



JMC, Sarajevo, 20 November 2013, 14.00

*„Challenges of the CEFTA Structures in the implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy“*

*Dear ministers, Deputy Ministers, Ambassadors, Heads of Delegations, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*It is my honour to welcome you to this seventh CEFTA Joint Committee Meeting on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina - the Chair-in-Office of CEFTA in 2013.*

*Although faced with great challenges that accompany small open economies in the developed global environment, by "holding" together we were able to finish everything that we "set" ourselves for the year of Bosnia and Herzegovina's presidency of the CEFTA Agreement.*

*Should we be satisfied with this?*

*As progress and development do not mean only what is behind us but much more what is to be expected and faced in the future, the answer to this question is clear. For our prosperity, we will have to put all our strength to it and unite all our targets into a common one in order to strengthen ourselves and each other. Our national interests in the direction of our own development, united in our common goal – creation of better conditions for new jobs and progress in the region will enhance our development towards integration into the European Union.*

*How to achieve this?*

*As you already know, following their commitment to join the EU family, countries in the region have started the adoption process of the SEE 2020 Strategy already in 2011 with support from the EU and the governments of the countries in the Region.*

*The Strategy itself follows the pattern of holistic development of the region and tries to encourage key long-term drivers of growth, above all: innovation, skills and trade integration. Like the Europe 2020 Strategy, this Strategy is focused on a group of interconnected pillars of development: integrated growth, smart growth, sustainable growth, inclusive growth and management in the function of achieving growth. Specific sectoral dimensions of regional cooperation and activities within these dimensions have been identified for these pillars, and these will contribute to achieving main objectives set out in the Ministerial Statement of November 2012.*

*As the pillars of the Strategy are interconnected, and bearing in mind the horizontal issues that are related to each pillar, very ambitious goals of this strategy can be achieved only through regional cooperation with the support of the governments of the region, the EU support and assistance from other international organizations. Taking into account the special circumstances of each policy area, the state of progress and the existence of regional commitments and structures, it is necessary to establish a clear governance structure that leans on political support from the highest level, paying special attention to avoiding the establishment of parallel and duplicate structures and avoiding the creation of additional strain on already limited human and financial resources in the state administration.*

*As the Strategy envisages the existence of a dimensions coordinator, strategy and regional dimensions coordinator for those dimensions for which currently there are no appropriate bodies, the special challenge for us is the coordination of dimensions related to the pillar of integrated growth and horizontal issues related to this pillar, which will be the task of CEFTA structures.*

*What are our challenges?*

*The goal of the integrated growth pillar is to promote regional trade and investment ties and policies which are not discriminatory, which are transparent, predictable and which enhance the flow of goods, investments, services and people within the region. This contributes to further integration of the region into the European and global economy, through greater participation in international supply chains, which represent the foundation for better international competitiveness assisted by deepened regional trade and new capital investments. The Strategy sets ambitious objectives to increase the circulation of goods within the region by more than 140%, and the total annual inflow of foreign direct investment in the region by at least 160% by the end of 2020? These objectives are closely linked to the overall strategic goals which provide that, inter alia, the total trade turnover (goods and services) would more than double during the same period? Furthermore, 5 out of 11 targets of the Strategy are linked to the objectives of the integrated growth pillar.*

*In cooperation with the RCC as a strategy coordinator and by using the institutional and legal framework, the CEFTA structures will implement activities in accordance with the key measures, instruments and priorities for the following dimensions: free trade zone, competitive economic environment and integration into the global economy. This requires a regional approach, involving all CEFTA structures and relevant institutions in the CEFTA Parties, cooperation with the private sector and the scientific / research institutions and EU institutions / international organizations, in all relevant sectors. This will allow for the integrated growth pillar in horizontal issues to be implemented without the formation of new structures and without duplication, while maximizing the use of existing resources.*

*The Sectors of particular importance for the CEFTA Structures are: agriculture and related sectors (sanitary and phytosanitary measures), intellectual property, public procurement, cooperation in customs administration. Furthermore, there are new requirements such as: monitoring requirements of the new EU investment policy, the implementation of the PEM Convention, the implementation of the EFTA Agreement and the Agreement with Turkey.*

*As the objectives of the SEE 2020 Strategy are equal or almost equal to the objectives of the EU 2020, new challenges appear in the process of its implementation, such as to bridge the gap in the current status of EU accession for the countries of the region, monitoring / meeting new EU requirements that are just being introduced by EU institutions, infrastructure support, financial and administrative capacity and related issues. These issues will have to be dealt with ad hoc, which will require additional efforts of all the involved parties, given that these are issues directly and / or indirectly related to the negotiation chapters for negotiations on the accession to the European Union.*

*Finally, I wish us all success in future work and fulfilment of existing obligations, and to get ready for new challenges that will give us good results only if we unite the individual with overall objectives.*

*To the Republic of Macedonia - I wish you success in your Chairing over the CEFTA Agreement in 2014 and to all the CEFTA Parties present here today - thank you for your support during Bosnia and Herzegovina's chairing in 2013.*

*Ermina Salkičević-Dizdarević*