

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fourth meeting of the CEFTA Working Group was held in Malmo on 1 February 2012 under the Chairmanship of Croatia. All the Parties except Moldova were present.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the identification of common priority sectors which will be covered by the next assessment cycle of the Multilateral Monitoring Framework on the elimination of NTBs scheduled for spring 2012.

MAIN POINTS OF THE FOURTH MEETING

Identification of priority sectors for NTBs elimination. The Parties agreed that identifying common priority sectors/product groups and corresponding directives where harmonisation and aligning with EU legislation can take place at an accelerated pace, could significantly contribute to the elimination of TBT which are the result of an uneven institutional and legislative framework. Two directives and subsequent product groups for assessment and further training, namely Household Appliances Directive (Low Voltage Directive) and Construction Products Regulation (cement) were chosen to be recommended to the Subcommittee on NTBs to be included into the assessment under the Multilateral Monitoring Framework on the Elimination of NTBs.

Adoption of European standards and withdrawal of conflicting national standards in the priority areas. Parties reported on the status of their membership to the CEN and CENELEC, as well as on the conditions necessary to be fulfilled for those who are yet to become members. The pace of adoption of European and international standards, as well as withdrawal of conflicting and/or mandatory standards were also discussed. All Parties agreed that employing efforts in translation of standards in priority sectors are of crucial importance for future activities.

Encouraging national accreditation bodies to continue striving for EA membership and signature of EA MLA in priority areas (testing and certification). In continuation, Parties reported on the status of signing of EA MLA in priority areas (testing and certification). Croatia signed the MLA in April 2010, Serbia and Macedonia are to become signatories in April 2012, while the others are in the process of obtaining membership.

Cooperation with the IPA Project on Quality Infrastructure. Good cooperation between the IPA Project on Quality Infrastructure and the CEFTA WG on TBT continued across a whole range of activities such as preparation for harmonisation of necessary technical regulations, elimination of NTBs and in particular technical barriers to trade, etc. It was agreed that the Project should maintain close contact with the CEFTA Secretariat and provide updates on the activities that are closely related to the CEFTA topics before the meetings of the Subcommittee on TBT and NTBs and those of the WG on TBT.

Other issues discussed included cooperation and coordination activities with the market surveillance bodies and strengthening private sector SMEs awareness. The Chair presented the draft Action Plan for the one-year period. In accordance with the plan, the Parties agreed to: (i) provide the Chair and the Secretariat with the list of accredited CABs related to the priority products (namely cement and household appliances- LVD); (ii) submit the reports on adoption of EU harmonised standards and report on harmonisation of legislation related to selected product groups and (iii) actively participate in the second assessment cycle of the Multilateral Monitoring Framework on the Elimination of NTBs scheduled from May till July 2012.
