

**CEFTA Deputy Ministers Meeting
23 June 2016**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The CEFTA Deputy Ministers meeting was held in Herceg Novi on 23 June 2016. The representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo* attended the meeting.

In his capacity of the Chair in Office, Mr. Goran Šćepanović, Director General in Ministry of Economy of Montenegro, opened the meeting. He welcomed Deputy Ministers and other delegates, and stressed the importance of the successful implementation of CEFTA for the economic development in the Region. Success in the liberalisation of trade and its further facilitation are main positive triggers for attracting foreign direct investments, intensifying bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and therefore fostering economic growth. In addition, the SEE 2020 Strategy encompassing both trade and investment comes as a timely strategic response of the Region to the challenges of growth.

The Chair introduced the key items on the agenda and since there were no additional comments, the proposed Agenda was adopted. He thanked to the experts who had their meeting before for the preparation of the Deputy Ministers' meeting.

The head of delegations were invited to deliver their statements on the subject "Main challenges in liberalisation of trade in services and in trade facilitation from a Party's perspective". All speeches are attached to the Agreed Minutes.

Implementation of CEFTA

Ms Milica Šćepović reported the activities of CEFTA Chair in Office. The Chair in Office presented on the work of CEFTA Committees on Trade Facilitation and Contact Points, Subcommittee on NTMs and Services carried out during the first six month of 2016. Kosovo* as the Chair of CEFTA Subcommittee on Agriculture and SPS on behalf of Kosovo* presented the activities of this Subcommittee. Serbia as the Chair of the CEFTA Subcommittee on Customs and Rules of Origin reported the activities of the mentioned Subcommittee.

Presentation of CEFTA contributions to the Western Balkans Summit in France of 04 July 2016

All Parties agreed with the text to be proposed as CEFTA contribution to the Western Balkan Summit in France on 4 July.

Preparation of CEFTA Joint Committee

The Chair invited the Parties to consider the draft ministerial decision about the procurement and programming in CEFTA that would be submitted to Ministers in November. As the majority of the text regarding programming has been finalized during the meeting of Contact Points all Parties agreed to submit their comments by 15 July.

CEFTA Secretariat

The Chair invited Mr Umut Ergezer to present the short and medium term challenges in front of CEFTA structures and in particularly what could be the possible implications of the WB 6 Summit in France on 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

Secretariat.

The Chair concluded that strong Secretariat is needed to meet the future agenda as well as the need to publish a new tender for staff. The Chair alerted that a compiled picture on the procedures to be followed in the recruitment campaign is still required from the Parties and confirmed its readiness to organise any meeting with EPSO for additional clarification to be provided to the concerned Parties. In case Parties decide to follow the EPSO procedures relevant ministerial decisions shall be adopted.

Priorities of the CEFTA Chair-in-Office for 2017

Ms. Bojana Todorović from Serbia gave an insight of the major objectives and priorities of Serbian Chairmanship. The priorities are: (i) Strengthening the implementation of CEFTA; (ii) Deepening the implementation of CEFTA (iii) Sustaining synergy between implementation of CEFTA and the SEE Strategy 2020 and (iv) Contributing of CEFTA Structures to the realisation of Western Balkans Summit conclusions.

Serbia will continue to maintain close contacts with all current partners who support the implementation of the CEFTA Agreement, including the RCC, EU, GIZ, World Bank IFC, etc.

AOB

The CEFTA Secretariat introduced to the audience the redesigned CEFTA website as the first accomplishment of the visibility programme for the 10th years of CEFTA.

CEFTA Parties welcomed the new website and praised the work of the Secretariat for the timely execution of the task.