

CEFTA Joint Committee Meeting

(Skopje, 21 November 2014)

**Dear Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,**

It is my pleasure and honor to greet you on behalf of the Government of Moldova and to thank our hosts for organizing today's Joint Committee Meeting.

First of all, allow me to apologize for the absence of the Minister of Economy Mr. Andrian CANDU. On his behalf, I apologize that, due to the parliamentary election, he was not able to attend the JC Meeting.

From the start I would like to state that this was a crucial year for the Republic of Moldova, with many key events, but none more so, than the signing of the Association Agreement with European Union.

European integration represents an irreversible strategic objective of the foreign and domestic policy of the Republic of Moldova. The creation of a deep and comprehensive free trade area will not just enhance trade liberalization and eliminate non-tariff barriers, but will also boost investor confidence in Moldovan economy through the establishment of clear and common rules for all market operators. We also hope that trade liberalization will 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 and other trade partners.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova has already launched a series of reforms aimed at supporting the private sector, strengthening the productive capacity, improving the access to the market, improving fiscal policies, ensuring the protection of human rights.

In this regard, I would like to underline of how important it is for the Republic of Moldova to draw from the experience of the other CEFTA member countries in developing and implementing the reforms which have been mentioned earlier, as well as practices used to adopt and apply the existing European standards.

Speaking about the implementation of CEFTA and the main challenges that lie ahead let me first start with the present moment. I have to notice that during the course of this year, the CEFTA member countries were actively involved in

fulfilling, what I can safely say, was a very full working agenda, and with the provided assistance from Secretariat, a lot more has been done this year, more work group meetings, sub-committee events and regional seminars, which definitely helped us take a step closer to successfully fulfilling the objectives planned in our activity Program for this year.

As Chair-in-Office of the Subcommittee on Customs and Rules of Origin during this year, Moldova pays specific attention to simplify customs and other trade related procedures in the Regional trade, to facilitate the Regional trade through promoting and increased use of risk management in customs and other border agencies, to strengthen capacity in smooth functioning of diagonal cumulation between the CEFTA Parties and other trading partners in the framework of the Pan-Euro Mediterranean Convention.

As far as the Pan Euro Med Convention is concerned, I would like to inform you that the Government of the Republic of Moldova has officially received the official notice from the European Commission to join the Convention, and as soon as the new Government is able, Moldova will ratify the necessary documents to become a full-fledged member of the Convention within the first quarter of next year, which hopefully will provide the necessary opportunities to use diagonal cumulation.

I would like to point out that, by the end of this year Moldova will sign with Macedonia the Additional Protocol 4 to the Agreement on amendment of Accession to the Central European Free Trade Agreement that will ensure a full trade liberalization between Republic of Moldova and CEFTA countries. We hope the Protocol will further contribute to the increasing of the trade exchange among our countries.

Another milestone that was reached during the course of this year by the CEFTA members which is worth mentioning is the progress that has been registered in the process of gradual liberalization of trade services. Subsequently Moldova supports the decision to establish the Sub-Committee for services and reiterates the importance of this topic for the future.

Having that in mind, Moldova during the Chairmanship next year will continue to work on reaching the progressive liberalisation of trade in services amongst the CEFTA Parties and on improving the quality and uniformity of trade in services statistics, joining efforts with international and regional partners.

Yet another success on the part of the CEFTA Secretariat which I would like to draw your attention to, is the obtaining of EU funding for the introduction of the National Experts Program and establishment of new CEFTA bodies. This Program will offer us the possibility to be actively involved in the implementation of the SEE Strategy 2020 and will also help facilitate some of the Secretariat's ongoing activities.

Another thing worth mentioning, which I believe that all in attendance here today might already know, is the fact that next year, during Moldova's Chairmanship, the focus will continue to be the promotion of regional trade and investment linkages, as well as policies that are non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable which will enhance the flow of goods, investments, services and people within the CEFTA Region.

In the same context, Moldova will make the best efforts to contribute to further integration of the region into the European and global economy through participation in the international supply chains, grounded on improved international competitiveness of national economies and backed by deepened regional trade and new investment.

On this note, I would like to convey once again our heartfelt gratitude to the Republic of Macedonia and CEFTA Secretariat for the efforts and assistance provided in changing our economies into smart, sustainable and comprehensive. I would also like to express our gratitude to the CEFTA Secretariat for its considerable technical and administrative support offered to all of us.

Finally, I would like to express our strongest commitment to further enhance our cooperation and deepen our relations within the CEFTA countries and I would like to mention that it is a great honour and pleasure for our country to take over the Presidency of CEFTA in 2015, and we will endeavour in achieving results next year, with our common efforts and involvement.

Thank you for your attention!