

CEI NEWSLETTER

In this Issue...

CEI Fund at EBRD: A Glance at Past Achievements and Future Developments

CEI Parliamentary Assembly on Role of Parliaments in Global Economic Crisis

CEI at Ministerial Meeting "Ljubljana Conference – Rehabilitating Our Common Heritage"

CEI-ES Secretary General Meets Ukrainian Authorities in Kyiv

CEI-ES Secretary General at BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials

South East European Transport Axis Cooperation: Kick-off Meeting in Vienna

Maestro Uto Ughi Joins CEI Youth Orchestra Autumn Tour in Bucharest

IX CEI Youth Forum: Supporting Youth Access on Labour Market

CEI Research Fellowship Programme: Nine Fellowships Awarded under First CERES Call

Coming up Events

10/11 November
Bucharest, CNC Meeting

11 November
Bucharest, Roundtable of CEI Ministers of Economic Sectors

12 November
Bucharest, 12th CEI Summit Economic Forum

12 November
Bucharest, Meeting of CEI Ministers of Foreign Affairs

13 November
Bucharest, CEI Summit of the Heads of Government

19/20 November
Prague, CEI Human Resource Development Forum

23/26 November
Paris, SUGAR Consortium Meeting 2

CEI Fund at EBRD: A Glance at Past Achievements and Future Developments

A week before the CEI Summit in Bucharest, celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Central European Initiative, the Italian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alfredo Mantica, expressed his views about the role and impact of the CEI Fund at the EBRD in the light of regional cooperation and EU integration.

CEI: The CEI was founded 20 years ago. In your view, what role has it played in bringing change in the former communist countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe?

Alfredo Mantica: Twenty years of regional cooperation have accompanied geopolitical processes of great relevance, such as the economic development of the region and its progressive integration in the European Union. Among the 18 CEI Member States, nine are now members of the European Union, six others, i.e. the Western Balkans, are included in the forthcoming EU enlargement perspectives and Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova are part of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The CEI has played an important role in this path towards development. It has allowed the maintenance of regional political dialogue even during the

"dark years" of wars in former Yugoslavia and also because, within the CEI framework, the priorities of single Member States for political, social and economic development have become regional priorities brought forward as a single voice before the international community. The integration of its Member States within the EU, in this regard, has been one of the most successful policies carried out by the CEI.

CEI: What is Italy's role in the CEI today?

AM: Italy has been one of the founders of the CEI and the importance given to regional cooperation through this Initiative has concretely been sustained through significant and continuous support, also in financial terms.

We strongly believe that regional development can be carried out through dialogue and regional

cooperation and that, under these circumstances, we act in order to give the CEI or the Adriatic Ionic Initiative covering the South Adriatic, the value they should be entitled to in the European context. I am referring to their role as catalysts of ideas and policies and also to the recent developments in the EU context, which have seen the EC addressing macro-regions such as the Baltic and the Black Seas with specific policies aimed at sustaining their development. Italy has been supporting the CEI since its incep-

tion and for this reason Member States see our country as a reference point. The structure of the Executive Secretariat in Trieste is funded by Italy which is also the first donor in CEI project financing. Moreover, the CEI Fund at the EBRD deserves specific attention. Initially, it should

have served as an example for producing other similar funds at the EBRD to be managed bilaterally by other CEI countries. Nevertheless, even though a successful one, throughout the years it has remained the only resource of this kind available, .. I regretfully have to say that, by judging the relevance of the projects financed by the Italian CEI Fund, which have paved the way for investments from EBRD and other institutions, had the experience been replicated with other funds, the impact on growth and regional development could have further increased.

CEI: How much has the Italian Government exactly granted to the CEI Fund at the EBRD, so far? And how have these funds been used?

AM: Since 1992, when the Italian CEI Fund at the EBRD was established, and until 2007, the Ital-



Mr. Alfredo Mantica

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ian Government has granted 26.5 million EUR, which have supported technical assistance and development projects for countries of the region, with "Country-priorities", thus taking into account political, social and economic developments in the region.

