms, the CEI's main goal is to bring its Member States closer together in joint initiatives and encourage further regional cooperation in a structured and result-oriented manner. It aims at making tangible contributions towards sustainable and inclusive economies and societies. In order to reach this ambitious goal, the Plan of Action offers the necessary framework to steer the CEI's future activities, while committing the Organisation to a continuous improvement of its performance.

I. CEI Strategic Approach to Regional Cooperation

1. Mission

The CEI is a noble experiment of regional cooperation. In a time when Europe was still divided, it was among the first political fora joining countries with different statuses (Italy - member of NATO and EEC; Austria¹ – neutral country; Hungary – member of the Warsaw Pact; and the SFRY – non-aligned country) ready to strengthen good-neighbourly relations and develop a manifold cooperation between their respective countries. Since its inception, although it has passed through numerous changes and challenges, the CEI has taken root, grown and finally blossomed into the largest regional intergovernmental forum in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

Its mission is *supporting European integration and sustainable development through cooperation among and between its Member States and with the EU, other interested public institutions or private and civil society organisations, as well as international and regional organisations.*

2. Strategic Objectives

The Initiative, currently counting seventeen Member States of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe with different a status vis-à-vis the EU (9 EU members - Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia; 4 candidates - Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; 1 potential candidate - Bosnia and Herzegovina; and 3 countries involved in the European Neighbourhood Policy - Belarus, R. Moldova, Ukraine), has become a recognised *promoter of EU/non-EU-country partnership.*

The CEI has strongly contributed towards reaching open and democratic societies in Europe along with the great changes witnessed since the fall of the Iron Curtain. Indeed, *building sustainable economies and secure societies* are the most important elements of the broader work the CEI is still doing. In drawing up the new Plan of Action, the CEI underlined the two most important features characterising its Region, namely connectivity (the economic and environmental aspect) and diversity (the socio-political aspect).

3. Working Methodology

The greatest source of strength of the CEI stems from its membership, geographical position and the comprehensive scope of its mission. It also stems from its flexibility to promote intergovernmental, inter-parliamentary and business cooperation and working methodology, *combining multilateral diplomacy and fund, programme and project management.* While acting as a platform for political dialogue - helping to maintain cooperative relations and build confidence among its Member States - the CEI has also developed a strong operational, result-oriented approach to regional cooperation.

This latter approach entails two mutually reinforcing elements: the CEI is both a donor - providing funding from its own resources; and a beneficiary - competing at EU level in order to raise funds for actions (i.e. EU-funded projects), thus contributing to the implementation of EU policies in its Member States. The CEI channels its resources through:

- The **CEI Fund at the EBRD** – launched in 1992 and financed solely by the Italian Government with a total contribution up to now of €43.5 million - provides grant-type assistance for specific components of TC projects (prefeasibility and feasibility studies, project implementation, management training, capacity building and pre-loan audits in support of investments and operations of the EBRD). Since its inception, the Fund has provided over €27.5 million for funding 170 TC projects mobilising €6 billion of international investments in the countries of operations (for each euro provided by the CEI Fund, the EBRD and other financiers have invested €215). The Fund's main beneficiaries are the non-EU CEI Member States (Western Balkans and the three Eastern Partners – Belarus, R. Moldova and Ukraine).
- The CEI Fund has also contributed to the **Know-how Exchange Programme (KEP)**. To date, 96 projects have been approved for a total CEI Fund contribution of about €2.7 million with an overall project value amounting to more than €13.5 million. The KEP is a development instrument aimed at supporting the transfer of experience from organisations in the EU to peers in the non-EU countries within the CEI region. The Programme, promoting the alignment of CEI Member States to EU standards, provides grants for projects related to capacity building and transfer of good practices and contributes to the economic and social advancement of non-EU countries (Western Balkans and the three Eastern Partners – Belarus, R. Moldova and Ukraine). It also supports the recent EU Members in their transformation from recipients to donors of development assistance and promotes principles of foreign development aid as well as international collaboration among institutions in CEI countries. In the period 2008-2015, the KEP has been financed also by Austria based on a Grant Agreement between the CEI and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA): in this way additional 31 projects were supported with €900,000. Between 2008 and 2011 the KEP programme also received funds from Poland (€50,000).

¹ Austria has withdrawn from the CEI in 2018.

- The **CEI Cooperation Fund** - financed by annual contributions from all Member States - supports small-sized projects, such as seminars, workshops, conferences, training courses, aimed at fostering mobility and people-to-people contacts in the CEI region, in particular of the non-EU CEI Member States (Western Balkans and the three Eastern Partners – Belarus, R. R. Moldova and Ukraine). Through these Cooperation Activities, the intra-CEI mobility rate has been increased by an average of 5,000 people every year. Since its inception in 2002, 1,039 activities have been co-financed with €9.4 million.
- In order to honour and encourage initiatives and activities of talented and often young people from the CEI Member States, several **CEI Prizes & Awards** are offered, in particular in the areas of culture and media.
- While providing resources through these funding tools, the CEI, since 2004, has also been active in the field of **EU project management**. By participating in EU Projects, the CEI is able to achieve tangible results, enlarge its cooperation networks and ultimately contribute to the implementation of EU policies in the broad area covered by its membership. 29 projects have been implemented so far with a total mobilisation of € 52,75 million, while 14 projects are currently under implementation for a total fund mobilisation of € 24 million, of which € 3 million administered by the CEI, in particular by the CEI-ES. The extensive expertise accrued over the years, in its capacity of both Lead Partner and Partner, qualifies the CEI as a credible and reliable player in the field of EU project design and management. Its long-standing activity in the promotion of regional cooperation and its well-established networks in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe represent an added value for the construction of transnational, cross-border and interregional partnerships and for the elaboration of concepts and constructive ideas to be translated into innovative EU project applications. The CEI's ability to design and implement EU-funded projects, involving partner institutions from candidate, potential candidate and partner countries, is a major CEI asset allowing it to provide a tangible contribution to a wider European integration, and in particular to the enlargement process.

This working methodology is crucial in order to address the CEI's core mission. It also makes the CEI unique among other regional organisations promoting cohesion and integration between EU and non-EU countries.

Moreover, thanks to its specific membership, the CEI is well placed to play a connecting role between and among the EU Macro-Regional Strategies active in this region (EUSBSR, EUSDR, EUSAIR and EUSALP)². It is the only regional organisation covering a vast and diversified geographical area connecting the Baltic, the Adriatic-Ionian and the Black Seas, with the Danube River, the Alps and the Carpathians as its natural backbones. Thanks to this position, the CEI is strengthening its links with all these dynamically developing and strategic regions as well as participating in the implementation of the relevant Strategies and their priorities.

In addition, the CEI is a natural player within three main EU Policies: Enlargement Policy (Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia); EU Neighbourhood Policy (Eastern Partners: Belarus, R. R. Moldova, Ukraine); Regional/Cohesion Policy (all its EU Members), thanks to its geopolitical context. It is the only organisation providing a peer-to-peer environment for sharing experience and synergising the new added values of the macro-regional approach to the complexity of transnational governance and programming.

The CEI's involvement in regional cooperation, as well as its bridging function, contributes to removing existing barriers and divisions, which are hindering the European integration process. The CEI has become a champion of regional cooperation and a trusted and respected partner in the region, fully engaged in and committed to providing significant, result-oriented contributions to strengthen the political, economic, and social systems of its Member States.

In order to fully accomplish its core mission, the CEI focuses on developing regional cooperation and is often working in partnership with the EU and many other international and regional organisations. The CEI has a strong institutional link with the EBRD, where it also holds a Fund - the CEI Fund at the EBRD, fully financed until now by Italy. Ties have been established with several Directorates and Agencies within the EC; with the UN, where the CEI was granted observer status in the UNGA on 9 December 2011, which opens a global perspective to the CEI's work; and with UN specialised agencies, i.e. FAO, IOM, UNECE, UNESCO, etc. Cooperation relations have also been established with the OSCE, the Council of Europe, as well as with several regional organisations such as the AII, the BSEC, the CBSS, the SEECP and the RCC.

Although a forum for intergovernmental cooperation, the CEI has also developed many contacts with NGOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), mainly in the context of project-related activities. With the aim of contributing to the process of democratisation and EU integration, the CEI intends to further strengthen cooperation with these actors, in particular through its Cooperation Fund, a main tool for promoting people-to-people contacts. The development of dynamic civil societies in non-EU CEI countries is a CEI priority, also taking into account that this is a pivotal aspect of the EU enlargement process and the Neighbourhood Policy. Regional cooperation for the development of civil societies constitutes a flexible and result-oriented effort.

² The CEI's constituency connects: the EUSBSR - Poland; the EUSDR - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Montenegro, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine; the EUSAIR - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia; and the EUSALP - Italy, Slovenia.

II. CEI Agenda for 2018-2020

This Agenda covers a three-year period (2018-2020) and represents a roadmap aimed at promoting regional cooperation for enhancing democratic and inclusive societies and sustainable economies of CEI Member States. This strategic framework document – stemming from the collaboration between the CEI Member States and the CEI-Executive Secretariat - is a contribution to the promotion of mutual trust and cohesion of the region, aimed at enhancing the European integration process.

In drawing up the Goals and Objectives, taking into account the inputs forwarded by the Member States and the results achieved in the recent past, the CEI has identified two key medium-term priorities: strengthening **Connectivity** (mainly the economic and environmental aspect) and valorizing **Diversity** (mainly the socio-political aspect), which will underpin the CEI's core mission. The chapters dedicated to these two priorities address the core challenges and opportunities for CEI Member States and include goals and objectives reflecting a common vision of the economic, social and environmental prosperity of the region to be attained through joint actions.

1. Connectivity, focuses on strengthening the capacities of the Member States towards good governance, sustainable economic development, also through improved interconnected transport networks, and environmental sustainability as key prerequisites for democracy, stability, security and prosperity in the CEI region.

2. Diversity, focuses on promoting intercultural cooperation as a tool for stronger democratic participation and on the role of media in strengthening the awareness of common core values. Furthermore, it focuses on international scientific cooperation, brain circulation and quality education & training to develop knowledge-based societies within innovative-intensive economies.

The goals and objectives of the CEI Plan of Action are fully in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the EU Macro-Regional Strategies also affecting the CEI area. These goals are interlinked, interdependent and represent the main areas of interest of the CEI Member States, as outlined in the CEI Guidelines and Rules of Procedure.

Despite the different levels of development among the CEI Member States, the proposed goals and objectives are relevant to all of them and will be pursued through goal-oriented multilateral co-operation, going beyond a purely intergovernmental dynamics, and collaborative, multi-stakeholder partnerships. These will involve both governmental and non-governmental actors – including civil society, business actors, scientific communities, academia and media. Furthermore, partnerships with other organisations is considered a part of normal working practice.

