

CEI NEWSLETTER

In this Issue...

CEI Romanian Presidency: An Opportunity to Promote Cooperation and European Values beyond CEI Borders

President of Italian Delegation at CEI Parliamentary Dimension Visits CEI Headquarters

CEI Trust Fund at EBRD: Italy Approves 6 Million EUR Replenishment

Biom-Adria 2 Project: From Theory to Practice

CEI Cooperation Activities Submitted by February 20

CEI Fellowship for Writers in Residence Call for Proposals 2009

Tapping Research Potential in the Western Balkans

Spreading an EU-wide Scheme on Rural Development to the Western Balkans

Coming up Events

5-6 March
Bologna, SUGAR Project Kick Off Meeting

9 March
Trieste, CEI Science and Technology Network Executive Board Meeting

3 April
Trieste, CEI Committee of National Coordinators Meeting

For more information
www.ceinet.org

“CEI Romanian Presidency: An Opportunity to Promote Cooperation and European Values beyond CEI Borders”



Mr. Cristian Diaconescu, is the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The CEI Newsletter has posed him some questions regarding this year's Romanian CEI Presidency:

CEI: In which way do you think the CEI Presidency will be useful to your country?

CD: It is a great honor for Romania to exercise the CEI Presidency in 2009, the year of the 20th anniversary of the organization. During the two decades of activity, the CEI has been in continuous expansion, in a large geographical triangle area, surrounded by the Mediterranean, the Baltic and the Black Sea, as regards both the number of Member States and the areas of cooperation. It is worth mentioning that the CEI is one of the oldest and most dynamic formats of cooperation in this part of Europe.

Regional cooperation represents a significant dimension of the Romanian diplomacy. After holding several CiOs in the last decade (SEECP - South-East European Cooperation Process) twice in 1999-2000 and 2004-2005, BSEC (Black Sea Economic Cooperation) in 2006; organizing the Stability Pact Regional Table in 2006 and hosting

in Bucharest since 2000 the SECI Center, the CEI Presidency is a new opportunity to promote cooperation and European values beyond the borders of CEI's Member States.

Romania became a member of the CEI in 1996 and since then it has been involved in a large number of projects and our experience demonstrates that a series of political, economic, security and cultural issues can be much better tackled in a cooperative framework.

Our participation in the CEI before becoming EU member was very valuable. Not only did it help us to acquire experience in working together for a common purpose, but it also complemented our individual efforts in the European integration process.

Now we can use this positive experience in promoting the active participation of all countries in the regional cooperation mechanisms, thus contributing to the stability and security of the European continent.

Romania attaches particular importance to all forms of cooperation involved in the region. Our participation in these mechanisms has enriched our expertise in understanding the particularities of this region. They have a major share in building trust and good-neighbourly relations and in promoting the European values.

CEI: How do you think the CEI will benefit from this year's Presidency?

CD: Romania will seek to promote the CEI instruments that could have a relevant impact on supporting the European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations of CEI Member States. At the same time, we will focus on projects that could facilitate people-to-people contacts in the CEI area, in order to better know each other's culture and history.

The events organized by the Romanian Presidency will facilitate cooperation between the EU Member States and countries outside of the EU in the specific CEI format, as well as the strong involvement of the European Commission in the activities of the CEI and an intensified dialogue on specific fields such as interconnection of transport and energy networks, agriculture, the global financial crises etc.

We will act in favour of enhancing the profile of the CEI among the other regional cooperation structures by putting emphasis on the unique characteristics of this Initiative, i.e. the fact that it has an equal number of EU and non-EU Member States, that CEI non EU members are part of the Stabilization and Association Process – SAP – as well as of the European Neighborhood Policy – ENP.

At the same time, the Romanian Presidency will support the interaction between the CEI and other regional structures (SEECP, RCC, BSEC) to develop efficient communication between these structures as well as avoid overlapping.



CEI: Do you foresee a stronger cooperation of Romania with other neighbouring countries both EU and non EU Member States? Which CEI Programmes are particularly interesting in this regard?

CD: Consolidating cooperation between the CEI EU and non EU Member States is the main aim of the Romanian Presidency. This will facilitate know-how transfer and give CEI non EU Member States assistance in specific fields in order to boost their relations with EU. The CEI, through the activities it promotes (e.g. workshops, conferences etc.), is an efficient forum for discussions both among its member states, as well as between the CEI and other formats of cooperation.

The development of regional cooperation is therefore a key factor for establishing political stability, security and for promoting good-neighboring relations.

The non EU countries have realized that they have many challenges in common, some are of a cross-border nature. They now see the considerable benefits of an increasing close regional cooperation – political understand-

ing, economic and social prosperity.

It is very encouraging that the areas of climate change, energy and people-to-people contacts are among those where CEI projects are the most substantial. The environment and climate change issues do not have any borders or limits and we should work more closely and efficiently in these fields. The CEI Special Climate and Environment Fund in particular is strongly supported by Romania. Great attention will be paid to all the initiatives in this field.

Romania will also highlight CEI's operational activities (e.g. the Know-How Exchange Programme, the CEI Secretariat for EU Projects, the CEI Trust Fund EBRD/London).

