

**Speech of Mr. Octavian CALMIC,  
Deputy Minister of Economy of the Republic of Moldova  
at the 7<sup>th</sup> regular CEFTA Joint Committee Meeting  
(20 November 2013, Sarajevo)**

**Dear Mr. Chairman,  
Esteemed audience,**

First of all let me express my open gratitude to Bosnia & Herzegovina for the hospitality and good organization of the Seventh regular CEFTA Joint Committee Meeting, as well as for the outstanding tenure and persistent promotion of CEFTA values over the period of its Presidency. Let me also express my appreciation to the CEFTA Secretariat for its extensive technical and administrative support offered to CEFTA parties, as well as to the other Parties which chaired different subcommittees and working groups this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress again the exceptional importance of the CEFTA Agreement in our efforts of regional economic integration, this being one of the pre-conditions for EU integration and one of the founding principles of CEFTA 2006.

In this context, let me briefly inform you that European integration remains a key priority, which marks the entire set of policies promoted by the Moldovan Government. The negotiations on the Association Agreement and the DCFTA with the EU have been concluded, and in a few days, at the Third Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, these agreements are to be initialed, followed by their official signing in 2014.

Political, economic and social modernization of the country can only be achieved as a result of the implementation of all commitments and obligations undertaken by the Republic of Moldova in the process of European integration.

Negotiations on DCFTA were among the most important Government's objectives in the process of negotiating the Association Agreement with the European Union. The creation of a free trade area will enhance trade liberalization and increase investor confidence in Moldovan economy through institutional reforms. To this extent, the Government has initiated a series of reforms aimed at improving the business environment in order to support small and medium businesses, enhance the competitiveness of local producers and exporters, increase protection of public health and also improve the operating conditions of the various areas of the internal market. It will also allow Moldova to utilize its competitive advantages and achieve long-term positive economic effects, thus developing a predictable framework for trade relations with the EU.

Distinguished participants, I would like to outline the main achievements which we have made during 2013 under the Chairmanship of Bosnia & Herzegovina, and specifically the facilitation of regional trade through the elimination of trade-related barriers and increasing transparency in areas with impact on trade, the active participation of the CEFTA Structures in

the programming of the SEE 2020 Strategy, the steps forward in implementing diagonal cumulation of origin in the framework of the CEFTA Agreement and the PEM Convention, the ongoing efforts of CEFTA Parties in completing full liberalization of trade in goods, as well as our steps forward in achieving further liberalization of trade in services, to name just a few.

Regarding the SEE 2020 Strategy, let me reiterate that the active participation of CEFTA Structures in the regional economic development agenda is crucial. Thus, Moldova welcomes the successful conclusion of the preparations of SEE 2020 and we emphasize the unique opportunity which SEE 2020 should offer our region in terms of promoting wider economic policy perspectives, economic growth and job creation.

The CEFTA Deputy Ministers, the Special Joint Committee and all CEFTA Subcommittees and Working Groups have successfully held their annual meetings and further advanced their respective agendas with the aim of increasing the fulfillment of commitments undertaken by the parties under the CEFTA Agreement.

Let me also emphasize the importance and express my gratitude for the assistance that CEFTA countries continue to receive from development partners, such as the European Commission, OECD, UNCTAD, among others. Taking into account the ever extending scope of activities involving additional human and financial resources for implementation of the ambitious CEFTA agenda, the donors' support is becoming even more vital in the years forward.

Distinguished participants, I believe that during the last year we have tracked the vast majority of ambitious trade liberalization initiatives launched in 2006. Indeed, there is still a lot of space for improvement. Yet, the work undertaken by us in the framework of CEFTA Agreement continues to provide us with opportunities to develop additional policies in order to further increase trade and investment opportunities in our region.

I would also like to avail myself of the opportunity to welcome Macedonia as the next Chair in Office for 2014 wishing them good luck, strategic vision and pragmatic approaches in pursuing the Chairmanship Programme in particular and the aspirant CEFTA agenda in general. I also welcome you next year to Moldova, given the fact that we will be chairing the Subcommittee on Customs and Rules of Origin. In this sense, the Subcommittee will focus on joint risk profiling and opportunities to develop a regional AEO programme, as well as on continuing activities aimed at trade facilitation and simplification of customs procedures.

Finally, allow me to wish all of us productive deliberations and a flexible approach in addressing the remaining issues, which should result in mutual benefits for our countries and citizens in particular and our region as a whole.

Thank you very much for your attention!