

Executive Summary

Ninth meeting of the Working Group on TBT

Brussels, 5 March 2014

The ninth meeting of the CEFTA Working Group on TBT was held in Brussels on 5 March 2014 under the Chairmanship of Montenegro. Representatives of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo* participated. Albania and BiH informed that could not participate to the meeting. The guests to the meeting included Mr. David Norris from the IPA Quality Infrastructure Project.

The Chair, Mr. Dragan Vukcevic, Senior Advisor from Ministry of Economy of Montenegro welcomed the participants and introduced items on the agenda.

The present Parties discussed the proposed text of the Work Programme of the Subcommittee on NTBs and TBT that relates to specific TBT activities and priorities of the Montenegrin Chairmanship in 2014.

The present Parties further discussed the proposed activity of Montenegrin Chairmanship on extension of the mandate of the WG on TBT. Some Parties raised the question of their nomination as members to the Working Group.

In reply to this, the Secretariat presented the Parties with the official letters of nomination received by their respective government officials in 2010 when the Working Group was established by the Joint Committee (JC Ministerial Decision No. 4/2010). The Secretariat asked to be informed through official channels of communications if there were to be any changes in the nominations.

Regarding the proposed change of mandate of the WG on TBT, the present Parties agreed to change the current wording used in the text of the Work Programme of the Subcommittee on NTBs and TBT and would discuss it further at the meeting of the Subcommittee on NTBs and TBT.

Related to the second priority on potential conclusion of multilateral agreements on cooperation between NABs and NSBs, the Chair presented the two proposal documents prepared by the Montenegrin accreditation and standardisation bodies.

The present Parties addressed the proposal on establishment and management of regional association of conformity assessment bodies, such as CEFTALAB. The Chair informed that the initiative was supported by the labs associations in the region during their last meeting held in Opatija (Croatia) in November 2013.

Agreements on Conformity Assessment Issues and on Easing Access of Industrial Products in CEFTA

* 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

Related to the text of the Agreement, Parties agreed that there were some issues still to be discussed in order to find appropriate solutions necessary for conclusion of the agreement.

Harmonisation of technical legislation, adoption of standards

Montenegro reported on adoption of ten new approach directives, their transposition into national legislation and finalisation of transposition of horizontal legislation. A positive opinion from EU (in line with Regulations 765 and 764, product contact points) on new laws on product safety and market surveillance was received. On vertical issues approx. 75% of Acquis was transposed in new and old Approach area, procedural measures are finished approx. 95%, only cultural goods are missing. In relation to opening benchmarks for Chapter 1, Montenegro needs to draft an action plan, screen national legislation and submit to the EU (related to Articles 35-36).

Transparency in TBT

The Chair urged Parties to continue with regular notification of technical regulation, conformity assessments and national standards according to the templates adopted.

The Secretariat informed the Parties that the establishment of the online notification is underway and is expected to be finalised by June. The testing phase will take place during summer, while a training of nominated persons to perform the notification online is envisaged in September. The templates will stay the same, therefore only the mode of sending the notifications will change – from emails to Secretariat, the notification will be done online and by Parties directly. The notification tool will be accessible through the CEFTA Secretariat website.

Regarding the development of other features of the TBT Platform, the Secretariat informed the members that the IT experts were creating the software solutions, and expect the relevant data from the parties to be uploaded at latest by the end of May.