

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **4<sup>TH</sup> Meeting of the CEFTA Subcommittee on Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade and Technical Barriers to Trade**

8-9 April, 2010 Durres, Albania

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The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CEFTA Subcommittee on NTBs and TBTs was held in Durres under the Albanian chairmanship and was hosted by the Ministry of Trade and Energy of Albania.

The consolidated outline strategic work programme of the Subcommittee for 3 years was presented for the final endorsement. The Chair pointed out that the priorities for 2010 under the Albanian Chairmanship are to enhance transparency including the launching of the CEFTA Trade Portal, while further focusing on eliminating unnecessary NTBs.

Following an open discussion the Parties agreed to the programme. It was recognized that all useful findings and results from other initiatives should systematically be fed into the work of the Working Group on TBT under the Subcommittee on NTBs and TBT. The Parties recommended that the permanent members of the Working Group on TBT should be the same persons representing the respective Parties in the Steering Committee of the Quality Infrastructure Regional project - IPA 2008 in order to ensure the most efficient flow of information

The introduction of the *CEFTA Monitoring Instrument I* was discussed by the meeting. The Parties gave an update on recent developments regarding NTBs identified in the Matrix of Raised Issues. The presentations introduced a relatively small number of new issues, while a number of previously existing NTBs were already solved. The Parties agreed to make the Matrix available to the OECD so they could start on the creation of the CEFTA Monitoring Instrument from already identified concrete NTBs and prioritize them according to their importance and impact on trade and propose instruments and approaches to reduce and eliminate them.

The OECD Private Sector Department gave a presentation on the introduction of the *CEFTA Monitoring Instrument II*. The OECD identified two basic options to be considered by the Parties for the employment of the instrument: - (i) for diagnostic purposes only or (ii) as a basis for more binding arrangements. The Parties stressed that this instrument should primarily serve as a decision making tool and is not meant to be published in the form of a report unless the Parties explicitly decide otherwise. The final monitoring scheme will be presented at the regional roundtable to be held in Budapest in October, 2010.

The Chair in Office gave a short update on recent development for the future functioning of the CEFTA Trade Portal under the GTZ Project. An extension for an additional 2 years is envisaged and it is proposed to enhance the future project by signing bilateral MoUs among GTZ and CEFTA Parties by the end of June 2010. Albania offered to "host" the follow up Project. Once GTZ support expires, the maintenance of the Portal will be regulated by a multilateral MoU among CEFTA Parties. A draft of this MoU was proposed for discussion; the main elements were agreed and are to be discussed again at the Deputy Ministers meeting in Belgrade in June.

A first demo of the CEFTA Trade Portal was presented during the meeting by GTZ. Local consultants responsible for developing the individual webpage of each of CEFTA Party were introduced to the participants at the meeting. The Parties and GTZ agreed that the Portal will be officially launched during CEFTA week in November 2010.

The Parties agreed to have a coordinated action regarding the promotion of the CEFTA Trade Portal, which would include also the respective Chambers of Commerce. The Parties further agreed to have a centralized approach to the technical maintenance of the Portal at least in the first year of its operation.

As far as liability is concerned, the general feeling expressed by the Parties is that the character of the Portal would be informative and not that of an “official” governmental portal. The exact text of the disclaimer is still to be defined.

With the objective to meet commitments regarding notification in the Agreement, the Chair launched an initiative to agree on a system on transparency issues. The Chair identified two possible approaches to notifications within CEFTA:- (i) follow WTO procedures and forms (members of the WTO to provide a model for non-WTO members); (ii) introduce CEFTA procedures and forms. All Parties agreed that option (i) is much more efficient. The Parties agreed to table the notification system at the Deputy Ministers meeting in June.

A short presentation was given on behalf of the Serbian and Albanian Chambers of Commerce on the activities of the Chambers in the region (CEFTA CCI Network) regarding NTBs. The most frequent NTBs include a lack of updated information on changes in regulations and procedures among CEFTA Parties, complicated procedures on borders and non conformity of domestic standards and technical regulations with international and EU standards.

The Chambers of Commerce in the region welcome the launching of the CEFTA Trade Portal which will provide necessary information to the business community thus contributing to the transparency, predictability and elimination of barriers to trade.