



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
MINISTRY OF ENONOMY, TRADE AND ENERGY

CEFTA Joint Committee Meeting
Paris, 23 November 2011

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentleman,

We meet after a successful and challenging year. After one year we are here together to discuss our progress and define the actions and steps for 2012. We have reasons to be proud of what this region achieved during 2011. We liberalized substantially the agricultural trade among us and started the implementation of the additional protocol on 13 November. I would like to congratulate those who could ratify and urge others to push the process ahead so we all can reach the expected results from the liberalization.

A particular consideration is required to the analysis of the expected results as a mean to further improvements needed in the regulatory and institutional framework in any CEFTA country. Albania as the next Chair in Office, believes that due attention should be given to the assessment of the impact of the liberalization and requires the Secretariat to work closely with all other CEFTA structures in this respect.

The export of agriculture product for the 9 month of 2011 is 10.2 mln Euro or 30% higher than the export of agriculture products for the whole 2010 (7.8 mln Euro). The export of non agriculture products increased as well. The export for the 9 month of 2011 is 118 mln Euro or 6% higher than the export of non agriculture products for the whole 2010 (111 mln Euro). It's noticeable the importance the

agriculture trade is getting for Albania and we are confident that this increasing trend will continue.

Although trade data of Albania with CEFTA countries for the 9 month of 2011 are impressive, Albania believes that the data cannot alone indicate the steps to be taken. This region needs to boost its trade and competitiveness to contribute to the welfare increase of its nationals.

After we liberalized tariffs we committed to reduce the NTBs as one of the most needed action to benefit from trading among us. This region invested a lot in removing the barrier to trade and many obstacles have been removed through bilateral efforts. We are growing and progressing as a region as we moved from the bilateral resolution of problems to regional actions. We learnt that ex-post removal of barriers to trade is necessary for our businesses but ex-ante prevention is crucial to the development.

Thus we engaged during this year in the first cycle of assessment of the barriers in trade among us. Concrete recommendations have been proposed and specific attention should be given to them by the respective sub committees. I would like to thank OECD and the Hungarian Government for the support given in this regard. The continues support provided by the European Commission and its firm commitment for the 3 upcoming years will be quite important for all CEFTA countries and all its structure involved in this process. Albania as the next chair of the subcommittee on agriculture and SPS will invest many efforts along with all CEFTA countries in internalizing these recommendations, where feasible, into the multiannual plan of the subcommittee.

During this year Albania is the Chair of the Subcommittee on customs and rules of origin. A lot has been done in this regard. Among many activities in this field the preparation of the multiannual program of the subcommittee has formed the basis for joint activities in this respect and will allow the next chairs to work on a common platform. I would like to thank all expert of origin network for their dedication to the PEM and Croatia for its contribution and leadership in the working group 4 of Pan Euromed process.

Honourable Ministers,

Ladies and gentleman,

Albania is the next Chair in Office and has already prepared the priorities for its chairmanship. We are pleased to continue and deepen the results achieved so far in all CEFTA aspects. I would like to highlight that next year all CEFTA aspects have a special attention within our priorities.

We have learnt during these years how to deal with crucial aspects of NTBs, rules of origin, liberalization of agricultural trade. However we believe that new challenges are ahead. The liberalization of services trade is among the most demanding not only because of the importance of services in our economic development but as a new opportunity to show maturity, political commitment and professionalism.

Moreover, increasing the capacities in trade policy development is a real challenge to be addressed during our chairmanship. Our common way to Europe shows that solid and sufficient internal capacities in the trade policy making and monitoring is fundamental to the new role our structure will take. Therefore starting a regional approach in this area would be beneficial to our countries and well appreciated by our partners.

Let me take the opportunity to assure all Ministers, representing today their countries on Albania's full commitment to work intensively next year to achieve the objectives for 2012.

I would like to thank the Republic of Kosovo for the hospitality, dedication and professionalism shown during its Chairmanship. This year Chairmanship showed the strength of our cooperation and provided an excellent example for the implementation of common and acceptable solutions in very sensitive pending issues.

By concluding, I would like to give a special thank to our Secretariat team for their firm commitment, professionalism and devotion in all our activities.