1. Connectivity

GOALS: Good governance, economic growth and environmental protection

GOAL 1: Good governance

Good governance is a cornerstone of democratic stability and security as well as a conditional asset for achieving sustainable development. Indeed, it plays a key role in ensuring an environment in which business and jobs can flourish and investment climate improve. Good governance requires a transparent and accountable state organisation, bringing together multi-level approaches and different actors for adopting shared long-term development policies and programmes, properly harmonised with agreed transnational strategies such as the macro-regional ones. In this regard, regional cooperation plays an important role in supporting intergovernmental dialogue, in preventing and solving bilateral distress, facilitating common transnational planning and preserving long-term stability upon the values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

OBJECTIVES:

1.1. Processing and exchanging experience on large-scale migration

RATIONALE:

In order to tackle the economic and social impact of current migration on CEI countries, the challenge of organising effective reception capacity for asylum seekers, as well as assistance and active cultural and social integration of migrants should be faced on the basis of a structural approach while respecting the CEI Member States national competences. Emergency fuels anger among citizens and creates uncertainty among potential investors, which can be reversed only by responsible, concrete answers from the Member States and their transnational collaboration, thus improving the international response

to large movements of people. Among its Member States, the CEI has registered different typologies of migration flows: i.e. the Balkan and Mediterranean Routes of asylum seekers and irregular migrants; but also the massive flow of mostly skilled young people leaving the Western Balkan countries, Italy and Croatia; and the sensitive situation in the CEI Eastern Members (Belarus, Ukraine, R. Moldova). Since mid-2015, on behalf of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the CEI Secretariat has deployed an action promoting the exchange of experience and networking among actors of its constituency, thus bringing together State Administrations, Civil Society Organisations and Local and Regional Authorities. The dynamics of knowledge sharing and that of setting new partnerships and initiatives has enhanced the understanding between the CEI and international organisations focused on migration such as the ICMPD, the IOM and MARRI and the relevant departments of the OSCE, the UNDP and the Council of Europe. The CEI commitment mostly focuses on institutional capacity building, in particular on fine-tuning the regulatory framework resulting from the cooperation between central and local public administrations. This is a result of the need to eventually help legally-arrived new comers to settle within the living conditions of local citizens and their cultural traditions. Also the challenges related to diaspora can be better dealt with in the framework of a comprehensive knowledge of migration governance. The role of civil society, a CEI priority since its inception, will also be supported to develop better frameworks for a public – private collaboration and to spread skills of social entrepreneurship.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Promote exchange of practice and knowledge among the public and non-governmental actors dealing with migration at central and local level;
- Support analysis and actions on demographic changes, brain-drain and diaspora feed-back, social entrepreneurship, rural depopulation recovery, etc.;
- Promote dialogue of the CEI Member States on the internal move of their people;
- Encourage cross-border cooperation of Public Authorities in combating trafficking in human beings, migrant exploitation and related crime and increase common understanding of integrated border management between CEI Member States;
- Encourage the development of partnerships between the main stakeholders in society – governments, civil society, private sector, members of the academia - within the framework devised by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations.

1.2. Promoting safe and secure e-Government solutions

RATIONALE:

The basic role of this objective is to contribute to the development of sustainable societies based on knowledge in the CEI region by creating an environment for applications in a wide range of areas, including eGovernment, eTrade, eHealth etc. Indeed, the EU Digital Agenda envisages the promotion of the deployment and use of modern accessible online services. Modernisation of public institutions requires easier and faster access to public services and absence of bias, which will eventually lead to the improvement of the overall performance of the public sector. The focus has to be on governance reforms with the technological tools provided by ICT being utilised to bring about fundamental changes in the governmental processes. E-Government will make public services faster, more efficient and more effective. Besides being cost effective, e-services are also transforming administration into a citizen-oriented one which will better align with citizens' needs. Furthermore, the development and harmonisation of interoperable eTrade systems, where relevant, among CEI Member States and with the related EU *acquis*, will be taken into account. ICT solutions for innovation & startup ecosystems and eHealth will also be considered. Special efforts will be encouraged for initiatives and programmes with particular regard to the delivery of modern teleinformatic services in rural areas and for the benefit of those population groups more at risk of digital divide (elderly, less educated, etc.). In order to extend the use of electronic services, the CEI will reinforce its role in the improvement of digital literacy skills. Moreover, the CEI will stress the importance of data security (cybersecurity) and high level of trust and confidence when delivering online service. The cybersecurity issue is of growing importance both on national and international level. There are many important players in the field including Governments, businesses, NGOs and academic institutions. A huge potential of national academic and public R&D centres is still underused. Fostering cooperation and information sharing between these entities would be beneficial also for national Governments. A more secure and resilient digital environment requires a wider risk awareness. Digital literacy initiatives will also be aimed at spreading a basic cyber hygiene attitude, thus avoiding a huge percentage of cyber-attacks.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Develop international cooperation in the field of e-governance and the exchange of good practices aimed at identifying the best examples for the implementation of e-governance solutions as well as supporting the improvement of activities of national stakeholders on eGovernment, eTrade, eHealth, etc.;
- Promote e-services and enhance awareness of its benefits in order to make public services more transparent, efficient and accountable, providing for digital-by-default standards, inclusiveness and accessibility;
- Promote cybersecurity, thus increase the security and integrity of electronic communications and support the development of right-based legislative and regulatory frameworks on data protection;
- Improve digital literacy, enhance the capabilities of the people to use electronic services and raise awareness on cybersecurity risks.

1.3. Strengthening institutional capacities and promoting effective anti-corruption measures and open data

RATIONALE:

A well-organised state organisation is the key element to achieve stability and security, ensuring a favourable environment where businesses and jobs can be created and investment confidence grows. Indeed, potential investors can only be attracted by transparent and responsible state organisations. Furthermore, the competitiveness of the private sector needs to be supported by enhancing value creation, improving access to finance, etc. On the contrary, weak institutions generate a lack of trust among potential investors, the business community and citizens. In particular, not only does corruption harm investments, but also the society as a whole. It undermines democracy and impedes overall economic growth. Fighting corruption contributes to democracy empowerment and improves competitiveness. Nevertheless, very often, public institutions do not have enough capacities to firmly enforce anti-corruption rules. In this context, the CEI will continue to support efficient and effective public administration through capacity building programmes and the inclusion of the civil society in this process. This will lead to more stable institutions able to implement anti-corruption agendas. Moreover, promoting open data, developing the re-use of public sector information (aiming at the “once only” principle), expanding public access to reliable and objective information will also be tackled. If appropriately balanced with privacy and correct processing of sensitive data, public sector information has a significant — still untapped — potential for the re-use of new products and services and for efficiency gains in administrations. Besides its economic value, opening up public data also fosters the participation of citizens in political and social life and contributes to various public policies. Actual openness of data is one of the key conditions for unblocking economic and social potential for a re-use of public sector information. Therefore, promoting good practice, facilitating coordination and experience sharing across the states is crucial for strengthening open data initiatives and the re-use of public sector information.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Support the establishment of common integrity standards of public administrations and the enhancement of institutional capacities/ competences of public administration at the central, regional and local levels to implement key reforms (in non-EU CEI Member States);
- Support trainings for public administration officers on effective anti-corruption measures;
- Raise awareness on fair public procurement;
- Promote the expansion of public access to reliable and objective information and support for introducing simple, clear and transparent rules of access to public services.

GOAL 2: Economic growth

Bringing people and countries closer together contributes to lasting stability and economic growth. Nevertheless, economic ties across the CEI region can substantially be improved. As national economies become increasingly interdependent, the need for enhanced harmonisation of the entrepreneurial environment, transparency and predictability of transport and customs procedures, energy connectivity and simplified regulations for trade and business is more and more important. The provision of quality jobs and decent working conditions is a requirement for socially sustainable economies. Research infrastructures and innovation delivery can further stimulate the economy and help the competitiveness of the CEI economies on the global market. The private sector, a pivotal player in the market economy, has to be properly involved in nourishing the quality of decision-making at intergovernmental level.

OBJECTIVES:

2.1. Strengthening transport networks

RATIONALE:

The CEI will continue to focus on the rehabilitation and development of transport infrastructure as a catalyst of international trade, investments and economic development. It will also continue paying attention to actions such as the extension of the TEN-T Network to the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership Countries, TEN-T guidelines, Motorways of the Sea Policy, green transport corridors and intermodal terminals policy, improvement of coordination in the development of transfrontier transport connections in the CEI region, One Belt - One Road (OBOR) Initiative, China – Central and Eastern European Countries Cooperation (16+1), etc. A well-developed and maintained transport infrastructure system linking various transport modes is essential to enhance countries' trade and overall competitiveness. The necessity to improve the transport infrastructure is especially valid for countries whose economic growth is trade-dependent. In order to boost international trade and investments, such countries must continuously improve the links between their trade gateways and extend their connections to the region and globally. In this context, the need for improving border crossings – an often neglected component of transport infrastructure and the weak part of TEN-T – is a major concern. Long delays in transiting international borders may cause inconveniences for passengers and drivers and, more importantly, hamper the transportation of goods, thus undercutting the CEI Member States' trade and causing unfavourable effects on the environment. In this context, the CEI will support the removal of bottlenecks in order to improve the speed of border-crossing procedures. In addition, the CEI will work on integrating rural/peripheral areas in main transport networks. A good connectivity network, including efficient transport nodes, ICT solutions and promotion of alternative fuels supply chain among transport modes and countries, is a precondition for carrying out commercial activities, delivering basic services such as education and health, as well as achieving social, environmental, economic and political goals.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Enhance transport policies of CEI Member States by including relevant national, regional and local authorities in a process oriented to improve freight and passengers transport, also taking into consideration the CEI countries' involvement in the Europe – Asia connectivity;
- Promote projects and activities to improve coordination and reduce barriers affecting CEI countries, through the development of methodologies for the analysis of physical and non-physical bottlenecks and through the promotion of ICT solutions & other soft measures, including initiatives towards the decarbonisation of transport;
- Promote capitalisation processes to increase accessibility of regional, peripheral and cross-border areas to the main regional/national and international networks (as TEN-T hubs) through a coordination of policies among the transport ministries of CEI Member States and relevant stakeholders;
- Promote inter-institutional cooperation among CEI Member States in order to coordinate the development of a common transport strategy also through the participation in EU project proposals.

2.2. Improving research and innovation systems

RATIONALE:

In order to build knowledge-based societies and unlock their economic potential, CEI Member States need to invest in the improvement of their research and innovation (eco-) systems. Within the CEI membership, relevant differences exist between a few strong and several moderate/modest innovators (European Innovation Scoreboard 2017): regional cooperation initiatives promoted by the CEI will basically aim at reducing this gap, which will have an impact both on the economic growth of the CEI region and on the EU integration process of non-EU CEI Member States. The latter will be supported in the elaboration of their Research and Innovation Smart Specialization Strategies (RIS3), and in the removal of bottlenecks and barriers, including legal/regulatory ones, for their future implementation. Moreover, actions will be promoted in order to enhance the participation of non-EU CEI Member States in Horizon 2020, the main tool for the implementation of the Innovation Union (IU) and for the consolidation of the European Research Area (ERA). The CEI will act as a platform for policy dialogue and knowledge circulation, as well as for facilitating the design of joint actions in fields such as capacity building, benchmarking and transferring of best practices. Specific attention will be paid to research-industry collaboration, which will be facilitated through an open innovation methodology to make sure industrial challenges are properly met by scientific solutions. This will enable the diffusion of technological innovation, as well as the creation of new hi-tech enterprises and start-ups. At the same time, it will support the valorisation of research results through knowledge and technology transfer to the business and industrial sectors. Efforts will be undertaken to support activities contributing to the development of innovation centres (science and technology parks, pre-seed and seed incubators, etc.) in CEI countries and the integrated use of Research Infrastructures. Within a broader, "quadruple-helix" perspective, CEI cooperation will aim at encompassing all actors involved in innovation, from policy makers to researchers, from

entrepreneurs to citizens, thus developing multi-stakeholder activities contributing to the enhancement of the CEI countries' research and innovation systems.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Support technical assistance in the development and execution of Research and Innovation Smart Specialization Strategies (RIS3);
- Promote capacity building and training on technology transfer, valorisation of research results, innovation management and start-up generation, and support the development of innovation ecosystems in CEI Member States;
- Encourage the organisation of brokerage and open innovation events to facilitate interactions between scientific and business communities, including clusters;
- Enhance skills for successful participation of non-EU CEI Member States in Horizon 2020.

