



## **MEETING OF CEI MINISTERS FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (Trieste, 19 October, 2011)**

### **FINAL COMMUNIQUE**

The Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology of the Central European Initiative (CEI) took place in Trieste (Italy), on 19 October 2011 under the Serbian Presidency. Delegations from Member States attended the meeting, including 6 Ministers and 6 Deputy Ministers and/or High Officials, as well as a Representative of the European Commission (Directorate General for Research and Innovation) and other guests.

At the inaugural session, delegates were welcomed by Minister Žarko Obradović, in his capacity as Chairman, and by CEI Secretary General, Amb. Gerhard Pfanzelter who also brought greetings from the President of Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Renzo Tondo.

Minister Obradović recalled the strong and irreversible commitment of his country in favour of European Integration and more specifically the sound efforts towards strengthening science and technology development as a national priority and as a basis on which this integration process would be fostered. Anticipating the message resulting from the interventions by all Delegations, he wished that all CEI Member States continue to strongly commit towards integration of the whole CEI Region into the EU area, thus creating conditions for an even more successful cooperation in all fields and in particular in the fields of science, education and culture. This will certainly generate better economic cooperation and foster development. Mr. Obradović also expressed his confidence, generally shared by the Delegations as well, that through closer cooperation CEI Member States would create the conditions for a more efficient use of existing research infrastructures. Through joint investments they could update and develop these infrastructures in order to achieve better results in research. A common goal should be to create new centres of excellence in order to generate new knowledge, new products and competitive technologies.

In his statement on behalf of the host country, the Italian Undersecretary, Giuseppe Pizza, emphasised the extraordinary commitment of the Italian Government in the creation in Trieste of the complex of scientific institutions of worldwide recognised excellence and its continuous support to these institutions for almost fifty years. He underlined that these Centres, which constitute the CEI Network for Science and Technology, are open to the scientific communities of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, in line with a convinced strategy of his Government in favour of international cooperation.

The representative from the European Commission, Ms. Tania Friederichs, on behalf of the EU Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn expressed wishes for a fruitful meeting. She summarised possible means of support by the EC in particular for the development of the Balkan countries in the field of science and technology. In this regard, she mentioned that networking and knowledge transfer were of the utmost importance and that it was crucial to pinpoint where the *scientific excellence* actual was in these countries. She also highlighted that the main aim of the EC was to focus on the Pre-accession Instrument in order to

boost research and innovation. This would be a unique opportunity for these countries to move towards a further EU integration.

Professor Carlo Rizzuto, Chairman of the Synchrotron Radiation Facility “Elettra” and of the new Free Electron Laser Laboratory “Fermi”, illustrated the most relevant features of these two facilities, previous successful collaborations and their worldwide quality, as well as the action under way in order to facilitate and to institutionalise access to scientists and junior researchers from CEI Member States (also through strong collaborations with complementary partner facilities of high international quality developed in other CEI countries and having a strong regional impact as well as global visibility). In this context, he also described in detail opportunities for financial support stemming from both consolidated and new instruments put forward by the European Commission. Hopefully, as many countries as possible would be willing to sign a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at the creation of a European Consortium in conformity with the EC Council Regulation N. 723/2009 of June 25, 2009.

After a visit to the two laboratories, Minister Obradović confirmed the strategic interest they represent for the development of Science and Technology in his country. He invited the other delegations to join Serbia for a common action, within the CEI as well as in different contexts such as the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the Danube Strategy and others. This in order to promote and facilitate the necessary activities for a full accessibility to the “Elettra” and “Fermi” laboratories by the respective scientific communities. This would pave the way towards a wider and more consistent participation of the interested parties in these world-class facilities. He also mentioned that in the current situation of financial crisis, the participation could also take place through in kind investments which could be individually or collectively supported by the European Commission by implementing already existing instruments.

In fact, all Delegations expressed full support to the position expressed by the Chairman and their readiness to commit themselves to the elaboration of the most appropriate follow-up as needed.

Among the various interventions, the Romanian Delegate, Mr. Dragos Mihael Ciuparu, took the opportunity to inform participants about a project proposal his country is currently elaborating within the Danube Strategy. The project would aim at building a multidisciplinary research centre in his country and in this regard, he suggested that the CEI could provide the framework for its further development.

