



CEI Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology

Biotechnology for Healthy and Active Life in CEI Region

26 October 2017, Minsk, Belarus

DRAFT CONCEPT

Background and objectives

For years, CEI Ministerial Meetings in Science and Technology constitute a valuable mechanism to coordinate activities of the member states at the level of science, technology and innovation (STI) policy and kick-start initiatives aimed at implementation of concrete projects in priority sectors. The latest Ministerial Meetings in S&T (2011, 2012, Trieste) have paved the way for an impressive collaboration on next generation of biofuels which was supported by the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. They also contributed to institutionalizing the access and increasing participation of CEI member states' research community in activities of Synchrotron Radiation Facility "ELETTRA" and the new Free Electron Laser Laboratory "Fermi". In the last years, however, this coordination mechanism was missing.

Within the ongoing CEI Action Plan for 2014–2017, CEI efforts *in Research and Innovation* dimension are focused on bridging between European Research Area (ERA) and non-EU and non-ERA CEI countries by promoting joint participation in the EU-funded programmes, linking academia and business and facilitating access to the institutions of the CEI Science and Technology Network. Here, the significant progress has been made with the joining the EU by Croatia and association to the EU Framework Programmes of Moldova and Ukraine. At the same time, heterogeneity of research potential and increasing competition in Horizon 2020, do not allow the countries of CEI region to be equally effective while many of them belong to so called "underperforming" group. Thus, new initiatives aimed at increasing competitiveness of CEI members and their participation in EU-funded programmes are in high demand.

Success in innovation is impossible without active involvement of business. Thus, CEI activities in *SMEs and Business Development* dimension aimed at fostering dialogue between governments and business communities with involvement of large industry, increasing the role of business in shaping the economic policy and climate, promoting SMEs and entrepreneurship culture, identifying possible sources of finance for SMEs, etc. are highly appreciated and should be continued.

Following the motto of its presidency in CEI – *Promoting connectivity in a wider Europe* – Belarus has proposed to resume Ministerial Meetings in S&T and, for the first time, held it out of Trieste. By hosting the event in Minsk, the organizers do not just change the environment but suggest expanding cooperation in biotech sector from bioenergy to *Biotechnology for Healthy and Active Life* – and hope to inspire new project ideas with active participation of industry and for the benefit of population in CEI region.

Biotechnology world market was estimated at over USD 330.3 billion in 2015 and will exceed USD 775.2 billion with 10% annual growth from by 2024. Biopharmacy leads the

industry with a revenue of over USD 199 billion (2015) owing to extensively useful products such as monoclonal antibodies, advanced drugs, recombinant proteins, growth hormones, recombinant human insulin and vaccines. Biopharmaceuticals are used in the treatment of several chronic diseases such as cancer, neurological, metabolic, cardiovascular and other diseases. Rising demand of new technologies such as DNA sequencing, recombinant technology, fermentation, tissue engineering will drive the biotech research and biopharmaceutical industry size in the coming decade. Even taking the significantly lower share of the whole biotech market than biopharmacy, biotechnologies for agriculture will also continue to grow due to increasing food demand in countries such as China, India, US, etc. to meet the need of ever increasing population.¹

Following the US, Europe biotechnology market share, along with Asia and Pacific will show, according to analysts, a lucrative growth during the coming years due to growing attention towards public health and introduction of healthcare benefits by government agencies. The favorable regulatory scenario should propel industry growth. European Commission and national governments of EU MS and many non-EU countries give priority to biotechnology in their agendas.

In Belarus, pharmaceutical industry belongs to the most prospective ones with 30 companies being involved and production exceeding USD 450 mln (2015). From 2012 to 2015, the latter demonstrated 1.5 times growth while the number of annually registered locally produced medications increased from 89 to 187. Some of them are unique. Share of local medications at domestic market is 52%. Belarus exports its medical products in 20+ countries. This has been achieved, in particular, thanks to modernization of several production lines and investing in innovation. At the same time, international cooperation in biotechnological research is rather limited and Belarus is interested to expand it by using different international fora.

Against the said background, the **objectives** of the conference include:

- Resuming high level expert dialogue on state of the art and prospects of cooperation in STI in CEI region,
- Discussing possibilities to expand STI cooperation in biopharmacy and agricultural biotechnologies and the role of business in it,
- Generating and discussing concrete project ideas for the benefit of the CEI region on the topics of the conference to be further proposed for implementation within EU-funded programmes and other funding instruments,
- Contributing to shaping of CEI agenda for 2018-2020 and bilateral cooperation between CEI member states in STI.

Participants:

- Ministers of CEI member states and other high officials responsible for science, technology and innovation, as well as for health and agriculture & food sectors development,
- Representatives of research centers, universities, business and NGOs working in biopharmacy and biotechnologies for agriculture,
- Representatives of the European Commission, EBRD, other international organizations, donors and investors.

¹ <https://www.gminsights.com/industry-analysis/biotechnology-market>

CEI Member States: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine.

Venue: 'PRESIDENT' HOTEL, 18 Kyrova str., Minsk, <http://www.president-hotel.by/en>

Date and duration: 26 October 2017, full day. Additional activities (visiting local companies and research centers, bilateral face-2-face meetings, etc.) are welcome and can be arranged by local organizers upon request. Optional social activities may be proposed to the registered participants at later stage.

Possible input: intervention at a plenary or thematic sessions (up to 15 min; with or without .ppt presentation) and/or participation in a panel discussion should be clarified at registration.

Language: EN, RU. Simultaneous translation is foreseen.

Expected number of participants: up to 100.

Cost of participation: participation is free of charge; travel and accommodation costs of participants are covered by seconding organizations.

During the Conference, catering will be arranged. Informal dinner hosted by the Mr. Alexander Shumilin, Chairman of the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus for the heads of delegations will be provided in the format 1+1 (minister or his/her representative + accompanying person)

To register, please, fill in a registration form by email to registration@belisa.org.by with a topic "CEI Ministerial Conference" **by 26 September 2017**. The registration form, as well as important information on logistics are available here:

<http://www.scienceportal.org.by/en/cooperation/CEI-2017.html>.

Local organizers:

State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus, <http://www.gknt.gov.by>

Belarusian Institute of System Analysis and Information Support of S&T (BelISA), <http://www.belisa.org.by>

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