2.3. Supporting transition to Circular and Bioeconomy and promoting Blue Growth

RATIONALE:

The shift towards a circular economy is one of the most important issues Europe is currently facing as well as the rest of the world. It is not sustainable to continue exhausting our planet's limited resources, many of which are non-renewable. The only solution is to further develop the countries' economies without overusing natural resources, while changing people's attitudes towards consumption and waste. Bioeconomy is a very important part of the circular economy. The cross-cutting nature of Bioeconomy brings about an opportunity to address complex and inter-linked issues, while fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, thus enhancing competitiveness and growth. Knowledge exchange between various stakeholders to transform the increased demand of biomass into sustainable solutions in the entire value chain - from biomass to bio-based products and to the consumer – ought to be encouraged. Based on its experience and achievements, the CEI will support the definition of bioeconomy strategies in the CEI Member States, including the creation of regional biomass markets and the promotion of the Danube River as a corridor for sustainable mobilisation of biomass and by-products. Particular attention will be devoted to supporting the implementation of Smart Specialization Strategies and to the principle of the knowledge triangle as applied to bio-based product value chains. Moreover, nowadays, more and more coastal nations are looking at the sea as the next frontier for sustainable economic development. As seas provide natural resources, keeping them healthy is crucial. Even more, by harnessing the marine and coastal resources, not only would countries be able to boost growth, but they would also be able to tackle some of the key challenges faced by these economies including unemployment, low growth, and food security. For these reasons, the CEI will pay special attention to the promotion of the blue economy, more precisely regarding the enhancement of administrative and institutional capacities in the area of maritime governance and services.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Consolidate institutional dialogue between countries and support for defining bioeconomy strategies and full-scale development of relevant value chains and promote regional markets for biomass and bio-based products;
- Promote biotechnologies and know-how transfer among CEI Member States.
- Communication and awareness-raising of research, innovation and business opportunities in blue economy sectors;
- Stimulate the strengthening of blue technologies and the improvement of maritime governance and services, including the development of human skills to foster inclusive growth and job creation within blue economy, in sectors such as blue energy, aquaculture, marine mineral resources etc.

2.4. Strengthening rural and area-based development

RATIONALE:

With over one third of the population in the CEI Member States living in rural areas, rural development remains among the most important fields of the CEI's activity. Particular attention will be paid to people living in isolated and underdeveloped regions or in specific areas, in order to help them meet economic, environmental and social challenges and improve their quality of life. Special attention will be paid to non-EU CEI Member States as they need more assistance in the field of agriculture, especially in terms of harmonisation of agriculture national law with the EU acquis and by strengthening the institutions involved in agricultural development. The CEI aims at enhancing sustainable agricultural development by improving farm efficiency and competitiveness, increasing farm incomes, food security; improving information sharing, promoting the use of associated technologies in the sector as well as by expanding access to adequate infrastructure and services in the agricultural sector. The attention should also be paid to further development of rural tourism as well as to the development of new and enhancing the existing tourism offer/products in rural areas with the aim of keeping the population in these areas. The CEI will also foster knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture and rural areas. In

particular, the promotion of the Bioeconomy potential will be taken into consideration. Moreover, social economy which is crucial for the convergence of disadvantaged regions, where market forces fail to revive the economy, will also be promoted. Social Enterprises are key actors in social inclusion and work integration in these regions. However, they face many common barriers at their birth, operation and growth. Therefore, support mechanisms tailored to the local needs and specificities of social businesses are necessary: social enterprises, if helped by a supportive environment, can be real drivers of economic and social change and can turn innovative social ideas into viable and sustainable business models. Since agriculture depends on ecosystem services and has an important impact on these ecosystems, it is worth underlining the importance of using environmentally-friendly agriculture practices in accordance with the principles of the Circular Economy.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Support the expanding of access to adequate infrastructure and services in the agricultural sector and promote projects and activities in order to improve the quality of life of the rural population, including the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas and small towns as well as rural/local tourism;
- Support actions that will contribute to the transformation of resources into economic assets, thus improve farm efficiency and competitiveness and increase farm incomes and non-agricultural share of farm income;
- Support the application of EU standards and regulations (including food-safety and good-quality standards) and application of geographical indications for locally produced food products;
- Foster activities in order to promote traditional land use, especially farming, and foster innovative and more efficient technologies in agriculture to counter the effects of climate change.

GOAL 3: Environmental protection

Environmental protection and climate change remain top CEI priorities for moving towards sustainable growth. The CEI fully recognises the two-way relationship between environment and security. Good environmental governance not only contributes to a sound investment climate, but can help in addressing the concerns and interests of all stakeholders, helping prevent tensions and conflicts. Indeed, dealing with environmental issues requires enhanced cooperation within a framework for consultations and knowledge sharing, and the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in the implementation of actions and activities. The CEI strives to transform environmental security risks into opportunities for cooperation that can enhance stability and contribute to sustainable development. Environmental considerations need not be an obstacle to economic development. Instead, they can be a catalyst for innovation, increased productivity and job creation.

OBJECTIVES:

3.1. Fostering adaptation to climate change

RATIONALE:

Climate change is a global challenge affecting people worldwide. Atmospheric gases, especially carbon dioxide are creating the greenhouse effect, which today has reached the highest level in history. It, therefore, influences climate changes contributing to the creation of extreme weather conditions, including powerful hurricanes and floods which have affected the Western Balkans in recent years as well. The abundant consumption of fossil fuels and the inefficient use of natural resources is also threatening our economic security. In order to address climate change, the countries need to adapt and become resilient to its current and future impacts and foster public and private investments in clean energy. Investments made today will result in future benefits both from a financial and environmental point of view. An efficient use of natural resources will save money and significantly contribute to economic growth. Considering the impact of daily life, this concept should be taken from a comprehensive point of view, covering all aspects of life, starting from early education to favouring cultural and sustainable habits in the daily life of all segments of population. Taking into account the increased frequency of the adverse effects of climate change, their consequences in CEI Member States and the need for appropriate policies and measures in all sectors, one of the CEI's priorities will be the assessment of vulnerability to climate change. It will also include support to the implementation of the results of the recent COP 23 of UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (Bonn, 6 – 17 November 2017) and contribute actively to the good preparation and favorable outcome of COP 24 hosted by Poland, in Katowice.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Foster the incorporation of the value of ecosystem services into socio-economic policy-making at local, regional and national levels across the CEI region;
- Contribute to the activities of ecological restoration, aimed at improving ecosystem services and ecological connectivity in the CEI Member States;
- Promote and support activities related to green infrastructure;
- Contribute to climate change vulnerability assessment in the CEI Region, focusing on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, disaster prevention and on the adaptation to climate change.

3.2. Promoting sustainable energy and energy efficiency

RATIONALE:

The CEI region is still facing drawbacks with regard to sustainable energy production. In this context, enhancing international cooperation is essential for promoting renewable energy sources, energy research and technology and investments in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology. Energy supply and demand will have to focus more on energy-efficient methods and make a greater use of renewable energy sources. The use of low-emission technologies will make a favourable impact on the environment and will contribute to the development of new businesses and job creation. Meeting energy goals is not only about financial savings. It is crucial for our energy security. In this regard, the CEI has identified - as core issues of its activities - the promotion and development of energy efficiency, security of energy supply as well as research and development of renewable energy sources. Bioenergy appears to be the most promising target for at least two reasons: a) the huge amount of organic by-products provided by agriculture and forestry related activities and b) the possibility for the countries to use conventional technologies which cannot count on a highly developed energy industry. In this framework, the CEI wishes to act as a platform for the adoption of sustainable development related policies, to strengthen co-operation among Member States and to support measures to facilitate investments and enhance dissemination and information in this field. In particular, priority is given to the industry and housing sector (energy performance of buildings and buildings with almost zero energy consumption); and to the transport sector, by supporting activities in sustainable mobility, i.e. promoting environmentally-friendly transport, with focus on optimisation of urban mobility, in view of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and of raising the quality of life in urban areas. Bearing in mind that investing in cleaner, low-emission technologies will contribute to fighting climate change and to creating new business and employment possibilities, the CEI will continue to support projects related to sustainable energy development covering both energy production and energy consumption in all sectors.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Raise awareness of the importance, benefits and potential of renewable energy sources;
- Promote the implementation of the Strategic Energy Technology (SET) Plan which aims at accelerating the development and deployment of low-emission technologies;
- Facilitate the exchange of best practices of CEI Member States in the area of promoting renewable energy and reduce the weight of hydrocarbons in the national balance of energy sources;
- Support activities promoting energy performance of public or residential buildings and of buildings with almost zero energy consumption, energy efficiency for corporate sector as well as environmentally-friendly transport.

3.3. Preserving natural capital, especially biodiversity

RATIONALE:

Regional economic prosperity and well-being is underpinned by its natural capital, from fertile soil, multifunctional forests and productive land and seas to fresh water and clean air – as well as by the biodiversity that supports it. Protection, conservation and enhancement of the EU's natural capital are the first key objective of the new European Environment policy (7th EAP), which predicts protected biodiversity and the enhancement of the society's resilience by 2050. Healthy forests and fertile soils, as major natural sinks of greenhouse gases, are vital for achieving climate neutrality. This could only be possible by maintaining and enhancing ecosystem resilience, because social, economic and ecological sustainability are interdependent. Despite the strong legislation framework, most ecosystems are seriously degraded. The increased human pressure on the environment – such as the conversion of natural habitats into agricultural areas, the overexploitation of fisheries, urbanisation, unsustainable farming – is diminishing natural capital at a faster rate than it can be replenished. Therefore, despite benefits and despite the importance of biodiversity for humans, it continues to be lost, mainly due to pressures caused by human activities. Based on the Living Planet's Index, the number of vertebrate species has on average, decreased by more than 50% in slightly more than 40 years. These global problems are also present in CEI Member States and are very often transboundary. For these reasons, there is a need for dedicated management of natural capital as a mean of integrating environmental priorities and the many sectoral interests depending upon them, in order to increase

environmental, economic and social resilience. In this context, the CEI will support actions aimed at improving ecological resilience and at maximising the benefits environment policies can deliver for the economy and society, within the planet's ecological limits. It will also reinforce the overall cooperation in nature and biodiversity conservation among its Member States also with reference to the Natura 2000 Network; and assist in enhancing the environmental asset and the nature capital of green areas and forests across the CEI region. Furthermore, it will encourage the CEI Member States to submit Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) to the United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) as part of the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Raise awareness and enhance public information on natural capital;
- Support appropriate policy measures to support biodiversity and improve human well-being; support the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and other strategic documents related to the natural capital in order to meet its targets;
- Promote the Natura 2000 network as an effective instrument for safeguarding valuable species and habitats and Habitats Directive which obliges EU countries to protect the habitats of endangered species of plants, animals and habitats;
- Support activities and projects in the field of natural resource management, e.g. ensure sustainable forest management, etc.

2. Diversity

GOALS: Intercultural cooperation, media freedom and scientific cooperation and education & training

GOAL 4: Intercultural cooperation

Respect for cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue as well as for equal opportunities are essential elements of conflict prevention and sustainable human, social and economic development. The CEI region has a great potential in terms of traditional values, diversity of expression, artistic creations and dynamic creative sectors. Thus, fostering intercultural cooperation through constructive dialogue and cultural exchange in all their tangible and intangible components is a key factor to contribute to mutual understanding between peoples, communities and countries. Active participation and coordinated efforts at various levels of society – involving governmental, business and NGO dimensions – are essential elements of this process.