This agenda item was concluded with the following resolution adopted unanimously:

“Upon a proposal by the Chair, the Ministers and other Heads of Delegation welcomed the proposal by the Italian Government and by the President of “Elettra” and “Fermi” laboratories aiming at institutionalizing the access and the participation in the activities of the afore-mentioned laboratories by the scientific communities of CEI Member States in collaboration and in partnership with other laboratories operating and/or being developed in the CEI Member States, reinforcing the capability to attract the best talents and reverse the brain drain, through an active circulation of ideas and opportunities. They expressed their commitment to promote the strengthening of the links between the investments in research infrastructures and the development of common research and innovation policies connected to the European Union Framework Programme. This will create synergies and best results in terms of research as well as of socio-economic impacts, building the basis for a stronger success, also in this area, in the pre-accession and accession phases for countries in view of entering the EU. The Heads of Delegation, asked the CEI Secretariat in coordination with the Presidency, (with the Chair of the EU) with the Italian Government and with the

President of “Elettra” and “Fermi” to further support the development of partnerships between the Institutions operating in the CEI Member States (also in the framework of Council Regulation EC N. 723/2009 aiming at pooling resources on a scientific-quality basis and asking for specific EU support for the joint activities open to further EU and international collaborations”).

Before starting the afternoon session the Delegates visited the laboratories of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), which include in its membership 11 out of 18 Member States of the Central European Initiative. The delegates followed with great interest the presentation by Prof. Mauro Giacca, Director of the Trieste Component of the Centre, and were impressed with the level of the ongoing research activities as well as with the state of the art facilities.

At the end of the visit all Delegations expressed consensus on the summary of the Presidency stating that: “Without underestimating the constraints of the present global financial crisis imposed on state budgets, all delegations shared the desirability of a participation in the Centre in a near future by all CEI Member States, recognising the value of the scientific cooperation performed in the context of ICGEB.” They mandated the CEI Secretariat to verify with the European Commission the possibility of specific financial support by the EC in order to accomplish this objective.

A presentation by CEI Alternate Secretary General, Giorgio Rosso Cicogna, introduced the third agenda item concerning a strategy for Next Generation Biofuels in the CEI region and, more specifically, a proposal for an integrated and interdisciplinary regional research project. This could involve up to one hundred groups already identified in the CEI region, thus mobilising over one thousand scientists with the common objective of improving biorefinery processes. This action would support a priority option for any long-term strategy concerning renewable, sustainable and eco-friendly energy alternatives.

Mr. Harry Boyle, senior researcher of Bloomberg New Energy Finance presented the preliminary version of a comprehensive report on the prospects for Next Generation Biofuels in the CEI region, implementing a joint project with the Secretariat of the Central European Initiative.

Opening the discussion on behalf of the Presidency, the Serbian Minister Mr. Žarko Obradović mentioned that the topic had already been raised on the occasion of the CEI Ministerial meetings on Economic Development (Podgorica, November 2010) and on Agriculture (Belgrade, May 2011) under the Montenegrin and Serbian Presidency respectively.

On behalf of Serbia he endorsed the approach and the guidelines described in the proposal by the Secretariat for an integrated regional R&D project and praised above all the innovative intent to catalyse on it all the existing EC support instruments in coherence with the different status of CEI Member States versus the European Union.

This agenda item was concluded with the following resolution adopted unanimously:

“Upon a proposal by the Chair, Ministers and other Heads of Delegation complimented the CEI Secretariat for the outstanding activity conducted so far concerning Next Generation Biofuels and for the preliminary draft of a CEI comprehensive regional R&D project in this field. They strongly recommended the present and future CEI Presidencies to provide continuous support to this initiative in view of facilitating the

accomplishment of all the outcomes envisaged. More specifically, they mandated the Secretariat to establish without delay a Network of Centres of Excellence as the basis on which the regional project should develop and, at the same time, to ensure that top experts from different Ministries in CEI Member States (Energy, Environment, Agriculture and others beside Research and Innovation) are involved in order to mobilise consensus and actual participation as large as possible.

