



**Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs
of the Member States of the Central European Initiative**
Split, 11 June 2018

Central European Initiative: perspectives of tomorrow

- **European integration: experiences and challenges**

A number of developments have occurred recently with regard to the European integration process. A credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans was reinforced, the Eastern European countries have made positive steps forward as well. The path to the EU, however, requires the adoption and implementation of numerous rules and standards, full respect of the democratic values, development of good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation, economies prepared to face competition etc. Nevertheless, while the non-EU CEI countries are called upon to respect these principles, yet the EU CEI countries, a number of which have passed through this process recently, have an important role in assisting their partners in meeting such criteria. Hence, the transfer of knowledge and building stronger partnerships on European integration issues is of utmost value and importance. Therefore, the Ministers are invited to discuss the best models and practices in knowledge sharing, also taking into consideration the existing CEI instruments, such as the Know-How Exchange Programme.

- **Common efforts in backing regional stability**

Numerous transnational challenges are currently affecting the CEI countries. First and foremost, we are seeing the size of the renewed migration crisis. Increased numbers of migrants are trying to reach the West using the SEE routes and the Mediterranean. On the other hand, we are witnessing a massive brain drain from the CEI countries where skilled young people are leaving their countries in search of better job opportunities. However, there is an increased focus, through different fora including the EU, on improving interconnections within the CEI Region in terms of transport, energy, digitalisation, education, culture, etc. The Ministers are, therefore, invited to discuss how to create a competitive region, with particular regard to issues such as preventing irregular migration and human trafficking as well as brain drain, promoting enhanced transport and energy connections, supporting intercultural links and education, etc., taking also into consideration the CEI Plan of Action 2018-2020, aimed at enhancing connectivity and valorising diversity.