OBJECTIVES:

4.1. Promoting intercultural dialogue and preserving cultural diversity

RATIONALE:

The CEI region enjoys remarkable cultural treasures, resources and values which play a major role in shaping its identity. Promoting intercultural dialogue and the respect for the diversity of cultures and arts remains a CEI priority. Strengthening core values such as mutual understanding presents an effective approach to preventing cultural, linguistic and ethnic divisions as well as to enabling people to deal with different identities constructively and democratically. In promoting intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity, media, NGOs, cultural networks and platforms have an important role to play in fostering respect and sharing of common values. In this regard, an active involvement of all groups of the society in the cultural life is necessary. According to the Regional policy of the European Union, territorial cohesion should contribute to enabling equal opportunities without excluding any vulnerable group of people from cultural life as culture contributes to building experiences and to the identity of each territory. This concept is extended to the different aspects regulating social life, and is particularly relevant when speaking about access to culture, which is fundamental for personal growth and self-realisation. Applying a holistic approach to accessibility into the reality of a museum/cultural institution is yet a challenge. It needs more awareness raising, continuous analyses and debates, but the valorisation of cultural heritage through an improved accessibility and know-how in managing the diversity can contribute to sustainable long-term socio-economic development. The CEI will pay particular attention to the cultural policies of the non-EU CEI Member States and will continue to foster intercultural dialogue and preserve the cultural and linguistic identity of minority groups. It will also support the sharing of lessons learnt from the past for better tackling the future.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Enhance integration through culture by increasing human contacts aimed at enhancing the understanding and respect for cultural diversity;
- Improve access to culture to vulnerable groups of people;
- Preserve cultural and linguistic identity of minority groups;
- Promote language exchanges.

4.2. Safeguarding cultural heritage and supporting creative industries (CCIs)

RATIONALE:

Cultural heritage and creative industries play an important role in achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Culture cannot only strengthen relationships and enhance social progress, but it can also help promote job creation and competitiveness. Promoting cultural heritage attracts tourism and boosts economic growth, but it is considered very fragile and often threatened by natural disasters and man-made destruction. For this reason, the CEI will continue to support actions and activities aimed at finding new solutions for the preservation and management of cultural heritage in its Member States. Moreover, cultural and creative industries have become high-capacity engines for economic growth. Over 70 EU regions have chosen culture and creative industries as a priority for their smart specialisation strategies, recognising these industries as drivers of regional growth. Beyond their significant economic contribution, CCIs have built a bridge between arts, culture, business and technology. In addition, CCIs have the potential to foster an inclusive European identity and support social cohesion, though poorly exploited. Thus, the CEI is highly committed to supporting the development of CCIs, especially by encouraging networking and the exchange of experiences among cultural stakeholders, also promoting innovation and the use of modern technologies.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Advance capacities in managing and safeguarding cultural heritage, in particular regarding the restoration and maintenance of the sites of historical and cultural importance;
- Exploit the potential of cultural heritage to develop cultural tourism and contribute to territorial growth and create joint tourist offers based on shared cultural heritage thematic routes;
- Develop actions and policies to reinforce entrepreneurship within the cultural and creative sectors to develop creative clusters or incubators in order to facilitate access to financing and establish an appropriate business environment.

4.3. Fostering cultural diplomacy

RATIONALE:

Cultural diplomacy as a channel for promoting diversity through international cultural relations is an integral part of the core European values. In an increasingly globalised world, cultural diplomacy is essential for fostering and preserving stability, encouraging the exchange of ideas, values, and traditions, and promoting mutual understanding and respect for fundamental rights. Cultural diplomacy reflects and promotes the EU's fundamental values, such as human rights, gender equality, democracy, cultural and linguistic diversity, but it also addresses some of the major global challenges such as conflict prevention and protection of human heritage. As the CEI region represents a diversity of traditional and cultural expressions, cultural policies are seen as drivers for peace and socio-economic development. Cooperation with Member States and their cultural institutions should be based on intercultural dialogue and capacity building and should be supported with specific financial means. In this respect, the countries of the region are increasingly aware of the need for joint efforts from all relevant actors at national and international level. Therefore, the CEI will further promote awareness-raising, especially by means of establishing and facilitating networking activities, disseminating best practices, seeking for funding opportunities.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Promote networking and exchange of experience among cultural stakeholders;
- Organise joint cultural events, festivals, exhibitions, etc.;
- Support mobility, such as artists/writers-in-residence programmes, especially addressed to young people;
- Promote the distribution of cultural goods and services outside national contexts, especially in the fields of audio-visual production and artworks.

4.4. Improving social integration of people from groups at risk of exclusion

RATIONALE:

Social integration is closely linked to the level of cultural growth and civic sense. In every society it is necessary to have a better understanding and respect for each other in order to move towards sustainable and inclusive societies through peaceful social relations of coexistence, collaboration and cohesion among people. In every country, certain groups of people face barriers preventing them from fully participating in the political, economic and social life. These groups are excluded through a number of practices due to a diverse gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, age, educational background, sexual orientation or disability status. In this context, the CEI will contribute to developing “diversity management” capacities, by identifying means and methods of integrating these groups into the society. A special focus will be placed on the creation of a multi-perspective environment through educational and training programmes promoting diversity, right-based conditions, affordable housing, gender-sensitive learning, etc. Even more so, diversity management activities and policies on equal opportunities should stress, in particular, the inclusion of vulnerable groups into the labour market. Furthermore, the CEI will share and promote the “age-friendly environment” principles, in line with the objective of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIPonHAH) that is to contribute to creating a more inclusive societies and communities across Europe by empowering the elderly through scaled-up solutions.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Contribute to initiatives and activities aiming at strengthening interethnic, intercultural and intergenerational solidarity and cooperation, as well as solidarity and cooperation with/between disabled people and other vulnerable groups across the CEI region;
- Foster disability-, ageing- and overall diversity-supportive environments at different levels, thus promote awareness raising and policy influencing activities aiming at enhancing the inclusion of vulnerable groups in all segments of life, work and society;
- Tackle the issue on the demographic changes and health.

GOAL 5: Media freedom

Open and free media landscape with divergent opinions and ideas is a key aspect in democratic and stable societies. Media diversity is the degree to which media content is heterogeneous. However, the concept includes a number of aspects. For media to be most effective in serving their communities, the range of broadcasters, print and online platforms must reflect the diversity and range of opinions of their audiences. It also means fostering the participation of ethnic and linguistic minorities, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups, to have their voices heard and actively contribute to media content creation and policy planning.

OBJECTIVES:

5.1. Promoting media pluralism, transparency and independence

RATIONALE:

Freedom of expression as an essential fundamental right can only be exercised in a free and pluralistic media environment, through an independent media governance. Maintaining media pluralism as well as safeguarding media transparency and independence are essential conditions for preserving the right to information and freedom of expression that underpins the democratic society. The CEI strives to promote and protect media pluralism, transparency and independence through cooperation with other regional and international organisations, especially with regard to the legal framework guaranteeing these principles. A continuous debate, monitoring and awareness raising with the involvement of the different segments of the society is required and therefore the CEI will act as a platform for implementing appropriate activities in this respect.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Stimulate networking and exchange of experience among media owners, journalists’ associations, universities, NGOs and other competent institutions, also in view of monitoring media developments in the region, taking into account national, EU and international legal frameworks;
- Promote the knowledge and implementation of EU standards and directives, such as the Audio-visual Media Services Directive(AVMS), as well as discussions on future developments in the field of media regulations;

- Develop cooperation with the European Audiovisual Observatory (EAO) in view of enhancing participation of CEI countries; increase the availability and quality of data and analysis, thus broadening the picture of the media landscape in Europe.

5.2. Enhancing quality journalism

RATIONALE:

Priority will also be given to media literacy education, considering that the major transformation of the media environment resulting from numerous reasons, including technological innovations, requires adequate skills and competencies. Critical questions linked to the use of Internet and digital media, in particular its legal and ethical dimensions, will also be at the core of CEI cooperation in this field. Special attention will be paid to the support of professional training to promote highest standards in journalism to the media in order to fulfil their role in democratic societies with respect to ethnic and linguistic minorities, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups. This will include cross-border exchange of information and good practices through seminars and workshops organised by the CEI Member States.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Support professional training to promote highest standards in journalism to the media in order to fulfil their role in democratic societies;
- Promote workshops and roundtables to provide media experts with the necessary background information and tools to understand the mechanisms, impact and challenges of the European integration process and provide a comprehensive and objective report on these matters;
- Encourage dialogue between and among legislators and journalists regarding the strengthening of the position of journalists in the newsroom;
- Find new schemes of public funding of quality journalism.

GOAL 6: Scientific cooperation and education & training

Scientific collaborations among nations are nowadays more and more important to tackle increasingly global challenges, which stand at the interface between science and policy. In this regard, Science Diplomacy is emerging as a useful tool to build bridges and strengthen relations, which CEI Member States can further develop and exploit. Additionally, the CEI will aim at enhancing science education in its region as a contribution to the consolidation of the European Research Area (ERA). One of the ways of increasing employability is to raise the overall quality of education and training. Special attention will be paid to the life-long learning concept. There is a continuous need in the CEI area for programmes supporting mobility of students, researchers and teachers, as well as for study visits, staff exchanges and networking opportunities. As the CEI strongly supports European integration, focus will be placed on the implementation of EU educational and employment policies in non-EU CEI Member States, thus increasing the share of highly-skilled people. Education and training will also address groups at risk of exclusion in order to integrate them into the labour market, while focusing on youth unemployment as a growing problem the CEI region is facing.

OBJECTIVES:

6.1. Promoting international scientific cooperation and initiatives in support to science diplomacy

RATIONALE:

The CEI has historically been involved in the promotion of international scientific cooperation, also thanks to the tight collaboration with high-quality Trieste-based research centres composing the CEI Science & Technology Network. Scientific cooperation has an important role in tackling global science challenges and developing political and business links between countries. It also raises awareness among the scientific community in non – EU countries on the EU values, visions and priorities. The CEI believes that good bilateral and multilateral relations can facilitate highly effective cooperation in research and innovation. There is a need for developing a common proactive research and innovation approach. Moreover, communication among scientists and the public should be enhanced and a responsible use of science in public policy should be promoted. The CEI strives to strengthen the support for the science and technology enterprise and to promote a responsible use of science in public policy. Using science to build bridges between countries and to promote scientific cooperation as an essential element of foreign policy by raising the profile of science diplomacy, creating a forum for thought and analysis, and initiating bilateral activities.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Promote a comprehensive CEI approach towards Science Diplomacy to support interactions between the scientific community and decision-makers;
- Bridge between ERA and non-ERA countries by supporting the participation of non-EU/ non-ERA CEI countries in international research projects;
- Support transnational mobility of researchers in line with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment;
- Facilitate access to the institutions of the CEI Science & Technology Network through the promotion of specific pilot projects of advanced research and technical transfer.