Furthermore, they mandated the CEI Secretariat to identify with different Directorates of the Commission the most appropriate ways to attract all possible means of financial support from the EC, from IFIs and from other public or private donors.”

After the concluding remarks by CEI Secretary General, Amb. Pfanzelter, and the Serbian Chairman, Minister Obradović, upon a proposal by the latter: “Delegations unanimously invited Ukraine to convene the next CEI Ministerial meeting during its Presidency in order to follow up on the progress in the implementation of the three above-mentioned resolutions adopted in Trieste.”



## **TRIESTE DECLARATION**

**adopted at the CEI Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology (19 October 2011)**

The Ministers and other Heads of Delegation of the Member States of the Central European Initiative (CEI) met in Trieste on 19 October, 2011 and unanimously adopted the following resolutions called “The Trieste Declaration”. In this context they referred in particular to the proposed “HORIZON 2020” EU Research and Innovation Programme, stressing the need that the investments in Research Infrastructures should be developed and planned on all available financial instruments. These investments will only be fruitful if a better synergy is achieved with a strengthened support by Horizon 2020 to “open Pan-European Operation” of these infrastructures, supporting “institutional excellence” alongside and with equal resources and a peer-review based approach as in the action for “individual excellence” already developed by the European Research Council.

1. “Upon a proposal by the Chair, the Ministers and other Heads of Delegation welcomed the proposal by the Italian Government and by the President of “Elettra” and “Fermi” laboratories aiming at institutionalizing the access and the participation in the activities of the aforementioned laboratories (Synchrotron Radiation Facility “Elettra” and the new Free Electron Laser Laboratory “Fermi”) by the scientific communities of CEI Member States in collaboration and in partnership with other laboratories operating and/or being developed in the CEI Member States, reinforcing the capability to attract the best talents and reverse the brain drain to fully benefit from brain circulation, through transfer of ideas and opportunities. They expressed their commitment to promote the strengthening of the links between the investments in research infrastructures and the development of common research and innovation policies connected to the European Union Framework Programmes. This should create synergies and best results in terms of research and innovation capacity building as well as of socio-economic impact and establish the basis for a stronger success, also in this area, in the pre-accession phase for countries in view of joining the EU. The Heads of Delegation, asked the CEI Secretariat in coordination with the Presidency, (with the Chair of the EU) with the Italian Government and with the President of “Elettra” and “Fermi” to further support the development of partnerships between the Institutions operating in the CEI Member States (also in the framework of Council Regulation EC N. 723/2009 aiming at pooling resources on a scientific-quality basis and asking for a specific EU support of the joint activities open to further EU and international collaborations)”.
2. “Without underestimating the constraints of the present global financial crisis imposed on state budgets, all delegations shared the desirability of a participation in the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology in a near future by all CEI Member States, recognising the value of the scientific cooperation performed in the context of ICGEB. They mandated the CEI Secretariat to verify with the European Commission the possibility of specific financial support by the EC in order to accomplish this objective.”
3. “Upon a proposal by the Chair, Ministers and other Heads of Delegation complimented the CEI Secretariat for the outstanding activities conducted so far concerning Next Generation Biofuels and for the preliminary concept for a CEI comprehensive and interdisciplinary regional R&D project in this field. They strongly recommended that the current and future presidencies should provide continuous support to this initiative in view of facilitating the accomplishment of all the outcomes envisaged. More specifically, they mandated the Secretariat to establish without delay a Network of Centres of Excellence as the basis on which the regional project should develop and, at the same time, to ensure that top experts from different Ministries in CEI Member States (Energy, Environment, Agriculture and others besides Research and Innovation) are involved in order to mobilise consensus and actual participation as large as possible. Furthermore, they mandated the Secretariat to identify with different Directorates of the European Commission the most appropriate ways to attract all possible means of financial support from the EC, from IFIs and from other public and/or private Donors.”
4. “Finally Delegations unanimously invited Ukraine to convene the next CEI Ministerial meeting on Science and Technology during its Presidency in order to ensure an appropriate follow up based on the progress in the implementation of the three above resolutions adopted in Trieste.”