

**DECISION OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN FREE  
TRADE AGREEMENT**

**No. 7 /2014**

**Establishment of the Committee of Trade Facilitation**

**Adopted on 21 November 2014**

The Joint Committee,

Having regard to the Agreement on Amendment of and Accession to the Central European Free Trade Agreement, CEFTA 2006, (hereinafter the "Agreement") done in Bucharest on 19 December 2006.

Hereby establishes, pursuant to Article 41.5 to the Agreement, the following Working Group:

- Committee of Trade Facilitation

The Terms of Reference of the Committee of Trade Facilitation is attached to this Decision as Annex 1 and shall form an integral part of it.

This decision was adopted by all CEFTA Parties in the presence of their representatives, except by Bosnia and Herzegovina which made a reservation regarding (completion of) its internal procedure.

This decision enters into force on the date following the date of the receipt of the written communication (notice) with which Bosnia and Herzegovina confirms to the Chair in Office, that internal procedures for the adoption of this decision have been fulfilled.

Adopted in Skopje on 21 November 2014

## **Annex 1 to the Decision No.5 /2014**

### **Terms of Reference for the Committee of Trade Facilitation**

#### **1. TASK**

The task of the Committee of Trade Facilitation (hereinafter referred to as: "Committee") is to develop and broaden cooperation among CEFTA Parties, according to Article 14 of the CEFTA Agreement, particularly to address the issues which are related to facilitation the regional trade in CEFTA with a view to reduce costs caused by the inefficient all types of clearance procedures, while balancing trade facilitation with the increasing requirements for safety and security measures in the international and regional supply chain;

For the purpose of these Terms of reference, trade facilitation is defined as the simplification and standardisation of procedures and associated information flows required to move goods across borders from seller to buyer and to pass payment in the other direction. Trade facilitation requires cooperation between public and private sectors to ensure that formalities, procedures, documents and operations of the regional trade transactions become easier, faster and more economical.

#### **2. MEMBERSHIP**

- 2.1.** Members of the Committee of Trade Facilitation are high level officials responsible from ministries responsible for trade, who are in charge of CEFTA Agreement, and Chairs of CEFTA Subcommittees on Agriculture and SPS, TBT and NTBs, Customs and Rules of Origin.
- 2.2.** The representative from each Party shall actively participate in performing the tasks and functions of this Committee.
- 2.3.** Experts from other public authorities of the CEFTA Parties or from other countries or international organisations may be invited to attend the meetings at the request of the Chair of the Committee to provide advice or introduce the best practice where needed. They have no rights in decision making and can be asked to leave the meeting at any time by the Chair.
- 2.4.** In the issues required specific technical knowledge, in particular for the implementation of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, the Committee may decide to benefit from technical consultancy which can be contracted by the CEFTA Secretariat. Consultants hired by the CEFTA Secretariat may attend the meetings upon the instructions of the Chair to provide their advice where needed.

- 2.5.** Recommendations for future actions will be made by consensus of all Committee members. If the member is absent from the Committee meeting, he/she shall communicate its position in writing within the period not longer than 20 working days from the date of the receipt of a request. If position is not communicated within the above mentioned period, it shall be deemed no objection has the member concerned.

### **3. CHAIRMANSHIP**

The Party which is Chair-in-Office of CEFTA in a given year shall chair the Committee.

The responsibilities of Chair include:

- Scheduling meetings and notifying the members
- Inviting guest experts to attend the meetings when required by members
- Guiding the meetings and other activities during chairing
- Ensuring all discussion items end with a decision, action or definite outcome

### **4. MINUTES TAKING**

Person appointed by the Chair and representative of the CEFTA Secretariat take notes and prepare draft minutes of the Committee meetings.

### **5. MEETINGS**

The Committee shall meet as necessary but at least once per year, preferably back-to-back and prior to the Deputy Ministers meeting.

### **6. FUNCTION**

The specific functions of the Committee are:

- (i)** Cooperation in the field of trade facilitation
  - To exchange information on the existing or any amendment adopted in the national legislation, regulations and rules affecting all kinds of clearance procedures and movement of goods in the CEFTA region,
  - To share best practices in facilitating trade, particularly with regard to the alignment with the EU acquis, and implementation of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement,
  - To discuss the implementation of regional projects in the field of trade facilitation, with an aim to develop common understandings to address the functioning and sustainability related issues to increase the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of the projects concerned.
  
- (ii)** Explore possibilities for creating regional legislative instruments in the framework of CEFTA with an aim to simplify and standardise the implementation of the rules and procedures applied in trade

- To discuss legal, and procedural possibilities in the framework of CEFTA Agreement in order to address all types of barriers to trade in all stages of clearance (pre-clearance, clearance, and post clearance, and undermining facilitation of legitimate trade without hampering the deterrence of risk based security and safety controls,
- To coordinate the priorities of CEFTA Subcommittees which are related to addressing all types of barriers to trade, and issues undermining facilitation of the regional trade,
- To propose the CEFTA Joint Committee the most appropriate legal instruments at the regional level in CEFTA to eliminate those barriers to trade and to facilitate trade in consideration of actions undertaken by the relevant CEFTA Subcommittees

## **7. ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING**

The agreed minutes of the Committee meetings will be submitted to the CEFTA Joint Committee and are to be integrated into the Ministerial Conclusions as appropriate.

The Chair of the Committee will report on discussion and outcomes to the Joint Committee.