

Information about the Meeting of the General Committee on Economic Affairs of the Central European Initiative Parliamentary Dimension held in Warsaw on 25 September 2018.

On 25 September 2018, the Meeting of the General Committee on Economic Affairs of the Parliamentary Dimension of the Central European Initiative was held in Warsaw. Delegations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine and Hungary participated in the meeting. The Belarusian delegation was represented by a representative of this country's Embassy in Warsaw. The meeting was chaired by Bogdan Rzońca, MP - Head of the Polish Parliamentary Delegation to the CEI and Chairman of the General Committee on Economic Affairs. The main topic of the meeting was Infrastructure, road and energy, connections in the Central European Initiative region on the North – South axis, with special focus on Via Carpathia road construction project.

The welcome address to the participants was given by Marek Kuchciński, Marshal of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland. The following persons participated in the meeting on behalf of the Polish government: Andrzej Adamczyk, Minister of Infrastructure, Krzysztof Tchórzewski, Minister of Energy, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Investment and Development.

In the course of the debate, it was emphasized that the aim of regional cooperation in the scope of the development of infrastructure should be the creation of a cohesive transport system between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea as well as the Balkans. One of the main projects in this scope is Via Carpatia. It is expected that its construction will facilitate and speed up further economic development of the countries of the region, enabling an increase in the quality of life and wealth of the residents. The attractiveness of the region will increase thanks to Via Carpatia, as a place to locate investments. This will also have a positive impact on the amount of employment, the volume of trading and increase tourist traffic as well as a cultural exchange between the residents of the region. Andrzej Adamczyk, Minister of Infrastructure emphasized that Via Carpatia is indicated as the main transport corridor in this part of Europe and the project of its construction is to be completed by 2025. Krzysztof Tchórzewski, Minister of Energy pointed to the economic aspects of this project. He emphasized that Via Carpatia as well as the Baltic Pipe gas pipeline are infrastructure corridors and tools to implement the plan of diversifying energy sources, most importantly including natural gas, for the purpose of not

being dependent on the supply from Russia. An important concept, which will allow for the implementation of this objective is also the Polish project for the construction of the Northern Gate as a key component of the North-South corridor (planned within the framework of the Three Seas Initiative). The project includes the connection of Poland through a gas pipeline (and then the other countries of the region) with the Norwegian continental shelf as well as increasing the regasification capacity of the LNG terminal in Świnoujście. The completion of the project is planned for 2022.

During the meeting, a lot of time was also devoted to the Carpathian Declaration, signed by Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine during the Economic Forum in Krynica in September 2018. It confirms the cooperation in the scope of the creation, and then the implementation of the Macro-regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region, which, in the future should become one of five EU marco-regional strategies, next to the Baltic Strategy - 2009, the Danube Strategy - 2010, the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy - 2014 and the Alpine Strategy - 2015. The proposed main aim of the Macro-regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region is the strengthening of the competitiveness and attractiveness of the Carpathian region as well as increasing the quality of life of the residents based on the internal development potential, with the simultaneous respect for the natural heritage and culture of the Carpathians. The draft document points out three main areas of potential cooperation of the Carpathian states, such as: Competitive Carpathians, Green Carpathians and Cohesive Carpathians as well as the horizontal area: institutional cooperation.

Meetings of the remaining two Parliamentary Dimension General Committees will be held in October 2018. On 25-27 October, the GC on Cultural Affairs will meet in Budapest and the GC on Political and Home Affairs will meet on 28-29 October in Sofia.