The fund currently focuses on the development of the Western Balkans and ENP countries, i.e. Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. The priority sectors have remained the same, which are infrastructure and transport, small and medium-sized enterprises, innovation and institutional development, sustainable agriculture and energy efficiency.

At the end of 2007, the Italian Government replenished the CEI Trust Fund with EUR 6 million for the period 2008-2010. Since its inception, the Fund has received a total of EUR 32 million. This demonstrates the relevance Italy attributes to this tool of cooperation.

CEI: In your opinion, which are the best examples of projects funded by the Italian Government through this CEI Fund? What kind of improvement have they brought to Central and South East European countries?

AM: In terms of quality, I think all projects realised through the Italian CEI Fund at the EBRD have been of a very high profile as well as backed by a strong technical analysis, thanks to the support of both the EBRD, and CEI Project Secretariat. I believe that the objectives for development have been fully reached. For example, the technical assistance to Bosnia Herzegovina for the development of infrastructure related to the Pan-European Multimodal Corridor V, which has generated far more international investments than initially forecasted. I am also thinking about the regional projects on energy efficiency, which, even though not directly linked to investments, they have been crucial for realising the

EBRD operational strategies in the region, activating investments after their realisation. Small and medium-sized enterprises have also been in the limelight in our use of the funds, according to our national economic tradition.

Finally, I do believe that the value of the projects financed through the CEI Fund at the EBRD needs to be evaluated not only in relation to specific contributions to beneficiary countries, but also in relation to their indirect impact, that is their role in allowing a given country, sector or region to attract foreign investments and in generating a multiplier factor for development.

CEI: How do you evaluate cooperation with the EBRD?

AM: I believe that the economic development the countries of the CEI region have experienced over the last 20 years has also been promoted, thanks to the cooperation between the Italian Government and the EBRD, through the CEI Trust Fund. Italy is one of the first bilateral donors at the EBRD and cooperation with the Bank has significantly shaped the economic, social and political development of our partner countries. We gladly welcome the success of the development and investment strategies of the Bank in the region and we look at a future cooperation with a positive attitude, hoping that the Western Balkans and the ENP countries will successfully complete their economic transition and reach a level of prosperity and development similar to that of the other CEI Member States. Through cooperation between Italy and the EBRD, through the CEI Trust Fund, we believe that those results might be reached very soon.

CEI Parliamentary Assembly on Role of Parliaments in Global Economic Crisis

Under the Romanian Presidency, the CEI Executive Secretariat has recently participated in the Annual CEI Parliamentary Assembly in Bucharest (27-29 October).

Under the title "Mitigating the Impact of the Global Economic Crisis in the CEI Region: the Role of Parliaments", the representatives of the parliaments focused their discussions on two thematic Sessions, namely on measures to enhance employment and the protection of vulnerable groups as well as on promoting an investment-friendly environment - a prerequisite for a sound economic recovery.

During the gathering, the participants adopted the Final Declaration to be presented on the occasion of the forthcoming Meeting of the CEI Heads of Government in Bucharest (13 November).

Among the decisions taken: the creation of a Sub Committee for the relations with international and regional organisations and the intensification of cooperation and a stronger coordination between the CEI Governmental Dimension and the Parliamentary Dimension.

During the General Committee on Political and Home Affairs, which took place the day before, Ms. Laura Ravetto and Mr. Valerii Kamchatnyi were reconfirmed as Chairwoman and Deputy Chairman of the Committee respectively.

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Bucharest: Palace of Parliament

CEI at Ministerial Meeting "Ljubljana Conference – Rehabilitating Our Common Heritage"

In the framework of the renewed cooperation with the Council of Europe, the CEI-ES actively participated in the Ljubljana ministerial conference on 6-7 November.

Around 170 participants from ministers of culture from South-East and Eastern European countries to representatives of international and regional organisations, NGOs and professional associations were welcomed by Danilo Turk, President of the Republic of Slovenia, Thorbjorn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Maros Sefcovic, European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth and Majda Sirca, Minister of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia.

