



**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
OF THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN INITIATIVE
Bucharest, 27-28 October 2009**

FINAL DECLARATION

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Central European Initiative (CEI) held its Annual Session in Bucharest, on 27 and 28 October 2009.

The general topic of the Parliamentary Assembly - *Mitigating the impact of the global economic crisis within the CEI region: the role of parliaments* - was examined in two thematic sessions, which focused on *Measures to enhance employment and the protection of vulnerable groups*, and *Promoting an investment friendly environment, a pre-requisite for a sound economic recovery*.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Borbély László, Chairman-in-Office of the CEI Parliamentary Dimension and Head of the Romanian Parliamentary Delegation to the CEI-PD.

The meeting was attended by delegations representing the following member countries: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Republic of Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Republic of Slovenia and Ukraine.

The opening session was addressed by Mrs. Anca-Daniela Boagiu, *Vice-President of the Senate of Romania*, Mr. Seres Dénes, *Quaestor of the Chamber of Deputies of Romania*, Mr. Borbély László, *Chairman-in-Office of the Parliamentary Dimension of the Central European Initiative*, Mrs. Irina Zidaru, *Chairperson of the Committee of CEI National Coordinators*, *Director General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania* and Mr. Mykola Melenevskyi, *Deputy Secretary General of the CEI Executive Secretariat*.

The CEI Parliamentary Assembly was also addressed by representatives of two regional parliamentary organizations: Mr. Sadik Yakut, *Deputy Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey*,

representing the Chairmanship-in-Office of the SEECF Parliamentary Dimension, and Mr. Svilen Kraychev, Head of the Bulgarian Delegation to the PABSEC, representing the Chairmanship-in-Office of PABSEC.

The thematic sessions of the CEI Parliamentary Assembly were addressed by representatives of the Romanian parliamentary committees, governmental officials and members of the CEI-PD national delegations.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the CEI:

Recalling that 2009 marks the 20th celebration of the fall of the Iron Curtain, as well as five years since the first step of the EU enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe;

Underlining that this year marks also the 20th anniversary of the Central European Initiative, which has as overriding purpose the re-integration of its members into the European family;

Emphasizing the CEI contribution to the democratic processes and the economic and social development of its Member States, and to strengthening the region's international profile;

Reiterating the need to further develop and enhance cooperation in the CEI area, while avoiding overlapping and capitalizing on the comparative advantages of regional stakeholders;

Fully aware of the urgent need to mitigate the social impact of the crisis, and to promote an investment enabling environment in the region,

Stressing that solidarity and social security are the key elements to overcoming the current economic crisis, and **acknowledging** the fundamental right of people in a situation of poverty or social exclusion to live in dignity and to play a full role in society;

Noting that the European Commission has designated 2010 as the European Year on combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, with the goal to raise awareness of the benefits of a society where poverty and social exclusion are eradicated;

Fully aware of the need to rebuild public trust in our political institutions, and **stressing** the key role of parliaments in promoting the long term stability of our economic systems and an adequate social protection for all,

Recognizing the common CEI goal of EU membership, and **mindful** that the EU enlargement process currently takes place against the background of the adverse impact of the global economic crisis,

Appreciates the considerable efforts undertaken and the important progress made by countries in the CEI region towards European integration, while noting the remaining challenges ahead, as highlighted in the EC annual progress reports and the Enlargement Strategy 2009- 2010;

Welcomes the Commission's decision of 14 October 2009 to recommend the opening of accession negotiations with the Republic of Macedonia, the establishment of a visa-free regime for some Western Balkan States, and the unfreezing of Serbia's Interim Agreement,

Encourages the efforts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to fulfil all EU requirements for a visa-free regime;

Notes with satisfaction the Commission's ongoing work on the Opinion on Montenegro's application for EU membership, as well as its readiness to prepare an Opinion on Albania's application for EU membership;

Highlights the importance of further reforms in the areas of justice, freedom and security, particularly as regards document security, border and migration management, and the fight against corruption and organized crime;

Looks forward to the launching of negotiations between the EU and the Republic of Moldova on the Association Agreement, and **expresses its confidence** that a dialogue on the visa liberalization will begin as soon as possible,

Welcomes the progress in the dialogue between the EU and Ukraine, which aims at developing conditions for a visa-free regime for the citizens of Ukraine;

Welcomes constructive discussions between the EU and Belarus on the same issue;

Encourages regional cooperation efforts in the CEI area to address the adverse effects of the global economic crisis;

Invites CEI-PD member parliaments to support tailored and targeted national responses to the crisis, particularly in the areas of social protection and investment, by reviewing the relevant legislation, allocating the necessary funding within the national budget, and exercising effective parliamentary oversight;

Calls on parliaments and governments of CEI Member States to address discrimination and promote social inclusion of vulnerable groups - such as

the poor, unemployed, and young people, as well as children, migrants, minorities, disabled persons and self-supporting parents - who are facing the risk of being hardest hit by the crisis;

Stresses that the economic and financial measures designed to counter the impact of the crisis must take also into account the needs of the most vulnerable, by developing or enhancing social safety nets;

Acknowledges that the *flexicurity* model is instrumental in making labor markets more inclusive, by ensuring the workers' safe transitions inside the labor market, while maintaining and improving the competitiveness of companies;

Calls on CEI-PD member parliaments to provide the appropriate legal framework for an investment friendly environment, as a means to generate growth and jobs;

Emphasizes that economic recovery requires high levels of public investment, and the mobilization of public-private investment partnerships, with a greater emphasis on smart investment in infrastructure, public services, energy efficiency, clean technologies, environmental services, IT&C, innovation, research & development, and in forecasting and matching skills with the future labor market needs;

Stresses that effectiveness of public policy responses in dealing with the economic crisis is crucial for creating favorable conditions for recovery in both Foreign Direct Investment flows and economic growth;

Underlines that the countries of the region should make an effort to participate in shaping an international legal framework that would to a greater extent prevent harmful speculations and regulate those fields in which market is not functioning well;

Invites member parliaments to further reflect on modalities and mechanisms to enhance effectiveness of the CEI Parliamentary Dimension, including by updating the CEI-PD Rules of Procedure, and by examining the possibility to establish a CEI-PD Permanent Secretariat;

Welcomes the participation in the 2009 CEI-PD Assembly of the representatives of the SEECF Chairmanship-in-Office and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, as expression of a shared commitment to enhance coherence of the parliamentary response to challenges facing our region;

Welcomes the setting up, under the aegis of the CEI-PD Romanian Presidency, of the Sub-committee on relations with international and

regional organizations, and **is looking forward** to concrete proposals from the Sub-committee regarding the scope and modalities of the CEI-PD future cooperation with relevant organizations in and beyond the region;

Calls for an enhanced coordination and a more structured cooperation between the CEI Governmental and Parliamentary Dimensions, with a view to building the necessary parliamentary support to the CEI key objectives;

Takes note of the request made by the Head of the Montenegrin Delegation to the CEI-PD to amend the Rules of Procedure, replacing the official name of the country from *Republic of Montenegro* to *Montenegro*, based on the recent change of the Montenegrin Constitution;

Invites the Heads of Governments and the Foreign Affairs Ministers of CEI Member States to consider the Final Declaration of the Bucharest CEI Parliamentary Assembly at their meeting of 12 and 13 November 2009;

Extends its best wishes of success to the forthcoming Montenegrin CEI Presidency.