

Executive Summary

Third CEFTA Deputy Ministers Meeting

Belgrade, 10 June 2010

The third CEFTA Deputy Ministers Meeting was held in Belgrade, Republic of Serbia on 10 June 2010. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, the Republic of Serbia and UNMIK/Kosovo. The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development of Serbia.

All Parties agreed that the major challenges for the implementation of CEFTA in the next period were the finalization of the negotiations in agriculture, opening talks on the gradual liberalization in trade in services and the implementation of commitments related to government procurement and competition rules. Parties thanked the Secretariat for its assistance during the past two years and supported its functioning in the next period.

The Chairs of the CEFTA Subcommittees reported on the activities and major developments in the last six months. The Chair of the Subcommittee on NTBs and TBT urged Parties to finalise the signing of bilateral MoUs with GTZ and announced that the CEFTA Trade Portal will be officially launched during CEFTA Week in November 2010. The Chair of the Subcommittee on Agriculture and SPS highlighted the remaining open issues in agricultural liberalisation. Parties agreed to aim to finalize the initialing of Annex 3 and the Additional Protocol by 1 July, 2010 and to ensure implementation no later than 1 January 2011. The meeting of the Subcommittee on Customs and Rules of Origin was not held at the time originally envisaged and UNMIK/Kosovo advised that it will be held in September 2010. The proposal was welcomed by the Parties.

The first meeting of the Working Group on Trade in Services was held in Belgrade on 9 June. The launching of the negotiations on services trade liberalization was supported by almost all the Parties. The members of the Working Group welcomed the EC Project on "Exploring the Potential for Liberalization in Trade in Services" and discussed the draft text of the Working Group ToR.

The Chair-in-Office who is also co-chairing the Investment Committee for SEE announced that every opportunity will be used to link CEFTA activities with the future activities of the Investment Committee once it is transferred to the RCC. Efforts will also be made to involve Investment Promotion Agencies wherever appropriate and useful.

The Chair noted that the OECD, in the cooperation with the Secretariat, has published three working papers on the Monitoring of Investment Related Clauses - National Treatment and BITs, Intellectual Property Rights and Trade Integration and FDI. The Chair advised that a new OECD project will start in mid July 2010 on mapping FDI and clusters in the CEFTA region. This analytical paper will include a set of proposed measures to optimize investment flows for the CEFTA economies.

The Chair reported on activities undertaken in order to comply with the commitments undertaken by the Parties in the area of the government procurement regulations and practices and the rules of competition. All newly adopted laws on government procurement in the CEFTA Parties are to incorporate the principles of equality of all suppliers, effective competition and no less favourable treatment of foreign suppliers as of 1 May, 2010.

The Chair concluded that satisfactory progress has been made on the implementation of CEFTA in 2010. Deadlines established by the Agreement have been respected, good progress has been made in key areas and the image of CEFTA is constantly improving.

Parties discussed the required steps to be undertaken in the next six months in order to make the Secretariat successfully operational after 2011

The UNMIK/Kosovo representatives outlined the priorities for their 2011 chairmanship and stated they are fully committed to continuing with the good work done so far under the Serbian Chairmanship. In addition, it is proposed to address two new priorities in 2011 i.e. protection of intellectual property rights and the interpretation and review of contingent protection rules.

The Chair-in-Office presented the outline concept paper for the CEFTA Week 2010 event to be held in Belgrade alongside the Joint Committee meeting in November 2010. She emphasised that the objective would be to stimulate debates with different stakeholders (government officials, business community, and international partners) on the implementation of the CEFTA Agreement. GTZ has once again kindly offered to support the organisation of the CEFTA Week.