
Headquarters

The annually rotating CEI Presidency is assisted by the CEI - Executive Secretariat in Trieste, Italy.

It has the legal status of an international organisation and is responsible for the administrative and conceptual support in the preparation and follow-up of activities.

The Secretariat for CEI Projects is located in the CEI-ES Headquarters in Trieste and maintains a permanent office at the EBRD, London, with the task of assisting the CEI with economic strategies, investment projects, international events and programmes, including the organisation of the CEI Summit Economic Forum.



Origin

The Central European Initiative is the oldest and largest regional co-operation initiative emerging in Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin wall. Founded in 1989 as a Quadrilateral co-operation its membership increased to 17 in the year 2000.

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Members

*Albania
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Belarus
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Czech Republic
Hungary
Italy
Macedonia
Moldova
Poland
Romania
Serbia and Montenegro
Slovakia
Slovenia
Ukraine*



Strategies

The CEI wants to encourage dialogue and co-operation in the region; to bring its non-EU members closer to the European Union and to avoid the creation of new divisions among advanced and less advanced countries.

Functioning and Events

The CEI is an intergovernmental organisation. It operates through the annual meetings of the Heads of Government (Summit) and of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs providing an overall guidance. The Committee of National Co-ordinators, responsible for the definition, co-ordination and implementation of the programme of activities, meets in principle on a monthly basis.

Meetings at the level of Political Directors of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and special ministerial meetings in different sectors are regularly convened to deal with specific needs. The Ministers of economic sectors meet in the framework of the annual CEI Summit Economic Forum.

Meetings are also held in the framework of the Parliamentary Dimension and of the Central European Chambers of Commerce Initiative.

At expert level 17 Working Groups or Task Forces are available to assist in the implementation of the CEI Plan of Action and the identification and evaluation of projects submitted by its Member States to the CEI for co-funding.



CEI Summit, Skopje, November 2002



*6th CEI Summit Economic Forum
Warsaw, November 2003*

Projects and Financing

The CEI Trust Fund established in 1992 by Italy at the EBRD is managed by the Secretariat for CEI Projects. The Fund is mainly intended to generate large investment by IFIs and has in the past facilitated a number of bankable projects such as the "CEI Wholesale Markets Foundation", railways restructuring in Romania, road construction for Corridor 8 in Albania, air navigation systems in Ukraine and Macedonia, Business Advisory Offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia.

The CEI Co-operation Fund, established in 2001, is based on annual contributions from Member States and aims at co-financing the CEI co-operation activities (e.g. workshops, conferences, training courses, etc.). The CEI Solidarity Fund, based on voluntary contributions from Member States, supports the participation in CEI events of representatives and experts from member countries in special need.

Indeed, the two Funds available to the CEI - the Italian Trust Fund at the EBRD and the Co-operation Fund - have already demonstrated their usefulness. A recent report on the CEI Fund at the EBRD (EUR 27 mio contributed by Italy) has highlighted a group of priority projects where a CEI grant value of EUR 4 mio has facilitated (by Technical Co-operation) EBRD investments worth EUR 360 mio.

With regard to its Co-operation Activities, started in 2002, about 80 projects have been approved since then. The CEI's total contribution amounted to EUR 1.1 mio over a total value of co-operation projects of EUR 8.5 mio.

The CEI Plan of Action 2004-2006 represents a new approach towards the problems of the region. It identifies a maximum of two core issues for each CEI area of activity, and contains references to possible partner institutions as well as sources of funding. With such more focused efforts, the CEI is implementing its objective to facilitate transfer of knowledge and best practice from CEI Member States acceding to the EU towards those remaining outside for the time being.



*CEI Wholesale Market Foundation - The Bronisze Project
in Poland (in co-operation with the EBRD)*