



International Conference in the framework of the
Moldovan Presidency of the Central European Initiative

**“Strengthening Cooperation towards a
Knowledge-based Society in CEI Region”**

October 24, 2008, Chișinău, Republic of Moldova

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the recent repositioning of the CEI structure in November 2007, at the CEI Summit of Heads of Government in Sofia, Bulgaria, a new system of networks of focal points was created. In this context, the event was organized with the aim to strengthen the role of the focal points in fostering regional cooperation, in the fields of Science & Technology and Information Society, towards a sustainable development of a knowledge-based society in the CEI region.

The sessions of the Conference focused on 2 key topics: development of knowledge-based society in the CEI region: identifying new forms of cooperation and EU Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) as an opportunity to improve international cooperation in S&T and Information Society. Also, the event included a working session, intended at exchanging experience and enhancing the cooperation activities within the CEI region in the fields of S&T and Information Society, by creating an opportunity for networking, collaboration, sharing of information and building of reliable relationships between the scientific communities of our countries.

Following the presentations and discussions held during the sessions mentioned above, the participants:

1. Noticed that the particular structure of the Central European Initiative, comprised of 9 EU and 9 non-EU Member Countries, gives an advantage comparing to other regional initiatives. In this way, each non-EU member state can benefit of a privileged relationship with a EU member state through the Know-how Exchange Programme, in terms of coaching towards developing further capacities for better integration into the European Research Area;
2. Agreed that the lack of interaction and communication between CEI focal points was noticeable in its first year of existence, a need of implementation of some interaction mechanisms is needed;
3. Acknowledged that the Trieste-based Lead Institutions are very important in offering a research, innovative and educational environment for the development of human capital in the region and scientific capacities of the countries in the region;
4. Noted that the topics of interest and the problems faced are similar across the CEI region and that great benefit could be obtained from exchanges of best practices, joint actions for regional cooperation, horizontal support activities with considerable regional relevance and other actions which require cooperative efforts;

5. Consented that special attention must be placed on the involvement of young researchers in the regional circulation of talents and on creating frameworks for the use of experience acquired abroad for the development of their countries of origin, in the long run.

The participants acknowledged that a specific comprehensive programme of actions related to the activity of the networks of focal points is necessary. In conclusion, the participants asked Central European Initiative, to consider the following recommendations in supporting the activity of the CEI networks of focal points, with respect to:

1. Implementation of interaction mechanisms between the focal points, intensify the exchange of information, profiles of interested institutions and research groups in their countries to collaborate with their counterparts in other CEI countries;
2. Reinforcing research cooperation agreements between their institutions and promote establishing new frameworks for cooperation;
3. Raising awareness of the CEI opportunities for cooperation and funding and encourage the building of relationships between scientific communities in the region, while CEI member states should create premises for intensifying the mobility among its states;
4. Identifying centers of excellence in the region and promote them widely, as well as take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Trieste-based Lead Institutions;
5. Supporting the implementation of feasibility meetings, funded from the CEI Know-how Exchange Programme or CEI Cooperation Fund, with respect of developing further cooperative project proposals to be submitted to other funds, especially the Seventh Framework Programme;
6. Facilitating the procedures for financial reporting system of the beneficiaries of CEI funding, to prevent delays in delivering of final payments and, consequently, loss of interest for CEI funding instruments in the future;
7. Establishing closer links between the CEI networks of focal points and the networks of FP7 National Contact Points in the region, organize joint information days and trainings.

The participants to the Conference agreed on the importance of meetings between the networks of focal points and convene that regular meetings should take place every year in the country of the CEI Presidency.