

“Evolution of priorities in CEFTA in the framework of the SEE 2020 Strategy”

Dear Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

It is my honour and pleasure to greet you on behalf of the Government of Montenegro and to apologize since the Minister of Economy Mr. Vladimir Kavarić could not be here with us due to previous scheduled appointments.

The Republic of Macedonia, as the Chair of the CEFTA 2006, in the previous year, worked very actively on the promotion and implementation of this Agreement. This is an opportunity to congratulate you on a successful presidency.

By organizing the CEFTA Week we continue to connect entrepreneurs, academies and public administrations, as well as topics that are of importance to the economic development of our countries.

Today's topic is best illustrated by the progress that CEFTA Parties have achieved so far in regard to deepening of regional cooperation by successfully completing an elimination of tariffs in goods, substantial liberalisation of trade in agricultural products and further liberalisation of trade in services.

Further implementation of the CEFTA 2006 proscribes not only on liberalisation of trade in goods and services but also with regard to trade facilitation, elimination of non-tariff barriers and other policy areas such as investment, public procurement, protection of intellectual property rights (IPR), competition and state aid rules. The agenda provided by the Agreement has already proven to be a driving force in the EU accession process of all CEFTA Parties.

Further implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy represents a mechanism for monitoring the economic growth of the region in which all citizens can actively participate with their governments.

Bearing in mind that the global economic crisis has shaken the whole Region and macroeconomic data are the best indicators which vividly describe our current situations and clearly determine the goals and policies for overcoming the crisis through SEE Strategy. In that context, the main purpose of the SEE 2020 has to be oriented to economic cooperation of the countries in the region in order to increase competitiveness, achieve higher levels of growth and faster social and institutional development by adopting its reform policies. Also, it is

clearly recognized the important role of CEFTA as a substantial part of the SEE 2020 particularly in promoting and improving trade and investment which are directly linked with increasing employment, improving competitiveness, transfer of technology and accelerating a country's economic development. In the next period, we are expecting the greater volume of foreign trade and investment on a non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable way at the regional level. Therefore, it would contribute to the further integration in the region and into the European and global economy, through increased participation in international supply chains.

As we have already known, the ambitious nature of the SEE 2020 Strategy reflects the political will of the SEE governments to take a decisive step towards creating vibrant economies and thriving societies in each and every country in the region.

By concluding, I would like to thank the host, the Republic of Macedonia for well –organized meeting and its contribution to CEFTA 2006 in 2014 and wish the Republic of Moldova a successful chairmanship for the next year.

Thank you for your kind attention.