6.2. Implementing life-long learning and developing competencies through mobility

RATIONALE:

The CEI will continue fostering high-quality education at all levels by facilitating the participation and the recognition of qualifications. Exchange of best practices between different education and training systems is of crucial importance. Efforts will also be made to counter the unfavorable effects of early school leaving, thus contributing to increasing the inclusiveness in life-long learning. Mobility is an important instrument for supporting high quality education at all levels. Cooperation among universities and institutions of higher education will be encouraged in order to support joint post graduate-level courses, seminars, workshops or summer courses. Major attention will, therefore, be devoted to enhancing the involvement of universities and institutions of higher education from the non-EU CEI Member States. In this context, mobility will be enhanced through university and research programmes such as Erasmus+ and Horizon H2020 MSCA, with the final goal to promote brain circulation and mitigate the negative effects of “brain drain”. Mobility should also be provided for young professionals and vulnerable groups. E-learning has also enormous potential to equalise opportunities and promote social mobility through access to quality higher education.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Promote cooperation among Higher Education Institutes with a focus on mobility/exchange of students, teachers and staff;
- Expand opportunities for learning mobility by vocational education institutions;
- Set up e-learning and distance learning facilities.

6.3. Enhancing scientific literacy and technological knowledge and capacity

RATIONALE:

The CEI has always attached great importance to strengthening educational institutions and building expert capacity. This calls for strengthening the capacities of higher education institutions in teaching, research and management. Well-educated people meet the local need for a qualified workforce and are prepared to face the demands of the global knowledge society. The CEI will continue to support the modernisation of the education systems, as it needs to be in line with the requirements of the fast changing job market and business innovation. Challenges posed by globalisation, demographic changes, rapid technological development require better performance of education systems and highly skilled people. This includes enhancing cooperation with education and training institutions, promoting learning at the workplace, etc. To increase capacities of the labour force and enhance employability, cooperation between education, academic and research institutions and employers (private and public bodies) should also be fostered. The CEI will pay particular attention to facilitating links between academia, business, government and community in line with the “Quadruple-Helix Model. Enhancing entrepreneurial literacy through education and training for the vulnerable groups will also be promoted. In particular, the activities will aim at promoting the dissemination of the concept and contemporary methodologies in the field of lifelong learning, including vocational training and adult education and training for innovation, economic growth and job creation. Furthermore, development of instruments / mechanisms to monitor the employment of graduates after graduation is also necessary.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

- Promote collaboration among education, employment and industry stakeholders in order to improve work-based learning experience;
- Organise training activities on skills and competences needed for the 21st century job market, with a special focus on enhancing entrepreneurial and innovation-oriented mind-sets and skills for all;
- Promote the inclusion of ICT in all learning systems;
- Promote actions to facilitate the transfer of scientific knowledge to the civil society.



Interim Implementation Report 2018 of the CEI Plan of Action 2018-2020

Elaborated by the CEI-Executive Secretariat, the Interim Implementation Report 2018 of the CEI Plan of Action 2018-2020 is intended to present the standing point of the implementation of the document with regard to the two main chapters: I. CEI Strategic Approach to Regional Cooperation and II. CEI Agenda for 2018-2020.

Acronyms and abbreviations

AII	Adriatic and Ionian Initiative
ARFVG	Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
CEI	Central European Initiative
CEI-ES	Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat
CNC	Committee of CEI National Coordinators
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUSAIR	The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
EUSALP	The EU Strategy for the Alpine Region
EUSDR	The EU Strategy for the Danube Region
KEP	Know-how Exchange Programme
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
SWG RRD	Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development
TC	Technical Cooperation
UN	United Nations
UNGA	UN General Assembly

Executive Summary

Regional cooperation is one of the key prerequisites in the process of **European integration** and **sustainable development**. In this context, the CEI has established two long-term priorities in its Plan of Action 2018-2020, i.e. **strengthening connectivity** and **valorising diversity** in the region.

A number of traditional and new actions have been launched by the CEI - in particular by the Croatian Presidency and the Executive Secretariat - in order to: intensify the **political dialogue**, enhance **parliamentary cooperation**, pursue **cooperation with the UN**, in the framework of the CEI's observer status in the UNGA, as well as strengthen **cooperation with the EU** and **other international and regional organisations**. The CEI-Executive Secretariat has put particular focus on **specialisation**. In its activities and projects, it has concentrated its efforts on issues where the CEI can make a difference.

Furthermore, the CEI has worked on enhancing its **project cooperation** through its funds and instruments, i.e. **Cooperation Activities** (small-scale projects aimed at networking and people-to-people contacts such as conferences, seminars, workshops, festivals, cultural and youth exchanges, educational and science meetings, media events, etc.), **Advanced Training Programme** (for Young Professionals from non-EU CEI Member States on work at the CEI-ES), **Feature Events and Prizes** (institutionalised events for networking, training and mobility in the fields of media, intercultural cooperation and life-long education and training), **KEP** (for activities linked to the capacity building, transfer of know-how and exchange of experience from EU to non-EU CEI countries), **TC Programme** (for technical assistance in support of larger EBRD operations and investments) and **EU-funded Projects**.

Through the above cooperation tools, the **CEI has organised, implemented and supported 113 projects and activities in 2018**, covering all the goals and objectives in the framework of the CEI Plan of Action 2018-2020, as follows:

- the CEI has engaged in actions in the field of **Good Governance** aimed at *processing and exchanging experience on large-scale migration* issues through the organisation, implementation and promotion of 5 projects and activities. The CEI has provided a platform for *promoting safe and secure e-Government solutions*, through a cooperation activity for the exchange of good practices related to eHealth. To *strengthen institutional capacities and promote effective anti-corruption measures and open data*, the CEI has organised, implemented and promoted 15 projects and activities;
- in the framework of **Economic Growth**, and in order to support the *strengthening of transport networks*, the CEI has organised, implemented and promoted 16 projects and activities. Moreover, 8 projects and activities have been implemented and promoted with the aim of *improving research and innovation systems*. The CEI has also launched and supported 5 projects and activities with the intention of *supporting transition to Circular and Bioeconomy and promoting Blue Growth*. Nevertheless, the CEI has also worked on *strengthening rural and area-based development* by implementing or supporting 11 projects and activities;
- the CEI has undertaken and promoted a number of actions in the field of **Environmental Protection** aimed at *fostering adaptation to climate change* (4 projects and activities), *promoting sustainable energy and energy efficiency* (8 projects and activities) and *preserving natural capital, especially biodiversity* (2 projects and activities);
- every year, the CEI supports activities aimed at encouraging **Intercultural Cooperation**, in particular *promoting intercultural dialogue and preserving cultural diversity*. This year 3 projects and activities have been promoted with the aim to achieve this objective. The *safeguarding of cultural heritage and the supporting of creative industries* have also been encouraged. In this context, 6 projects and activities have been organised, implemented and promoted. In addition, *fostering cultural diplomacy* (9 projects and activities) and *improving social integration of people from groups at risk of exclusion* (3 projects and activities) have also been adequately tackled;
- the CEI has also supported activities fostering **Media Freedom**, especially for *promoting media pluralism, transparency and independence* (2 projects and activities) and for *enhancing quality journalism* (1 activity);
- finally, the CEI has promoted **Scientific Cooperation and Education & Training** by organising events and providing funding through its instruments aimed at *promoting international scientific cooperation and initiatives in support to science diplomacy* (6 projects and activities), *implementing life-long learning and developing competencies through mobility* (6 projects and activities) and *enhancing scientific literacy and technological knowledge and capacity* (2 projects and activities).

Introduction

The CEI Plan of Action 2018-2020 has been developed as a focused and project-oriented roadmap for this three-year period. Special attention has been paid to the real needs and proposals expressed by the CEI Member States, while also taking into account the evolving environment in the region.

The document intends to capitalise on the main strengths of the Organisation, based on its distinctive methodology for the promotion of **regional cooperation** through a combination of **multilateral diplomacy** and **fund, programme and project management**. While remaining a platform for political dialogue, in support of the **European integration** process and the **sustainable development** in the region, the CEI has developed a strong operational approach aimed at achieving these two strategic objectives.

The goals and objectives of the Plan of Action are fully in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the EU Macro-Regional Strategies also affecting the CEI area. The goals are interlinked, interdependent and represent the main areas of interest of the CEI Member States, as outlined in the CEI Guidelines and Rules of Procedure.

Despite the different levels of development among the CEI Member States, the goals and objectives of the document are relevant to all of them and are pursued through goal-oriented multilateral cooperation, going beyond a purely intergovernmental dynamics, and collaborative, multi-stakeholder partnerships. Thus, they involve both governmental and non-governmental actors – including civil society, business actors, scientific communities, academia and media. Furthermore, partnerships with other organisations are considered a part of normal working practice.

In practical terms, the CEI's main goal through the implementation of the Plan of Action is to bring its Member States closer together in joint initiatives and encourage further regional cooperation in a structured and result-oriented manner, while committing the Organisation to a continuous improvement of its performance.

I. CEI Strategic Approach to Regional Cooperation

Regional cooperation is a cornerstone of securing peace, stability and prosperity. It is also one of the prerequisites of the process of European integration, which is one of the CEI's strategic objectives, together with the promotion of sustainable development. The CEI Plan of Action 2018-2020 has, indeed, been devised to meet these two strategic objectives and has established two long-term priorities, i.e. **strengthening connectivity** and **valorising diversity** in the region.

A number of new developments have occurred with regard to the European integration process in 2018. A credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans has been reinforced, the Eastern European countries have made favourable steps forward as well. The path to the EU, however, requires the adoption and implementation of numerous rules and standards, full respect of the democratic values, development of good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation, economies prepared to face competition etc. Hence, the transfer of knowledge on European integration issues has been considered of utmost value and importance and has adequately been tackled both by the Croatian CEI Presidency and the CEI-Executive Secretariat.

In addition, numerous transnational challenges have affected the CEI countries this year. First and foremost, the renewed migration crisis. Increasing numbers of migrants are trying to reach the Western region through the South East European routes and the Mediterranean. On the other hand, there is also a massive brain drain from the CEI countries where young skilled people are leaving their countries in search of better job opportunities. Thus, these increasingly important issues had been tackled more systematically at regional level in the framework of the CEI's political structure.

On the other side, there was also an increased focus, through different fora, above all the EU, on improving interconnections within the region in terms of ensuring good governance, strengthening transport and energy links, combating climate change, promoting research and innovation, introducing digitalisation, improving education, enhancing cultural relations etc.

