



**CEI Youth Forum on**

**“YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”  
Skopje, 13-15 November 2002**

Ref. 223.001-02

**FINAL DECLARATION**

We, the representatives of the youth organizations of the Member States of the Central European Initiative<sup>1</sup> (CEI) held our second Youth Forum in Skopje, 13-15 November 2002, on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Heads of Government of the CEI Member States.

At the Trieste Youth Forum 2001 the final declaration on “*Growing up together. Building a common future: cultural activities, job opportunities and new society*” was adopted and is still valid.

We, the participants of the Second CEI Youth Forum, focused our attention on the issues of youth employment and sustainable development. Considering that young people have to be recognized as an asset for economic and social development, and not as a problem, we would like to ask the Governments of CEI-MS to concentrate their future activities on the following issues:

1. education and training;
2. access to information;
3. quality and security of jobs
4. mobility;
5. equal opportunities regarding ethnic, gender, religious and age groups;
6. the fight against illegal and unethical acts;
7. environmental protection;
8. welfare and social security

During our workshops we discussed these issues and developed the following proposals which we ask the Governments to consider in order to find adequate solutions:

**Education and training:**

- Education systems should be improved to meet the demands of the business market by cooperation and interaction between the two sectors
- young people are to be offered training or re-training opportunities for existing employment opportunities at an early age in both formal and informal education
- Young people are to be made aware of the necessity for permanent learning and improvement of their knowledge.

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\* Albania, Austria<sup>1</sup>, Belarus<sup>1</sup>, Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>, Bulgaria<sup>1</sup>, Croatia, the Czech Republic<sup>1</sup>, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania<sup>1</sup>, Slovakia<sup>1</sup>, Slovenia, Ukraine and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

- Young people are to have adequate exposure to information technology and facilities to use computers within formal education systems.
- Governments need to develop specific employment programs for the youth and to facilitate the creation of new job opportunities.

### **Access to information:**

The development of information technology and scientific instruments over the past few years has given strong impetus to new societies, completely changing the ways youth can gain access to and use information.

Access to information for all young people in CEI-MS is necessary.

Young people are to be given the opportunity to grow up in an environment determined by ICT in order to familiarize themselves with it and learn how to make use of it.

### **Quality and security of jobs**

We ask the Government:

- to provide all young people with sufficient opportunities to obtain decent and productive jobs with adequate payment;
- to create a legal framework where employer needs and the respect for employee rights meet;
- to provide subventions, legal and administrative advisory services and entrepreneurial guidance for self-employment sectors.

### **Mobility**

There should be :

- increased opportunities to study and attend training courses abroad, to learn foreign languages and compare life styles in other countries.
- Measures in the economic and social environment should be adopted, allowing young people to apply the acquired knowledge in their countries
- The exchange of experience, skills and technological know-how should be facilitated through CEI projects

### **Equal opportunities regarding ethnic, gender, religious and age groups**

Societies affected by tensions and conflicts because of ethnic or religious rivalries need to make particular efforts in their formal and informal education systems to overcome prejudiced behavior and establish favorable human relations. Only by sorting out tensions between ethnic groups in our own region will we be able to live in a peaceful global setting.

Therefore, we ask governments to raise awareness on how differences can constitute advantages in our daily lives.

### **The fight against illegal and unethical acts**

Youth unemployment is particularly disruptive for social cohesion. Young people without employment or without any realistic future expectations will be exposed to all kinds of risks from low self-esteem, narcotic drug consumption and health deterioration to vandalism, political extremism, intolerance and organized crime.

We ask governments to develop programs giving young people more opportunities to improve their skills thus improving their prospects for a better future .

### **Environmental protection**

Immediate and efficient environmental protection is needed world-wide. We can combine the necessity of reducing environmental pollution and increasing sustainable development by creating new opportunities for young people, based on attention given to water, land and energy. Renewable energy is also a field of interest for creative young entrepreneurial initiatives.

### **Welfare and social security**

In order for an initiative in the field of youth employment to be effective, it needs to be based on the satisfaction of basic human needs and social rights. Only then will young people have the incentive to improve themselves and to be more attractive on the labor market.

We ask You to address all these issues to the CEI MS and develop cooperation activities financed by CEI funds and other donors.

Hopefully the possibility to meet one other, discuss problematic issues and table proposals, will be reiterated in the forthcoming years. Finally, we believe both our enthusiastic initiatives and your experience will enable all our countries to find effective solutions and strengthen cooperation among CEI MS.