Special attention will be paid to: trans-border cooperation, transport, economy, agriculture, and environment. Enhancing cross-border and interregional cooperation through joint projects of local authorities and NGOs provides an adequate framework for the development of projects in the most diverse domains.

Stemming from our belief that extended regional cooperation in Europe is essential, Romania will continue, during its CEI Presidency, to foster all endeavors to promote regional cooperation. We hope our efforts will contribute to consolidating confidence building and mutual trust among the CEI Member States.

President of Italian Delegation at CEI Parliamentary Dimension Visits CEI Headquarters

On 25 February Ms. Laura Ravetto, President of the Italian Delegation at the CEI Parliamentary Assembly together with Ms. Valeria Galardini, paid a visit to the CEI Executive Secretariat in order to have an overall view of the priority activities of the CEI as well as see whether it is possible to coordinate the CEI Governmental Dimension with the CEI Parliamentary Dimension.

She paid particular attention to the CEI Science and Technology Network and the CEI University Network, to relations with the European Union and the CEI's involvement in EU Programmes and the CEI Climate Fund. The CEI Trust Fund, in particular the organisation of the CEI Summit Economic Forum was also highlighted.

Ms. Ravetto had the chance to exchange views with Amb. Pietro Ercole Ago, CEI-ES Secretary General, Amb. Gherard Pfanzelter, Alternate Secretary General and Min. Mykola Melenevskiy, Deputy Secretary General as

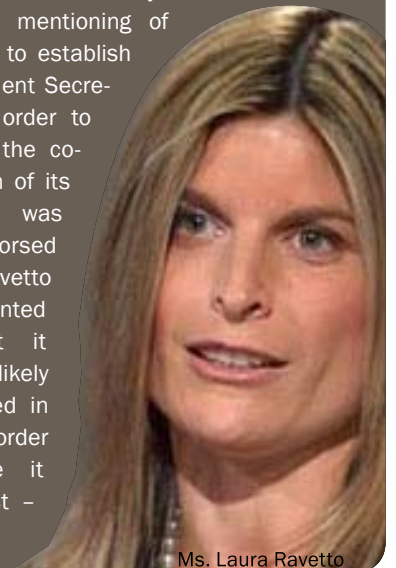
well as with officers in charge of these areas. Prof. Claudio Tuniz from the ICTP was also present and illustrated the activities of this Centre of Excellence in particular its role as one of the members of the CEI Science and Technology Network.

The afternoon session was dedicated to a visit to the University of Trieste where Mr. Ravetto met the Rector, Prof. Francesco Peroni and Vice Rector, Prof. Fabio Ruzzier, in their capacity of Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General of the CEI University Network respectively.

In summary, while pointing out that she was very pleased with the results of the gathering, Ms. Ravetto expressed her willingness to continue and improve the cooperation relations between the CEI Executive Secretariat and the Parliamentary delegation. She also agreed to look into the possibility of obtaining additional funding for the activities most in need such as the CEI Climate Fund as well as

the CEI Science and Technology Network and the CEI University Network and expressed great interest in the Summit Economic Forum as a source of enterprise development.

As to the Parliamentary Dimension, the mentioning of the need to establish a Permanent Secretariat in order to facilitate the coordination of its activities was fully endorsed by Ms. Ravetto who pointed out that it would likely be opened in Rome in order to make it more cost-effective.



Ms. Laura Ravetto

CEI Trust Fund at EBRD: Italy Approves 6 Million EUR Replenishment

The Italian Government has recently approved the replenishment of the CEI Trust Fund for a 3-year period for a total amount of 6 million EUR (Law 244/2007).

Mr. Guido Paolucci, Programme Manager of the CEI-Project Secretariat commented that "This has given the Secretariat unrelenting confidence to continue with the implementation of ongoing projects as well as to start thinking with a fresh mind as to how we can move forward in our activities. The continual financial support granted by the Italian Government, towards which I am mostly grateful, has empowered the CEI with new resources and a refreshed mandate".

The CEI Trust Fund has been operational within the EBRD since 1992. Before the replenishment, a total cumulative amount of 26.5 million EUR, fully provided by the Italian Government, had been allocated to the Secretariat for CEI Projects over the period 1992 – 2008.

The Secretariat concentrates most of its funds towards Technical Cooperation (TC) in order to support projects alongside EBRD investments in a number of areas (normally with co-financing from other International

Financial Institutions - IFIs). TC is offered as grant-type assistance in support of specific components of a project (i.e. feasibility and pre-feasibility studies, sector and environmental engineering, management training, capacity building, pre-loan audits).

By supporting the operations of the EBRD through specific TC commitments the CEI strengthens the mandate of the Bank to foster transition market economies in the countries of operation.

Through its Trust Fund, the CEI-PS also supports the CEI Know-how Exchange Programme (KEP), a dedicated instrument created in 2004 which is offering co-financing of projects focused on the transfer of know-how and best practices from CEI EU to CEI non-EU Member States.

"In view of the global financial crisis, donors' support is needed for many investment activities and Italy's replenishment has ensured the CEI continues to support technical assistance in the Initiative's Member States." pointed out Mr. Guido Paolucci.