In this context, the CEI, in particular the Croatian Presidency and the Executive Secretariat, was fully committed to adequately meeting the priorities and challenges. Indeed, traditional and new-initiated actions were launched within the CEI framework in 2018, pursuant with the Plan of Action 2018-2020:

- **intensified political dialogue** - in line with the already established practice, activities included: several meetings of the CNC, an annual formal [meeting of Foreign Ministers \(MFA Meeting\)](#) under the topic "Central European Initiative: perspectives of tomorrow", with particular regard to "European integration: experiences and challenges" and "Common efforts in backing regional stability", as well as an [informal MFA meeting](#) at the outskirts of the UN General Assembly, and a meeting of Heads of Government (CEI Summit) under the topic "Building Security, Boosting Economy, Enabling Prosperity". The Croatian CEI Presidency paid particular attention to the various important issues for the region. Therefore, numerous high-level meetings, expert conferences, and other events have been held throughout the year on topics such as building stronger partnerships and twinning in the process of European integration, migration in the twenty first century, intermodal transport development, fostering cohesion and competitiveness through regional cooperation, energy efficiency, sustainable tourism, cultural heritage and media freedom. In addition, a few cultural events (concerts) took place as a contribution to the promotion of intercultural dialogue. A Business Forum for advancing economic cooperation was also organised. The important outcomes and significant inputs gained through the MFA Meetings, Summit, CNC gatherings, High-level and Expert Conferences, Events, Forums, have contributed to significantly stepping forward cooperation towards European integration and sustainable development within the CEI Member States and on the challenges occurred throughout the year;
- **parliamentary cooperation** – the CEI activities also included cooperation among parliaments. The Croatian CEI Presidency organised the meetings of the [CEI Parliamentary Committee](#) and the CEI Parliamentary Assembly on the topic of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, the Polish Chairman of the [General Committee on Economic Affairs](#) of the CEI Parliamentary Dimension organised a meeting of this committee in Warsaw with the participation of high-level representatives of the Polish Government, i.e. Andrzej Adamczyk, Minister of Infrastructure, Krzysztof Tchórzewski, Minister of Energy, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Investment and Development. The main topics of the meeting were infrastructure, road, energy and connections in the CEI region on the North-South axis, with a special focus on the Via Carpathia road construction project;
- **cooperation with the UN**, in the framework of the CEI's observer status in the UNGA, was also strongly supported – besides the traditional informal MFA meeting at the outskirts of the opening of the general debate of the 73rd session of the UNGA, the CEI, through the Croatian Presidency, presented a *Draft Resolution on Cooperation*

between the United Nations and the Central European Initiative, adopted by the General Assembly on 26 November 2018, on the occasion of the biannual meeting among UN and regional organisations;

- **cooperation with the EU**, and in particular the EC – strengthening this cooperation has always been for the CEI one of the main priorities. At political level, it was pursued through participation of the EC representatives in the meetings of the high-level structures, namely the MFA Meeting and the CEI Summit. At practical level, a number of contacts have been established with various Directorates General of the Commission in the framework of the CEI EU-funded projects. Moreover, the CEI further enrolled in the implementation of the EU Macro-Regional Strategies and actively participated in a number of events in the context of the EUSDR, EUSAIR and EUSALP;
- promotion of **cooperation with other international and regional organisations** – particular attention was paid to the harmonisation of CEI priorities and specific projects with that of the others aimed, in particular, at establishing common actions and joint events, but also at avoiding proliferation of similar initiatives among various regional organisations, as well as their overlapping and duplication. In this context, cooperation with the OSCE was enhanced and a joint project for young entrepreneurs (YDEAS - Young Developers and Entrepreneurs to Advance Start-ups in the Western Balkans) was launched and finalised, in the framework of the CEI Fund at the OSCE. A project of the BSEC on the inter-basin cooperation on marine litter, with a focus on the Danube River and the Black Sea, to be implemented next year, has also been co-financed by the CEI this year. Moreover, the Croatian CEI Presidency organised a joint event with the Council of Europe under the title “‘Cultural Routes of the Olive Tree’ as a model for Europe’s values, heritage and sustainable development”. Last but not least a [Memorandum of Understanding with the SWG RRD of South-Eastern Europe](#) aimed at promoting effective regional cooperation in the field of agriculture and rural development was signed. Besides these new activities, cooperation has been pursued through a regular reciprocal participation of partners in various events and activities, in particular with the AII, BSEC, CBSS and RCC;
- with regard to this latter point, the CEI, and in particular the Executive Secretariat, put an accent on **specialisation** and concentrated on issues where it can make a difference. The recent actions, indeed, focused on several central themes, stemming from the two strategic objectives, which needed a broader regional engagement, such as for example that of the mobility, the circular economy and in particular the blue growth, the accessibility and social integration and the cultural and science diplomacy. In their broader term, these topics cover numerous areas such as culture, education, migration, research and innovation, science and technology, environment, transport, energy, business and so on. Thus, numerous events, activities and projects made part of the Secretariat’s programme of activities, with a view to encouraging cooperation among CEI members in these areas;
- last but not least, the CEI, and in particular the Executive Secretariat, has worked on a strong intensification of the **project cooperation and tailor-made programmes** for the needs of its countries. In this context, the following instruments have been put at the disposal of the Member States:
 - **Cooperation Activities** (co-financed out of the CEI Cooperation Fund, contributed by all CEI Member States) – the activities mainly promote networking and people-to-people contacts, such as conferences, seminars, workshops, festivals, cultural and youth exchanges, educational and science meetings, media events, etc. on topics where smaller amounts make an effective impact. The utility of this instrument is demonstrated by the fact that a large number of applications for co-financing requests have been submitted this year and 43 Cooperation Activities were eventually approved with 368,460 EUR;
 - **Advanced Training Programme for Young Professionals** (fully financed out of the CEI Cooperation Fund) – the CEI is strongly promoting learning-at-workplace activities. In this context, throughout 2018 it has engaged several young professionals in the area of external relations, communication and project management (from Albania, R. R. Moldova, Montenegro and North Macedonia). After their training period, they are expected to return to their countries and apply the knowledge gained during their stay at the Executive Secretariat in Trieste. Participants from the previous editions of the Programme, are currently employed in national institutions (e.g. last year’s trainee in the area of External Relations was afterwards employed by the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of Montenegro within the Directorate General for Multilateral Affairs);
 - **Feature Events and Prizes** – the CEI has further promoted its “Feature Events”. They are events, which are recurrent in nature and highly contribute to enhancing the CEI visibility. These events either carry the name of the CEI in their title or dedicate a special segment to the CEI, providing valuable opportunities for networking, training and mobility in the fields of media, intercultural cooperation and life-long education and training. Moreover, in order to honour and encourage initiatives and activities of talented and often young people from CEI Member States, several Prizes have been offered, in particular in the fields of culture and media.
 - **KEP** (financed out of the CEI Fund at the EBRD funded by Italy – KEP Italy and of a voluntary contribution provided by the Polish Government – KEP Poland) – the CEI has paid special attention to the promotion of joint projects between the EU and non-EU CEI Member States related to transfer of know-how, exchange of experience and capacity building, such as trainings, study visits, etc. Indeed, this specific Programme, has proven to be the most efficient and stimulating mechanism for the transmission of best

practices in all areas of activity. As an outcome of this year's Call, 6 KEP projects were approved with 228,057 out of KEP Italy and 2 with 40,000 EUR out of KEP Poland.

- **TC Programme** (financed out of the CEI Fund at the EBRD, entirely funded by Italy) – through this Programme the Fund offers grant-type assistance in support of specific components of investments and operations of the EBRD. TC operations include support for feasibility and pre-feasibility studies, sector and environmental engineering, management training, capacity building, pre-loan audits. The CNC has recently approved the financing of three TC projects by the CEI Fund at the EBRD. These projects will target all the non-EU CEI Member States in priority sectors such as energy, transport and capacity building for a total cumulative cost of 595,000 EUR.
- **EU-funded Projects** – the CEI, through its Executive Secretariat, makes use of EU funding programmes as a valuable tool for the attainment of one of its strategic objectives - the promotion of regional cooperation for European integration – as well as for the implementation of its tri-annual Plan of Action. The CEI-Executive Secretariat is currently involved in 16 EU-funded projects with a total amount of about 25 million EUR of which about 3 million EUR administered by the CEI-Executive Secretariat in a number of areas such as transport, energy, research and innovation, environmental protection, social innovation, culture.

II. CEI Agenda for 2018-2020

The Agenda, covering a three-year period (2018-2020), represents a roadmap aimed at promoting regional cooperation for enhancing democratic and inclusive societies and sustainable economies of the CEI Member States. In this regard, the CEI has identified two key priorities aimed, in particular, at promoting connectivity and valorising diversity in the region, which underpin the CEI's two strategic objectives on promoting European integration and the sustainable development.

In this context, and for adequately tackling these issues, the CEI launched, supported and organised a high number of actions in close cooperation with stakeholders from the CEI Member States (Governments, Ministries, Expert groups, Regional organisations and institutions, NGOs). The activities dedicated to these two priorities and to the goals and objectives established, address the core challenges and opportunities for CEI Member States reflecting a common vision of the economic, social and environmental prosperity of the region attained through joint actions.

I. Connectivity

Goal 1: Good governance

Good Governance as a basis of democratic stability and security as well as a conditional asset for achieving sustainable development is at the top of the CEI Agenda in 2018.

Throughout the last years, Europe and the CEI Region have faced with unprecedented migration flows. Since all countries are equally concerned about migration, it was decided to undertake common actions. Thereby, the CEI has resolutely and determinedly engaged in actions aimed at processing and exchanging experience on large-scale migration issues, including through promoting exchange of practice and knowledge among public and non-governmental actors dealing with migration at central and local level and encouraging cooperation in combating illegal migration and trafficking in human beings.

Moreover, the CEI has provided a platform for cooperation in the field of e-Governance and the exchange of good practices for the implementation of safe and secure e-Governance solutions, in particular eHealth. Promoting e-services and cybersecurity and improving the digital literacy are also among the CEI priorities.

The CEI is also actively promoting the strengthening of institutional capacities and effective anticorruption measures and open data by supporting the establishment of common integrity standards of public administrations and trainings for public administration officers on effective anti-corruption measures as well as raising awareness on fair public procurement.

1.1. Processing and exchanging experience on large-scale migration

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
Third Annual Conference of the Western Balkans Migration Network "A search for that special place under the sun in modern Europe: migration in the twenty first century"	CEI Presidency Event	The Institute of Economics Zagreb, Croatia	25-26 May 2018, Zagreb - Croatia
MIGRALONA Project - Strengthening collaboration between the local and the national tiers in the management of migrations	Project funded by the ARFVG	CEI-ES implementing partner, with the support of NALAS, association of the SEE Municipalities; MARRI, the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative	Regional, six workshops in the Western Balkans between December 2017 and March 2018
Territorial and Urban Potentials Connected to Migration and Refugee Flows	ESPON Targeted Research	Consortium led by University of Bologna	01/07/2017 - 01/07/2018
	EU-funded Project	(CEI-ES Partner)	
International Symposium "Combating Illegal Migration and Illicit Human Trafficking"	Cooperation Activity	Department for International Affairs of the University King Danylo, Ukraine	16 – 17 March 2018, Ivano-Frankivsk - Ukraine
"Fostering social inclusion and integration of asylum seekers and refugees in Western Balkan region and other CEI countries"	Cooperation Activity	Asylum Protection Center, Serbia	5-7 December 2018, Belgrade, Serbia

1.2. Promoting safe and secure e-Government solutions

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
CEI-HECE Spring School on "IoT, economic and management challenges for e-health integration in the enlarged Europe"	Cooperation Activity	Higher Education in Clinical Engineering (HECE) of the University of Trieste, Italy	14-17 ay 2018, Koper - Slovenia