On top of the Agenda the achievements (including concrete national projects) of the "Integrated Rehabilitation Project Plan/Survey of the Architectural and Archaeological Heritage" (IRPP/SAAH) – a joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Commission in South East Europe since 2003 as well as future prospects for heritage rehabilitation in the region.

In this context, the CEI, which financially contributed to the event, had the opportunity to convey its readiness to be involved in follow-up actions of the regional programme of heritage rehabilitation, especially those which are meant to involve the Eastern European countries. To this end, the priorities expressed by the "Kyiv Initiative countries" will be taken into account (e.g. strengthening multilateral co-operation and harmonising cultural heritage policies, espe-

cially in terms of institutional capacity-building and improvement of the respective legislative frameworks through the exchange of experience and good practice).

The gathering brought about the adoption of three documents, namely the "Ljubljana Declaration: From Reconciliation towards Sustainable Socio-Economic Development", the "Joint ministerial statement of the beneficiaries of the Ljubljana Process" and the "Ministerial statement between the Black Sea beneficiaries and the South Caucasus beneficiaries".

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Ljubljana

CEI-ES Secretary General Meets Ukrainian Authorities in Kyiv

The October meetings in Kyiv concluded this year's tour of CEI capitals of the CEI-ES Secretary General in order to meet with the Networks of CEI Focal Points.

Upon invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the CEI-ES Secretary General, Amb. Ago, accompanied by the Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Melenevsky, met on 23 October with representatives from various Ministries and State Agencies: the Ministry of Education and Sciences, the State Committee of Regulatory Policy and Entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Fuel and Energy, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Culture, the State Committee for Tv and Broadcasting.

During the meetings Amb. Ago underlined the

need to intensify cooperation among the Networks of Focal Points, the CEI National Coordinators and the Secretariat in Trieste. In order to enhance their role in the various CEI activities, Amb. Ago briefed the Focal Points with an overview about CEI activities and procedures and encouraged them to collect and generate project proposals at the national level as well as to disseminate information on CEI activities. The Secretary General reaffirmed in this occasion that the first step for ensuring an efficient functioning of the Network of CEI Focal Points is the coverage of all thirteen areas of CEI activity with the appointment of the respective Focal Points in each Member State.

The programme of the SG visit in Kyiv included a meeting with the Director of Economic Coop-

eration Directorate at the MFA, Sultansky, and a meeting with the Director General of the Bilateral Cooperation Department at the Ministry of Economy, Popov.

Furthermore, the SG met with the organisers of the CEI Conference on Alternative and Renewable Energy to be held in Kyiv in February 2010. In this context, the possibility of duplicating in Ukraine a CEI pilot project for the construction of a biomass plant currently under implementation in Belgrade, was discussed.

The CEI delegation finally met, at the Parliament of Ukraine, with the Head of the Ukrainian Parliamentary Delegation to the CEI, Kamchatny. The discussion focused on parliamentary cooperation within the CEI.

CEI-ES Secretary General at BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials

On 21 and 22 October, CEI-ES Secretary General, Amb. Pietro Ercole Ago participated in the Committee of Senior Officials as well as in the BSEC Ministerial Meeting, both held in Baku.

On top of the Agenda of the Committee of Senior Officials, the soon-to-be-signed Memorandum of Understanding between CEI and BSEC.

It was unanimously agreed, also in the Ministerial Conference, that



an expert legal working group would meet before the next CSO, in late November or early December, in order to finalise the text from a legal point of view.

Amb. Ago expressed the CEI's intention to participate in programmes included in the Eastern Dimension and, in particular, the Ring Road around the Black Sea Project, a concrete example of future cooperation.

South East European Transport Axis Cooperation: Kick-off Meeting in Vienna

The kick-off meeting of the project SEETAC (South East European Transport Axis Cooperation) took place in Vienna on 24-25 September 2009. It was organised by the Federal Ministry for Transport Innovation and Technology in cooperation with the Central European Initiative, Lead Partner of the Project.

