

## **CEFTA Joint Committee Meeting – Sarajevo**

**H.E. Valon Saraqini, Minister of Economy of Republic of Macedonia**

**“Challenges of the CEFTA Structures in the implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy“**

**Respected Chair ,  
Your Excellencies,  
Respected colleagues, respected friends,**

In the beginning I would like to express my gratitude to the host of Chairing with CEFTA this year, Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the successful organization of this, as well many other events in the framework of its chairmanship with CEFTA.

In respect to our devoted work this year, I would like to point out the main document Strategy of South East of Europe 2020, as part of the CEFTA Agreement, by defining its priorities in future.

A lot of publicity was given within the working bodies and subcommittees this year in order to establish the synergy between the Strategy 2020 and CEFTA structures, for effective implementation of the Integrated Growth Pillar and its three dimensions.

Republic of Macedonia fully supports the strategic goals of the five pillars of the Strategy of SEE 2020. Those goals are key points of the following Ministerial Conference of the Investment Committee of SEE tomorrow, being considers as supportive integrative part of our economic system and development. Special attention is given to the Integrated Growth Pillar because the role of that Pillar is fostering the intra regional trade, especially trade liberalization and trade facilitation. The Subcommittee for Non-Tariff and Technical Barriers to Trade of CEFTA and the Subcommittee for Customs and Rules of Origin have committed its work activities in line with those dimensions.

Important contribution that Macedonia provides in this direction this year, we agree to approach to full liberalization of trading of agricultural products with Moldova. It is useful to give an opportunity the trading in this sector to be free of customs duties, therefore we are ready to abolish quotas for wine, as the only product quoted in our bilateral trading. In that respect, I would like to suggest to sign the Additional Protocol related to this issue, in the beginning of 2014 , during our chairing of CEFTA.

Considering the second dimension, referring to the trade facilitation, the CEFTA structures shall put a special attention to the defining and eliminating of the various forms of tariff and non-tariff barriers. The two phases of the OECD Project for Multilateral Monitoring Framework for Eliminating of Non-Tariff Barriers, provides essential feedback in order to be more successful in creating intra-regional trading. All of this, I certainly believe will have great influence on sustainability and inclusive growth, especially better competitiveness, employment and new investments.

To vote by consensus of concluding an Agreement among the CEFTA parties for conformity assessments and facilitation for the access of the industrial products on our markets, shall be a document to ease the regional trading.

Also, to mention the importance of transparency, Market Access Database, database for sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and the Trade Portal.

What are the challenges in the CEFTA structures in the future?

Republic of Macedonia will chair with CEFTA in 2014 and this will be our second chairmanship. Even though, the priorities of our chairmanship will be presented later today, allow me briefly to inform you about the basic principles of the Strategy SEE 2020 included in our Program, combining the synergy of priorities of these two documents. By creating: 1. Free trade zone; 2. Competitive economic environment; 3. Integration in the global economy, all together shall achieve better promotion of the regional cooperation, market access by providing unified zone for diagonal cummulation within the Regional Convention for Pan Euro Med cummulation; establishing of investment concept for fostering our approach in the regional supply chain and global supply network and others.

The objective is to strengthen the inflow of goods, investments, services and people within the region. A multidimensional synergy shall be created by linking our trade and investment policies. Such synergy can be achieved, if all of us agree to establish a working group for investments.

For Republic of Macedonia, its trading within CEFTA is of great importance. The data for 2013 shows that Macedonian export to CEFTA market is about 18,1%, and the import is around 10%.

I hope in 2014, through the CEFTA structures, we should contribute to achieve these objectives and priorities. The intention is to have more intensive regional cooperation, following our priorities in our negotiation for accession in European Union.

The new mandate of the CEFTA Secretariat that should be reached by consensus , with all respect I believe will continue to give its input to support all parties in proper and adequate functioning of the CEFTA Agreement.

For this purpose, I invite you next year on our common meetings in Republic of Macedonia.

Thank you.