

Mr. Stojan Karajanov, Ambassador of the Republic of Macedonia

Main challenges for the implementation of CEFTA in 2012

Respected Colleagues,

Please allow me to express my gratitude to the host of today's meeting for their efforts for the organization of this regular annual meeting that I consider will contribute for the implementation of concrete activities that will facilitate the implementation of CEFTA.

Implementing the Agreement, we are witnesses that the same imposes to us obligations as in diversification of the activities upon different obligations, also with the deadlines that we should respect for their realization. Can we expect in 2012 increase of our trade exchange and minimization of the obstacles that influence it?

Republic of Macedonia with the economic measures of the Government of RM, last year made significant efforts to improve the business climate in the country. The remarks and problems of the business community in relation to the trade with CEFTA countries are compulsory subject of review and the responsible organs with conclusion and deadline are obliged to solve the problem.

Macedonian economy this year is planned to realize solid growth which is expected to present 3,5 %. It is supported with the growth of investments and the export as key components of the growth of the economic activity. I can state that last year we completed with increased export to CEFTA countries for 7,7% and during the first quarter this year, with 13,1% increased export as well as with increased import for 32%. For us is very significant the participation of the export in CEFTA countries in the total export and it presents more than 30%.

As one of the more significant areas upon the concrete results in the regional cooperation in 2012, we should emphasize the mutual cooperation among the member countries with the elimination of the obstacles that influence the trade.

Namely, the CEFTA 2006 countries so far had active role in the definition and elimination of the non-tariff barriers to the trade. During the next period the implementation of CEFTA in cooperation with OECD, will focus on the creation of the instrument for monitoring of the non-tariff barriers with purpose of reduction and elimination of the unnecessary activities and documents that interfere the regional trade. This instrument I consider will enable solving of these issues

multilaterally and with system approach through defining of the priority sectors and suitable groups of products will assist the CEFTA countries to allocate suitable solutions for elimination of these barriers.

I would like to emphasize the significance of our regular consultation and informing as one of the elements for cooperation and agreement among the CEFTA countries for elimination of these barriers. Into that direction I would like to emphasize the significance of the Trade web site of CEFTA countries during its first year of functioning as well as, the Matrix of the barriers of the CEFTA countries where they emphasize the unsolved issues in the area of trade as base for solving the problems on bilateral level. There I would like to emphasize that the function of the Matrix would be without results if this Matrix remains for its own purpose, but it should be initiative for priority focusing to what is emphasized as problem of the countries, to allocate rational and suitable solution and compromise within the frames of intensive bilateral contacts. Under conditions of need for improvement of the business climate and competition, I would like to emphasize the need for fair and transparent conditions for granting the state aid in each of our countries. Namely, although last year we stated that everybody fulfilled the conditions stated in the Agreement in the part of state aid, we have examples of disloyal competition caused by the granting of state subventions for separate countries that are not in compliance with the conditions of the Agreement nor with the suitable EU regulation. Therefore, beside the stated Matrix we should consider during the next period suitable transparent instrument where will be notified all of these problems in the area of state aid.

I would like to express my gratitude to all of the other regional projects that have influence on the advancing of the trade and the elimination of the non-tariff and technical barriers in the trade that are financed by EU and GTZ. I hope that the SEE countries will realize significant benefit from the improvement of the infrastructure of the quality, trade logistics and monitoring of the market stimulated by the support of IPA Multi-Beneficiary Program in 2012.

At the end, I would like to express gratitude to all of the participants that from the start of this year made constructive efforts with purpose of realization of the priorities in this year program of work for realization of the Agreement.

Thank you.