

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

7th Meeting of the CEFTA Subcommittee on Agriculture Including Sanitary and Phytosanitary Issues

9-10 June, 2014 Skopje

The Seventh meeting of the CEFTA Subcommittee on Agriculture and SPS was held on 9 and 10 June in Skopje under the Chairmanship of Macedonia.

The participants to the meeting were the representatives of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo* while the invited guest was Mr. Edo Omic from the OECD.

The Chair presented in brief the objectives and priorities of the Macedonian Work Programme of the Subcommittee. He highlighted that the Programme relies on the three-year Strategic Work Programme (2012-2014) conceptualised under the Chairmanship of Albania and that Macedonia was fully committed to carry on with the work of its predecessors in both areas – facilitation of the agricultural trade and improvement of cooperation in sanitary and phytosanitary domain.

The main focus of the Macedonian Chairmanship will be placed on: Formalization of the Additional Protocols on further trade liberalisation and their effective implementation; The impact and challenges of CEFTA liberalization process to efficient restructuring of the agricultural economies and follow up actions; Further reduction of NTB's of trade by scaling up and harmonization of food safety standards and improvement of risk-based inspection control at BIP's; and Development of initiatives of common participation of CEFTA Parties in other international organizations.

Sanitary and phytosanitary issues, Ms. Marija Manevska from the Food and Veterinary Agency of Macedonia presented the activities aimed at the improvement of the risk-based inspection at BIPs. The model they developed has numerous benefits: (i) provide the equal treatment for all operators; (ii) adds to the shorter time necessary for inspection and (iii) reduce the costs of crossing the border subsequently.

Presentation of a common model (template) of bilateral/multilateral agreement in the SPS area, Ms. Tomeska Mickova from the Food and Veterinary Agency of Macedonia, presented the potential text of the multilateral agreement in the SPS area, explaining the objective, scope and provisions of each of suggested articles.

Trade in agricultural products, Parties to presented in brief their agricultural policies, as well to report on the assessment of liberalization for those who were involved in it in 2011. Also Chair in briefly reported on the status of cases in the Market access database. Trade Facilitation Concept, Ms. Rakovic explained that the trade facilitation as one of the priorities of the CEFTA Chairmanship and the SEE2020 Strategy would be integrated into the future CEFTA Structures at the level of the Committee. The members of the Committee will be the Chairs of the Subcommittees on Agriculture and SPS, Subcommittee on NTBs and TBT as well as of the Subcommittee on Customs and Rules of Origin. She announced that the Ministerial Decision on establishment of the Committee on Trade Facilitation would be submitted to the deputy ministers for endorsement at the meeting in July, and formally adopted at the Joint Committee meeting in November.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence