

CENTRAL EUROPEAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

29 October 2009
Podgorica, Montenegro

Ministerial Conclusions

On the occasion of the third CEFTA Joint Committee Meeting under the Chairmanship of Montenegro:

PLEASED to note the successful implementation of the Agreement on Amendment of and Accession to the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) since its entry into force in 2007, we, the Ministers and authorised representatives reiterate the importance of working together in deepening our economic ties, promoting and defending region's common interests while preserving the principles of equality, mutual benefit, non-discrimination and international law;

WE welcome the conclusion of successful negotiations on liberalisation of the mutual agricultural trade and looking forward to its positive impact on the intra-regional trade;

AWARE of the global economic crisis affecting the CEFTA Party economies, we agree to do our best to resist to any protectionism that would further impede our prospects in promoting the stable and prosperous, investment conducting region;

WE reaffirm our commitment to exploit CEFTA as a forum for discussion and resolution of all the issues raised in mutual trade and cooperation;

WE stress the importance of enhanced regional cooperation and successful implementation of the Agreement as complimentary processes on our ways to the EU integration;

REAFFIRMING our commitment to boost regions competitiveness we agree to promote CEFTA nationally, regionally and internationally;

WHILE continuing to face many challenges we recognise the importance of respecting the deadlines in implementing the commitments undertaken in the Agreement;

WE also acknowledge the progress in the implementation of the Agreement as introduced in the reports by the Chairs of Subcommittees, attached to these Conclusions;

WE are committed to:

- Undertake all the necessary actions, including initialling, signing and ratification of the Additional Protocol and Annex 3, to start with the implementation of the results of negotiated liberalisation in agricultural trade not later than 1 July 2010;
- Work further on identifying and eliminating non-tariff barriers inter alia by introducing concrete transparency such as web portals and notification mechanisms on legislations, regulations and procedures, while exploring possibilities for joint multilateral /plurilateral action wherever possible;
- Secure the preparation of long term work programmes of the respective Subcommittees by the end of January 2010;
- Work further on finding ways in overcoming differences in the area of quality infrastructure and conclusions of agreement on mutual recognition of conformity assessment procedures where appropriate pursuant to Article 13.4 of the Agreement;
- Seek for appropriate mechanisms when dealing with issues related to SPS measures by enhancing the transparency and allowing non restricted, timely and accurate flow of information on relevant regulations and legislations;
- Enhance cooperation among customs administrations and ensure their further capacity building for efficient application of the Agreement;
- Ensure the smooth application of diagonal cumulation of origin among CEFTA Parties;
- Ensure the access to the EUROSTAT trade database of the CEFTA Parties, allowing the utilisation of the comprehensive and uniform European standard trade database in analytical and policy purposes;
- Ensure effective and sustainable functioning of all CEFTA Structures;
- Prepare, pursuant to Article 41.5 to the Agreement, the establishment of a body to advance work in the area of services and if necessary in other areas.

WE note that various activities have been undertaken in the field of NTBs and TBT in 2009 under the auspices of international projects:

- Acknowledging recommendations articulated in the information note attached to these conclusions;
- Encouraging further close cooperation of all Subcommittees with international partners on this important topic and looking forward to reviewing progress at the next meeting.

WE take a note that the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Croatia, and the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro apply the cumulation of origin of products obtained in those Parties, incorporating materials originating in the European Community provided that products are intended for trade between these Parties;

We recommend to experts to explore the possibility to propose a common CEFTA logo for stronger international identity and promotion of the Agreement.

WE adopt:

1. Decision No. 2/2009 on Amendment to the Annex II of the Protocol concerning the Definition of the Concept of “Originated Products” and Methods of Administrative Cooperation
2. Decision No. 3/2009 on List of Mediators

In the presence of representatives

Republic of Albania

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Republic of Croatia

Republic of Macedonia

Republic of Moldova

Montenegro

Republic of Serbia

In Podgorica, 29 October 2009