



**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN
INITIATIVE
AT THE UNECE REGIONAL FORUM 2024
(Geneva, 13-14 March 2024)**

1. The Member States of the Central European Initiative (CEI) are strongly committed to sustainable development, one of the main strategic goals of the CEI. This commitment was also recognised by the UN General Assembly, thus granting it with an observer status in 2011. Since then, biannual resolutions on the “Cooperation between the UN and the CEI” are adopted. The latest resolution of 2022 specifically notes the efforts made so far by the CEI in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the continuous commitment of the Initiative in keeping up with the pace of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. The Member States of the CEI demonstrate their strong support to the 2030 Agenda through its promotion at political level in the framework of the CEI, including through: support to its adoption in 2015, its integration throughout the Joint Statements of the CEI high-level meetings, the CEI Plans of Action - the main strategic document guiding the work of the Organisation - and other documents, organisation of several CEI side events at the High-Level Political Forums showcasing what and how the CEI does to tackle the implementation of the SDGs, as well as through the organisation of meetings among government representatives in charge of 2030 Agenda in order to exchange views, experiences and best practices related to its implementation. This approach will continue also in the future.
3. The CEI is also pursuing tangible action towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, in particular through its funds, programmes and instruments supporting the know-how transfer and exchange of best practices, capacity building, awareness raising, studies, research and innovation, education, and other types of activities aimed at promoting economic growth, environmental and climate solutions and social cohesion while emphasising security, democratic values, opportunities for youth. The CEI thus promotes also its other key goal, namely European integration, through genuine transfer and exchange of experiences between EU and non-EU Member States of the CEI, which is strongly connected with the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. Moreover, the CEI is pursuing partnerships with other international and regional organisations to enhance synergies on the implementation of the Agenda 2030. The CEI has been working with UN departments, funds and programmes. A bright example of jointly tackling the attainment of SDGs is the CEI's strong cooperation with the WHO Regional Office for Europe since the setting up of the joint Task Force in response to the Covid-19 pandemics in 2020, which was later further extended to discussing key issues and identifying opportunities in the area of health and well-being. The CEI intends to also step up its cooperation with the UNECE, recognizing its pivotal role as a facilitative platform to assist in SDG implementation and poverty alleviation efforts, with the overarching aim of attaining sustainable development by 2030.
5. Recent challenges and geopolitical turbulences call for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, a reinvigorated commitment to multilateralism and stronger joint efforts are needed. In this sense, CEI member states fully support the commitments made in the September 2023 SDGs Summit Political Declaration, i.e. to review progress and accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to deliver on the adopted targets. The international community in particular plays a leading role in keeping up with the roadmap, providing effective framework in which countries could address the challenges, thus build the needed resilience together.
6. In this regard, the Member States of the CEI share a mutual understanding on their responsibility for further contributing to the global efforts in this endeavour and consider regional cooperation as an extremely important approach helping to achieve most tangible results through coordinated multilateral action. Furthermore, with governments playing an essential role in gearing the political agenda, the role of parliaments, the private sector, local communities, civil society, academia and youth is also essential in driving meaningful change of countries and societies at all levels. This multilevel and multistakeholder approach is vigorously promoted within the CEI.
7. The Member States of the CEI will further strive to keep up political engagement as well as projects supporting the advancement of the 2030 Agenda through regional cooperation formats, such as the CEI. The CEI Member States are of the opinion that, if adequately tackled, the challenges could become opportunities for cooperation and catalysts for innovation and, thus contributing to the peaceful, prosperous and sustainable development of the societies.