

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fifth CEFTA Subcommittee on Agriculture and SPS took place on 29-30 May in Tirana. The members discussed the annual Work Programme of the Subcommittee proposed by the Chair, reviewed their respective agricultural policies, exchanged information on trade of agricultural products in the period from the last meeting, key issues arising and explored further cooperation amongst SPS agencies in the region.

MAIN POINTS OF THE FIFTH MEETING

The Parties adopted the three year Strategic Work Programme of the Subcommittee on Agriculture and SPS introduced by the Chair. The Parties had the opportunity to hear about the objectives and priorities of the Chairmanship, the technical assistance needs, main results expected and the calendar of events envisaged for 2012.

The Parties reviewed their respective agricultural policies, exchanged information on trade of agricultural products in the period from the last meeting and gave a preliminary assessment of the implementation of the Additional Protocol and Annex 10.

The Market Access Database analysis in 2012 showed that the percentage of newly emerging issues is low (8%), while solved issues represent 37% of the total. Furthermore, almost one third is coming from the SPS area (26%), followed by issues connected to pre-shipment inspection (18%) and charges and taxes (15%). By sector, the most frequent barriers are presented in beverages and tobacco (28%), live animals (19%) and vegetables (9%). The Parties reported on the new issues and provided updated information on the pending issues that were considered as potential non-tariff barriers to trade in agricultural products among CEFTA Parties.

The SPS representatives at the meeting held in Tirana reported on the new regulations, the process of harmonisation of standards with those of the EU, the possibilities to conclude the mutual recognition agreements, as well as to inform on best practices in the region.

The Parties discussed the recommendations of the OECD related to SPS, in particular the ones that deal with a joint participation of CEFTA representatives at FAO, IPPC and OIE meetings. The Parties agreed that the person who participates at the meeting of the FAO, OIE and IPPC share the information on new developments and key issues with other CEFTA Parties. The information should be shared through the network of CEFTA Contact points.

The IFC representative presented the highlights of the workshop on supply chain process maps in agribusiness held in Sarajevo on 17 May and introduced the recommendations and set of activities

agreed at the meeting. He announced a number of IFC missions that will be organised in CEFTA Parties to collect the necessary data. The Parties will need to select the priority products having in mind the OECD analysis on NTBs and on the value chains.

According to the adopted three-year Work Programme of the Subcommittee on NTBs and TBT, as well as to the Work Programme for this year, the permanent coordination of this Subcommittee with the other two CEFTA Subcommittees (on Agriculture and on Customs) is deemed necessary. This coordination would allow a permanent exchange of information on issues, measures and activities related to the notification and reduction of non-tariff barriers to trade.

The CEFTA Secretariat presented the outline of the project on the SPS Database which is a part of the activities envisaged in the three year Strategic Work Programme of the Subcommittee and one of priorities of the Albanian Chairmanship for 2012. The major objective of the database is to enhance the transparency and improve the exchange of data in the SPS area. It will contain SPS measures, key laws and selected bylaws in the three areas: sanitary, phytosanitary and veterinary field. The tentative launching of the database is projected by mid 2013.

The representative from the private sector (Albanian Agribusiness Association) presented the experience of cooperating with companies in Albania as well as in the region. He emphasised that Albanian companies benefited a lot from the CEFTA Agreement once it had been signed in 2006 and entered into force in 2007 and informed that they cooperate regularly with their counterparts in other CEFTA Parties.