1.3. Strengthening institutional capacities and promoting effective anti-corruption measures and open data

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
International Conference - "Knowledge sharing for building stronger partnerships in the process of European integration"	CEI Presidency Event	<i>Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia</i>	25-26 April 2018, Zagreb - Croatia
Ministerial Conference "Fostering Cohesion and Competitiveness through Regional Cooperation"	CEI Presidency Event	Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds of the Republic of Croatia	6 June 2018, Zagreb - Croatia
WBG Facility	Project funded by the ARFVG	CEI-ES implementing partner	September 2018-September 2021, Western Balkans
Establishing of Origination and Execution Capacity Program for SME Direct Finance in Ukraine, R. Moldova, Belarus	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Regional (Belarus, R. Moldova, Ukraine)
Albania Secretariat to the Investment Council	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Albania
CEI Support to Small Business Initiative: Expansion of Origination and Execution Capacity Program for SME Direct Finance and Risk Sharing in Belarus	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Belarus
Capacity building Programme for Enhancing Public Procurement Professionalism International Master in Public Procurement Management (IMPPM). 6th Generation (2018/2019)	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Regional
Regional Western Balkans Master Programme in Public Procurement Management. 1st Generation, (2017/2018)	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Regional
Support anti-corruption capacity building in Albania	KEP Italy Project	OSCE - Governance in Economic and Environmental Issues Department (GEEID)International Academy of Anti-Corruption (IACA)	Closed in 2018, Albania
Strengthening governance through public procurement in the Western Balkans - "Regional Western Balkans Master Programme in Public Procurement Management"	KEP Italy Project	Department of Economics and Finance, University of Rome tor Vergata, Italy	September 2017 - June 2018, Regional
Regional Hidden Economy Forum	Cooperation Activity	Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM), North Macedonia	7 February 2018, Skopje - North Macedonia
International Conference on Enhancing arbitral Resolution of Disputes	Cooperation Activity	Economic Chamber of North Macedonia	19-20 April 2018, Skopje - North Macedonia
Pre-Presidency Conference	Cooperation Activity	Institute for Advanced Studies Vienna, Trans European Policy Studies Association TEPSA, Austrian Society for European Politics	7-8 June 2018, Vienna - Austria
"Building sustainable links in the Danube region" - citizen participation on local, national, macro-regional and EU level	Cooperation Activity	Citizen Participation Forum, Bulgaria	15-16 October 2018, Sofia - Bulgaria
International Conference European Integration through the Perspective of Cooperation between Civil Society and Local Authorities	Cooperation Activity	European Movement Republic of North Macedonia	6-7 November 2018, Skopje - North Macedonia

Goal 2: Economic growth

In a period when national economies are becoming increasingly interdependent, the need for enhanced harmonisation of the entrepreneurial environment, transparency and predictability of transport and customs procedures, energy connectivity and simplified regulations for trade and business is more and more important. Thereby, economic growth is one of the main priorities of the CEI.

Throughout this year, a number of projects have been supported and implemented by the CEI in order to enhance transport policies of the CEI Member States, to improve coordination and reduce barriers affecting CEI countries, to promote the capitalisation process to increase accessibility to the main transport networks as well as to promote inter-institutional cooperation among CEI Member States in order to coordinate the development of a common transport strategy. Environmentally-friendly transport and transport methods were also promoted.

Along the same line, the CEI has launched various actions financed by the CEI funds but also within EU-funded projects in order to improve research and innovation systems and to support transition to Circular and Bioeconomy and promoting Blue Growth.

Due to the fact that over one third of the population in the CEI Member States living in rural areas, rural and area-based development remain among the most important fields of the CEI's activity.

2.1. Strengthening transport networks

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
International Expert Conference on Combined Cargo Transport	CEI Presidency Event	<i>Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Croatia</i>	29 May 2018, Zagreb - Croatia
Sustainable Urban Logistics Planning To Enhance Regional freight transport (SULPITER)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/06/2016 - 01/06/2019
Sustainable Urban Mobility in MED port cities (SUPPORT)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Lead Partner)	01/02/2017 - 31/07/2019
Improved rail connections and smart mobility in Central Europe (CONNECT2CE)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Lead Partner)	01/06/2017 - 31/05/2020
Cross-border institutional cooperation for Port Security Enhancement (SECNET)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/10/2017 - 31/05/2020
Integrating multimodal connections in the Adriatic-Ionian region (ADRIPASS)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Lead Partner)	01/01/2018 - 31/12/2019
Intermodality Promotion and Rail Renaissance in Adriatic – Ionian Region (INTER-CONNECT)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/01/2018 - 01/12/2019
SILK2FVG	Project funded by the ARFVG	CEI-ES implementing partner	01/01/2017 – 31/12/2018
Rail Corridor X in Serbia and North Macedonia: Lender's Monitor Advisor	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Regional
North Macedonia: Railway Corridor VIII - Energy Management System for PERI	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	North Macedonia
Local Roads Reconstruction and Upgrade Project	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Montenegro
R. Moldova Railways: Assistance in preparation and implementation of tender for rolling stock rehabilitation	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	R. R. Moldova
North Macedonia: National Roads Programme - Project Implementation Unit support	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	North Macedonia
Supporting Public-Private Partnerships in the Transport Sector in Belarus: Road Sector Reform	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Belarus
Corridor Vc in Republika Srpska - Procurement Certification Support	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Capacity building on PPPs (Public Private Partnerships) for road construction and exploitation for Albanian authorities with the participation of Serbia and other Western Balkan countries	KEP Italy Project	ANAS S.p.a., Italy; ANAS International Enterprise S.p.A., Italy; AIPCR Italy World Road Association	Closed in 2018, Albania

2.2. Improving research and innovation systems

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
Young Developers and Entrepreneurs to Advance Start-ups (YDEAS)	CEI-OSCE Joint Activity CEI Fund at the OSCE	OSCE and CEI through the CEI Fund at the OSCE	8-27 July 2018, Turin, Italy 8-9 November 2018, Tirana - Albania
Innovation in Health and Care for All (ITHACA)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES subcontractor)	01/01/2017 - 31/12/2021

Development and regulation of the University of Belgrade laser-laboratory infrastructure for education and research	KEP Italy Project	European Laboratory for Non-linear Spectroscopy (LENS), Italy	January 2017 – December 2018, Serbia
Innovation Vouchers scheme for resource efficiency technologies and services in Serbia - Support to the implementation and marketing of the innovation vouchers scheme in the country	KEP Italy Project	Department of Management Engineering, Politecnico of Milan, Italy	Closed in 2018, Serbia
SAFEMEAT - developing a system for easy and accurate monitoring of gas in meat products during storage and distribution	KEP Italy Project	National Research Council - Institute of Photonics and Nanotechnologies, Italy	February 2018 - December 2019, Serbia
From startup to scaleup: Scaling up Europe's entrepreneurial future	Cooperation Activity	YES - Youth Entrepreneurial Service (YES) Foundation	7-8 June 2018, Skopje - North Macedonia
Conference on Radiation and Applications in various Fields of Research	Cooperation Activity	RAD Association, Serbia	18-22 June 2018, Ohrid - North Macedonia
7TH International Conference on Logic and Applications	Cooperation Activity	Inter University Center, Croatia	24-28 September 2018, Dubrovnik - Croatia

2.3. Supporting transition to Circular and Bioeconomy and promoting Blue Growth

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
Boosting the innovation potential of the triple helix of Adriatic-Ionian traditional and emerging BLUE growth sectors clusters through an open source/knowledge sharing and community based approach (BLUE BOOST)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/01/2018 - 31/10/2019
Empowering the 4 helix of MED maritime clusters through an open source/knowledge sharing and community-based approach in favour of MED blue growth (4helix+)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/02/2018 - 31/07/2020
WASTE MGMT in Vinnytsia – Capacity building and transfer of knowledge for increasing and improving professional skills in waste management in the Region of Vinnytsia	KEP Italy Project	Contarina Spa, Italy	Closed in 2018, Ukraine
WASTE OIL FREE Integrated Waste-Oils Management System - Transfer of Best Practices for Safe, Sustainable and Eco-friendly Transport in Serbia	KEP Italy Project	University of Chemistry and Technology, Prague; The Czech Technology Platform for Sustainable Chemistry, Czech Republic	February 2018 - December 2018, Serbia
Sustainable Approach to Managing Construction and Demolition Waste (SAMCODE)	KEP Italy Project	Department of Physics And Earth Sciences, University of Ferrara, Italy	January 2018 - August 2019, North Macedonia

2.4. Strengthening rural and area-based development

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
Cooperation with SWG-RRD	Institutional Activity	CEI-ES signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Standing Working Group on Regional Rural Development (SWG RRD)	Trieste, September 2018
SENTINEL Advancing and strengthening Social Enterprises to maximize their impact in the economic and social sector of Central European countries	EU-funded project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/06/2017 - 31/05/2020
Kotor Fortress Urban Regeneration - Technical and Market Due Diligence	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Montenegro
Water Sector in Coastal Area Reform	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Montenegro
SMART RIVER GOVERNANCE 2.0	KEP Italy Project	Alta Scuola, Ecoazioni, Italy	January 2018 - March 2019, R. R. Moldova
Regional Conference on Cultural and Historical Potential in Tourism	Cooperation Activity	Cultural Center Parobrod Belgrade, Serbia	31 March 2018, Belgrade - Serbia
2018 Danube Future Interdisciplinary School	Cooperation Activity	"Angel Kanchev" University of Ruse, Bulgaria	9-16 September 2018, Ruse - Bulgaria

CoCoBela (Coordinated Cooperation Between LAGs)	Cooperation Activity	Hranice Development Agency and Local Action Group from Hranice– LAG from Hranice, Czech Republic	10 – 11 September 2018, Hranice - Czech Republic
9th CEI Regional Forum for Wellness & Spa Industry	Cooperation Activity	Cluster of Health, Wellness and SPA Tourism Serbia (WELLNESS SERBIA)	17 October 2018, Vrnjacka Banja - Serbia
Workshop on promotion of traditional meat products and exchange of good practices in meat processing sector in Western Balkans (EXQUISITE)	Cooperation Activity	Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe – SWG, North Macedonia Regional Development Agency of Zlatibor, Serbia	16-18 October 2018, Jahorina – Bosnia and Herzegovina
Regional tourism entrepreneurship conference based on EIAT platform	Cooperation Activity	Centre for Tourism Research and Studies (CTRS), Serbia	November 2018, Serbia

Goal 3: Environmental Protection

As one of the global challenges, environmental protection and climate change are at the top of the CEI priorities for moving towards sustainable growth. Furthermore, the CEI fully recognises the two-way relationship between environment and security. Thereby, the CEI strives to transform environmental security risk into opportunities for cooperation that can enhance stability and contribute to sustainable development.

In this context, the CEI has undertaken and supported a number of actions and activities to foster adaptation to climate change, promote sustainable energy and energy efficiency and preserve natural capital, especially biodiversity.

These CEI actions and activities have meaningfully contributed toward improving ecosystem services and ecological connectivity, disaster prevention and on the adaptation to climate change.

Moreover, disseminating the importance of renewable energy sources, facilitating the exchange of best practices of CEI Member States and supporting activities promoting energy performance of public or residential buildings are also among the activities carried out within the CEI Framework in 2018.

