

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fifth regular meeting of the CEFTA Working Group on Trade in Services was held in Tirana on 11 October 2012, under the Chairmanship of Albania. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the current market openness of each individual Party, explore the potential for the negotiations and prepare for the forthcoming Joint Committee meeting.

MAIN POINTS OF THE FIFTH MEETING

The Parties discussed the Report of the Consolidated Table undertaken by the independent international expert on trade in services. The members of the Working Group found the analysis and accompanied Annexes quite useful for discussions on further steps in opening the negotiating process.

All Parties reaffirmed the commitment for negotiations. They agreed to start the negotiations in 2013 and to have a substantial sectoral coverage with a multilateral format, while exploring the potential for concluding plurilateral/bilateral agreements (in transport and MRAs). Croatia reiterated its position that due to upcoming accession to the EU it would not be in position to participate in the negotiations but would support the process.

A small task force consisting of the current and next Chair, interested Parties and the Secretariat was created to work on the preparation of the text of the Agreement.

Building on what was discussed and agreed at the third meeting, the OECD and the World Bank together developed a project on providing assistance to the potential negotiations in liberalisation of trade in services.

The OECD and the World Bank presented the preliminary findings of the regulatory database and the STRIs. The validation of the data has to be done by 26 October by the relevant institutions in each CEFTA Party. Based on the preliminary results, the OECD prepared the recommendations, which listed three options based on the most and least restrictive sectors.

The Parties revised the Action Plan in line with the conclusions of the meeting. Two more activities have been added towards the end of 2012: (i) Establishing the ad hoc task force, and (ii) work on the draft Agreement on trade in services.