For more information: dovier@cei-es.org

BIOM-ADRIA 2 Project: From Theory to Practice

The BIOM-ADRIA Project, co-financed within the framework of the Adriatic New Neighbourhood Programme INTERREG/CARDS-PHARE with around 0.5 million EUR was successfully concluded in July 2008.

The Project aimed at setting up a documentation for a 3-5 MW first-of-a-kind demonstration energy plant (to be constructed in Serbia) fuelled by primary biomass obtained from agricultural by-products.

The BIOM-ADRIA 2 Project is currently under preparation and aims at putting the theoretical results of the BIOM ADRIA 1 Project into practice. Under its preparatory phase, scheduled to be concluded by April 2009, the Business Plan of the Demonstration Plant will be revised by taking into account the various technological and financial aspects related to both the energy generation system as a whole (thus the biomass fuel cycle included) and the infrastructure needed to transfer the gen-

erated energy to the final users (district-heating related hot water pipelines and electric power distribution network).

To this end, the City of Belgrade and the main utility, Beogradske Elektrane, has offered financial support for the feasibility study of the necessary external infrastructure. The CEI will contribute with technical assistance and applied research.

CEI-ES Secretary General, Amb. Pietro Ercole Ago informed the Committee of National Coordinators (February 2009) that the EBRD is interested in investing in this project as well and highlighted the fact that "it is the first time the CEI has been involved in such a large project".



For more information:

- www.ceinet.org/fundingunit
- g.cico@cei-es.org

CEI Cooperation Activities Submitted by 20 February

CEI member countries have submitted - within the February deadline - 48 applications for funding Cooperation Activities for an overall cost of about 3 million EUR. The majority of applications has been submitted within the cultural sector. Applications in Science and Technology, Human Resource Development and Climate, Environment and Sustainable Energy were also numerous.

CEI Fellowship for Writers in Residence Call for Proposals 2009

The Slovene Writers' Association has just launched the Call for Proposals 2009 for the CEI Fellowship for Writers in Residence. The fellowship is endowed with a cash award of 5.000 EUR offered by the CEI for a three-month stay in any of the CEI Member States, selected by the candidate. Applicants eligible for the fellowship are writers under 35 years of age from CEI non EU Member States. The award will be presented on the occasion of the opening of the Vilenica International Literary Festival on 2 September 2009.



Deadline for submission: **1 June 2009**

Call for Proposals and Application Form available at www.vilenica.si

Tapping Research Potential in the Western Balkans



The Project Western Balkan Countries Inco-Net Support in the field of ICT (WINS-ICT) was launched in Vienna on 5-6 February 2009 on the premises of the Zentrum für Soziale Innovation (Centre for Social Innovation, ZSI), the Lead Partner.

WINS ICT is funded under the 7th Framework Programme (FP) and aims at enhancing cooperation in the field of Information Society by tapping the research potential in the Western Balkan region. The ultimate goal will be to fully integrate researchers from the region into networks of FP-active EU organizations and to enable researchers to submit their own project proposals as coordinating institutions.

The partnership is well balanced with experienced representatives from EU and Western Balkan countries (Ministries, Chamber of Commerce). The CEI will contribute to the project by ensuring dissemination of project activities at the relevant institutional level in ministries and agencies of the project area and beyond.



For more information: casarella@cei-es.org

Spreading an EU-wide Scheme on Rural Development to Western Balkans

A recently concluded pilot project on “Enhancing Sustainable Rural Development in the SAP Countries by Introducing the LEADER Experience” has brought about promising results. The project, co-financed by the CEI Know-how Exchange Programme with a grant of € 39,000, and led by the International Center for Democratic Transition (ICDT), transferred Hungarian experience and best practices associated with LEADER, a successful EU-wide scheme, to the countries in the EU’s Stabilization and Association Process (SAP), commonly referred to as the “Western Balkans”.

LEADER (Links between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy) is a European Community initiative for assisting rural communities in improving their quality of life. It is an innovative approach which addresses issues like participatory democracy, specific methods of local governance, cross sector decision-making, a bottom-up approach, and stretching the definition of accountability – clearly strengthening local democracy in the process.

The CEI-supported pilot project started by raising awareness about the idea among

national officials, civil society leaders, experts and other local stakeholders. A site visit was then organised to the local development area of the region surrounding a village near Budapest, where Hungarian rural development examples were presented. Subsequently, in order to assure the biggest possible impact and ripple-effect, a “Training for Trainers” workshop was conducted in September 2008. Upon conclusion of the training, an important milestone was reached as participants were assigned to work on a selection of micro-regions in their countries to serve as venue for the implementation of pilot projects based on the LEADER approach. The findings of the pilot phase were extremely encouraging and the organisers see the results of this project as the beginning of a longer-term process that can ultimately lead to hundreds of micro- and other regions of different size using this approach to bring improvements to the daily life of people throughout the Western Balkans.

A final project implementation report can be downloaded from the ICDT website (www.icdt.hu) or requested from the CEI Secretariat by writing to kep@cei-es.org.