3.1. Fostering adaptation to climate change

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
NAMIRG - North Adriatic MIRG (Maritime Incident Response Group)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Lead Partner)	01/01/2018 - 31/12/2019
Dams safety: a new approach for the monitoring of the dams with the use of remote sensing	KEP Italy Project	University of Padua - Interdepartmental Research Center of Geomatics (CIRGEO), Italy	January 2017 – June 2018, Albania
HYMEUR-HYdrometeorological Modelling for Environmental qQualitycontRol	KEP Italy Project	University of Brescia, Italy	Closed in 2018, Serbia
Improving Disaster Risk Reduction skills and Resilience-building Practices in the Western Balkans: EMS WeB	KEP Italy Project	Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Italy	January 2018 - December 2018, Regional

3.2. Promoting sustainable energy and energy efficiency

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
Conference “Energy Efficiency in Buildings-for a better tomorrow”	CEI Presidency Event	Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning of the Republic of Croatia	26-27 September, 2018, Zagreb - Croatia
European Technology and Innovation Platform Bioenergy – Support for Advanced Biofuels Stakeholder (ETIP Bioenergy SABS)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/09/2016 - 30/09/2018
European Technology and Innovation Platform Bioenergy - Support of Renewable Fuels and Advanced Bioenergy Stakeholders 2 (ETIP-B-SABS-2)	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	01/09/2018 – 31/08/2021
Support to ZS for Implementation of Energy Information Management System - Serbia	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Serbia

Independent System Operator of Bosnia and Herzegovina - Consultant for the Project Implementation Unit	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Implementation of the Corporate Governance Action Plan (CGAP) for KESH (Korporata Elektroenergjitike Shqiptare)	TC Project	EBRD/CEI	Albania
CEI support to strengthening Energy Regulatory Authorities in the Western Balkans	KEP Italy Project	Italian Regulatory Authority for Electricity, Gas and Water (AEEGSI), Gestore dei mercati energetici (GME), Terna, Italy	November 2017 - October 2018, Regional
Second International Conference Women in Energy	Cooperation Activity	Association of Engineering Societies – Engineering Institution of North Macedonia and EVN North Macedonia	4-5 June 2018, Skopje -North Macedonia

3.3. Preserving natural capital, especially biodiversity

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
Preserving Kotor Bay as natural and historical heritage - Analysing sea pollution sources and raising ecological awareness	KEP Italy Project	lefluids s.r.l., Italy	Closed in 2018, Montenegro
Nature-Based Solutions for Smart Cities (Next)	Cooperation Activity	Belarussian-Russian University (BRU), Belarus	15-26 August 2018, Mahiliou - Belarus

II. Diversity

Goal 4: Intercultural cooperation

The CEI region has a great potential in terms of traditional values, diversity of expression, artistic creations and dynamic creative sectors. Thus, fostering intercultural cooperation through constructive dialogue and cultural exchange is a key factor to contribute to mutual understanding between people, communities and countries.

The CEI supports, every year, activities that promote intercultural dialogue, creative industries, cultural heritage and cultural diplomacy. Cultural heritage and creative industries play an important role in achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Culture cannot only strengthen relationships and enhance social progress, but it can also help promote job creation and competitiveness. Promoting cultural heritage attracts tourism and boosts economic growth.

Moreover, the CEI supports mobility activities, such as an artists/writers-in-residence programme, especially addressed to young people. It promotes the distribution of cultural goods and services outside national contexts, especially in the fields of audio-visual production and artworks and contributes to initiatives and activities aimed at strengthening interethnic, intercultural and intergenerational solidarity and cooperation, as well as solidarity and cooperation with/between disabled people and other vulnerable groups across the CEI region.

4.1. Promoting intercultural dialogue and preserving cultural diversity

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
CEMAN-Central European Music Academies Network	CEI Presidency Event	Conservatory of Music G. Tartini, Italy	26 October 2018, Zagreb – Croatia 28 October 2018, Trieste - Italy
CEI Concert – A recital by Andreas Ottensamer at Dubrovnik Summer Festival	CEI Presidency Event	Dubrovnik Summer Festival, Croatia	14 August 2018, Dubrovnik - Croatia
XIV International Forum of Aquileia Euroregion “The Betrayed Europe – Illusions and Disillusions”	Cooperation Activity	Mitteleuropa Cultural Association, Italy	19 October 2018, Udine - Italy

4.2. Safeguarding cultural heritage and supporting creative industries (CCIs)

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
International Workshop The "Cultural Routes of the Olive Tree" as a model for Europe's values, heritage and sustainable development	CEI-Council of Europe Joint Activity CEI Presidency Event	Ministry of Tourism, Croatia	14-16 November 2018, Mali Losinj - Croatia
International Conference "Underwater cultural Heritage in Europe Today"	CEI Presidency Event	International Centre for Underwater Archaeology in Zadar, Croatia	25-27 October 2018, Zadar - Croatia
tARTini Promoting cultural heritage of Giuseppe Tartini, the great musician from Piran/Pirano (SI)	INTERREG VA IT-SLO EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Partner)	1/10/2017 - 30/09/2019
HERITAGE FIRST AID: cultural tourism in support of Heritage Conservation	KEP Italy Project	SACIARKEO-Archaeological Service of Central Italy-s.r.l.; University of Urbino - Conservation and Restoration's School, ITALY	February 2018 - February 2019, Albania
Conference on European and Cultural Heritage - a sustainable way / best practice within the CEI	Cooperation Activity	Institute of the Regions of Europe (IRE)	26-27 April 2018, Novi Sad - Serbia
3rd LAB for European Project Making cycle	Cooperation Activity	LAB for European Project Making	30 June - 8 July 2018, Rijeka - Croatia

4.3. Fostering cultural diplomacy

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
Trieste Film Festival	CEI Feature Event	Trieste Film Festival, Italy	19-18 January 2018, Trieste - Italy
Vilenica Literary Festival - CEI Round-Table Discussions at Vilenica	CEI Feature Event	Slovene Writers' Association and KUD Vilenica Art Society	7 September 2018, Lipica - Slovenia
CEI Prize at the Trieste Film Festival	CEI Prize	CEI-ES	2018, Director from Romania
CEI Fellowship for Writers in Residence	CEI Prize	CEI-ES	2018, Writer from R. R. Moldova
CEI Prize at International Design Contest "Trieste Contemporanea"	CEI Prize	CEI-ES	2018, Designer from Serbia
WHEN EAST MEETS WEST Co-production Forum	Cooperation Activity	FVG Audiovisual Fund and the Trieste Film Festival	21-23 January 2018, Trieste - Italy
Workshop: Ex Oriente Film	Cooperation Activity	Institute of Documentary Film and One World International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival	3-9 March 2018, Prague - Czech Republic
CEI PIANO FORUM 2018 – "A music road map"	Cooperation Activity	Friuli Venezia Giulia International Piano Competition	7 May 2018, Sacile - Italy
FESTIVAL IDENTITY 2018 – workshop for festival organizers from across Europe	Cooperation Activity	DOC.DREAM Services, s.r.o.	25-30 October 2018, Jihlava – Czech Republic

4.4. Improving social integration of people from groups at risk of exclusion

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
COME-IN! Cooperating for Open Access to Museums – towards a wider inclusion	EU-funded Project	Partner consortium (CEI-ES Lead Partner)	01/07/2016 - 30/06/2019
Professional intergovernmental know-how exchange on the implementation of large scale Secondary School Scholarship and Mentoring Program for Roma Students	KEP Italy Project	Roma Education Fund (REF), Hungary	January 2017 – June 2018, Regional
Social inclusion for Roma families - Strengthening the Toy Library Network	Cooperation Activity	Roma Education Fund, Hungary	September 2018, Hungary

Goal 5: Media freedom

The mass media have become an essential part of everyone's life and play a constructive role in today's society. They represent an essential pillar of a democracy – from increasing public awareness to collecting views, information, and also

the attitude of the people towards certain issues. The freedom of expression is an essential fundamental right and can only be exercised in a free, independent and pluralistic media environment, through a transparent media governance.

The CEI supports activities that stimulate networking and exchange of experience among media owners, journalists' associations, universities, NGOs and other competent institutions, also in view of monitoring media developments in the region, taking into account national, EU and international legal frameworks. The promotion of knowledge and implementation of EU standards and directives is also one of the institutional objectives.

The CEI, in line with the efforts undertaken by other regional and international organisations, is committed to further supporting and promoting media freedom, quality reporting and freedom of expression. These elements are high on the list of improvements to be achieved on the road to EU membership.

5.1. Promoting media pluralism, transparency and independence

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
Press freedom in South East Europe debate	Institutional Activity	CEI-ES and ANSA	29 June 2018, Trieste - Italy
South East Europe Media Forum (SEEMF)	CEI Feature Event	South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)	15-16 November 2018, Tirana - Albania

5.2. Enhancing quality journalism

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
CEI SEEMO Award for Outstanding Merits in Investigative Journalism	CEI Prize	CEI-ES	2018, 2 Journalists from Serbia and 1 Young Journalist from Bosnia and Herzegovina

Goal 6: Scientific cooperation and education & training

The scientific cooperation sector, including education and training, has an important role in tackling global science challenges and developing political and business links between countries.

Scientific cooperation is emerging as a useful tool to build bridges and strengthen relations. The CEI aims at enhancing scientific education in its region as a contribution to the consolidation of the European Research Area (ERA). CEI actions in this regard include: promotion of the international scientific cooperation and initiatives for supporting science diplomacy, enhancing scientific literacy and technological knowledge and capacity.

In order to increase employability, special attention is paid to the life-long learning concept and to the implementation of EU educational and employment policies in non-EU CEI Member States. Particular attention is also paid to the youth involvement in politics as well as youth unemployment as a growing problem the CEI region is facing. The CEI contributes to the implementation of life-long learning and to developing competencies through mobility.

6.1. Promoting international scientific cooperation and initiatives in support to science diplomacy

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
The Secretary General of the Italian Foreign Ministry, Amb. Elisabetta Belloni, meets the Science & Innovation System of the ARFVG	Institutional Activity	CEI-ES	7 February, 2018, Trieste-Italy
Promotion of proESOF and ESOF 2020 towards CEI scientific communities	Institutional Activity	CEI-ES	Regional
Contribution to support mobility of CEI participants in OGS Summer School on Blue Growth in the Euro-Mediterranean Region 2018	Institutional Activity	CEI-ES	18 – 27 June, Piran-Slovenia, Trieste-Italy
Delegation of Science Representatives from CEI Member States visits Scientific Centers in Trieste	Institutional Activity	CEI-ES in collaboration with the ARFVG, AREA Science Park and ELETTRA Sincrotrone Trieste	4 October, 2018, Trieste - Italy
OGS-Fellowships to Master in Sustainable Blue Growth	Cooperation Activity	Italian National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics (OGS), University of Trieste, Italy	2018, Regional

Third Zeldovich Meeting held in Minsk	Cooperation Activity	ICRANet and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus	23-27 April, Minsk - Belarus
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6.2. Implementing life-long learning and developing competencies through mobility

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
Advanced Training Programme for Young Professionals from non-EU CEI Member States	Institutional Activity	CEI-ES	2018, Regional (beneficiaries from Albania, North Macedonia, R. R. Moldova and Montenegro)
XIX Summer Seminar for Young Public Policy Professionals from South Eastern Europe and the Black Sea Region	Cooperation Activity	Economic Policy Institute, Bulgaria	28 May-1 June 2018, Albena - Bulgaria
11th National Selection Conference of the European Youth Parliament Serbia "Young Europe – Europe of opportunities"	Cooperation Activity	European Youth Parliament Serbia	4-9 July 2018, Novi Sad - Serbia
Straniak Academy for Democracy and Human Rights	Cooperation Activity	Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights	2-15 September 2018, Saranda - Albania
Young Bled Strategic Forum BSF 2018 – Sustainable security: the role of youth in bridging the divide	Cooperation Activity	Center for European Perspective (CEP), Slovenia	7-11 September 2018, Bled - Slovenia
Winter School "Creating territorial cooperation: the impact of intercultural dialogue and migration flows in South East Europe"	Cooperation Activity	Jean Monnet Network Consortium	12-19 December 2018, Cesenatico - Italy

6.3. Enhancing scientific literacy and technological knowledge and capacity

RECENT AND ONGOING CEI PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Title	Type of activity	Organising Institution	Implementation Date and Place
SEENET-MTP Balkan School and Workshop	Cooperation Activity	SEENET-MTP Centre, the Faculty of Sciences and Mathematics, University of Niš, Serbia and the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, University of Craiova, Romania, CERN TD and ICTP	3-14 June 2018, Nis - Serbia
International Conference DisCo 2018: Overcoming the challenges and the barriers in Open Education	Cooperation Activity	Centre for Higher Education Studies and West Bohemia University, Czech Republic	25-26 June 2018, Prague - Czech Republic