SEETAC is co-financed by the European Union through the South East Europe Cooperation Programme. It aims at establishing and implementing an effective and coordinated South East Transport Axis framework for the promotion of institutional cooperation among Pan European Corridors structures and Member States. Among some of the Project's main objectives, the establishment of an institutional communication system aiming at fostering information and dissemination activities; implementation of a coordinated database manage-



ment system; definition of multi-modal traffic scenarios and common mobility standards and environmental guidelines.

The project will offer significant advantages to

all project partners in terms of spatial planning and regional cooperation and integration, and will contribute to solving the existing problems in the traffic sector. Close cooperation among the main actors will facilitate investment matching, cross-border project development and agreements on measures for the elimination of non-physical barriers (for freight and passengers/tourists), thus raising awareness of political decision-makers and public opinion regarding the aims and priorities along the Axes.

The project started on 1 April 2009 and will end on 31 March 2012.

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Maestro Uto Ughi Joins CEI Youth Orchestra Autumn Tour in Bucharest

In the context of the "CEI InConcerto" Project, co-financed by the EU under the CULTURE 2007 – 2013 Programme, the young musicians of the CEI Youth Orchestra will meet in Romania and perform some concerts within the scheduled autumn tour.

After few days of rehearsing, the CEI Youth Orchestra, directed by M° Igor Coretti-Kuret, will perform its first concert in Horadea on 14 November. It will then move to Bucharest where the world-famous Italian violinist M° Uto Ughi (see photo) will join the CEI Youth Orchestra on the occasion of a Gala Concert (17 November) celebrating ten years from the death of Yehudi Menuhin.

Young musicians will also have the opportunity to attend a master class with M° Uto Ughi, thus enjoying an outstanding experience for their musical career.

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Maestro Uto Ughi

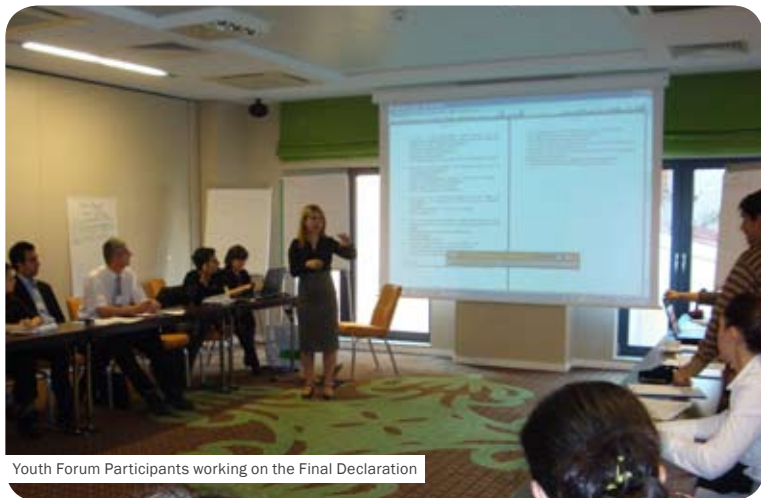
IX CEI Youth Forum: Supporting Youth Access on Labour Market

Young People from 15 CEI Member States gathered this year in Bucharest on the occasion of the IX CEI Youth Forum held on 19-22 October.

Under the title Supporting Youth Access on Labour Market the participants had the opportunity to discuss ways of harmonizing formal education with the requirements of the labour market, its challenges and perspectives at national, regional and European level.

They were welcomed by Sorina Placinta, Minister of Youth and Sports of Romania.

The delegates worked on the elaboration of a Final Declaration which will be submitted at the CEI Summit in Bucharest on 13 November 2009.



Youth Forum Participants working on the Final Declaration

CEI Research Fellowship Programme: Nine Fellowships Awarded under First CERES Call



In the context of the CEI Research Fellowship Programme – CERES, co-funded by the EU under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, 9 fellowships were awarded to scientists from Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Moldova, Poland, Slovenia and Ukraine.

The selected fellows are already working on their research project in one of the five host institutions which compose the CERES partnership: International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP); International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB); Cluster in Biomedicine (CBM); International School for Advanced Studies (SISSA); Synchrotron ELETTRA.

The next CERES call for proposals will be indicatively launched in March 2010 and published on the CERES website:

www.ceinet.org/CERES

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