

WORK PROGRAMME

CEFTA Committee of Contact Points

The Republic of Serbia
January 2017

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

1. COMMITTEE AS A PART OF CEFTA STRUCTURES

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP

3. PRIORITIES OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP

5. EXPECTED RESULTS

6. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

7. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Work Programme of the Committee of Contact Points covers the period of one year from 1 January to 31 December 2017.

In its capacity of the Chair, Serbia is fully committed to carry on with the work of its predecessor Montenegro, with the following objectives of the Chairmanship in specific:

1: Contributing to the smooth implementation of CEFTA

2: Strengthening monitoring mechanisms of CEFTA

3: Enhancing public-private sector dialogue and strengthening the dissemination of information and processing of the available information regarding the implementation of the Agreement

4: Strengthening the institutional capacity of CEFTA Secretariat

1. THE COMMITTEE AS PART OF CEFTA STRUCTURES

1.1. Mandate of the CEFTA Committee of Contact Points as determined by the CEFTA Ministerial Decision 1/2015

In accordance with CEFTA Ministerial Decision 1/2015, the following bodies have been established:

- Committee of Trade Facilitation
- Committee of Contact Points
- Subcommittee on Non-tariff Measures and its working groups as below:
 - Working Group on Technical Measures
 - Working Group on Risk Management
 - Working Group on Electronic Exchange of Information
- Sub-committee on Agriculture including Sanitary and Phytosanitary Issues
- Sub-committee on Customs and Rules of Origin
- Subcommittee on Trade in Services and its working groups as below:
 - Negotiating Group on Trade in Services
 - Working Group on Trade in Services Statistics, FATS and FDI Statistics
 - Joint Working Group on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications

The following areas have been determined as the main mandate of the CEFTA Committee of Contact Points:

- i. The function of the Committee is to support the smooth functioning of the Agreement and the fulfilment of the decisions of the Joint Committee, according to Article 44 of the CEFTA Agreement; particularly:
 - To report to the CEFTA Joint Committee the implementation of CEFTA Ministerial Decisions, Conclusions and Recommendations;
 - To coordinate / liaise the implementation of CEFTA in each CEFTA Party through other officially appointed CEFTA Contact points established by the CEFTA Structures (e.g. Customs, Ministry of Agriculture);
 - To steer capacity building in trade policy formulation, implementation and coordination in CEFTA at the regional scale;
 - To outreach the private sector in relation to CEFTA;
 - To be responsible in promoting the visibility of CEFTA in the overall policy making in each CEFTA Party;
 - To report the CEFTA Joint Committee the implementation of SEE 2020 Integrated Growth in each CEFTA Party;
 - To coordinate the implementation of the National Secondment Programme.
- ii. The Contact Point who is member of CEFTA Committee of Contact Points undertakes the necessary technical, coordination, communication and administrative tasks required to ensure the smooth and timely implementation of the CEFTA work programme and the decisions of the Joint Committee;
- iii. In performing the tasks above mentioned each Contact Point will perform the following specific tasks at the national level in each CEFTA Party:
 - a) Preparation and Follow-up of Official Meetings of CEFTA Structures at the National Level in Each CEFTA Party;
 - b) Central Coordination of Official CEFTA Information Flows;
 - c) Monitoring of Implementation of CEFTA Ministerial Conclusions and Decisions;
 - d) Liaison with CEFTA Secretariat;
 - e) Development of Trade Related Capacity Across Administration;
 - f) Promotion of CEFTA among Key Stakeholders;
 - g) Contact Points can deploy a range of communication tools to promote CEFTA and other trade related issues to a wider audience including seminars, workshops, press releases, social media which are to be administrated by the CEFTA Secretariat and an up-to-date CEFTA page on the ministry responsible for trade website with relevant information and links to the main CEFTA website and other trade related sites;
 - h) The CEFTA Contact Point report to the Director General / Deputy Minister of the ministry responsible for trade and has an ad hoc reporting relationship with the Minister as required.

Members of the Committee are the lead CEFTA Contact Points or their deputies as established under Article 44, Paragraph 2 of the Agreement. The CEFTA Contact Points shall perform the functions as

defined in 1.1., which provides tasks of each Contact Point to be carried out at the national level in each CEFTA Party.

1.2. CEFTA Ministerial Conclusions of 2016 in relation to Committee of Contact Points

At the meeting of 9th of December 2016, CEFTA Ministers agreed to have a consolidated agenda supported with an action plan in order to facilitate the efforts of CEFTA structures under the CEFTA Chairmanship of Serbia in 2017 to deepen the regional economic integration as emphasized by the conclusions of the latest Western Balkans Summit in Paris.

Furthermore, CEFTA Ministers/Authorised representatives responsible for trade agreed:

- a) to ensure a strong and robust support for the dialogue with the international and regional private sector within CEFTA structures;
- b) to strengthen the enforcement of CEFTA rules through more effective dispute settlement mechanism in CEFTA,
- c) to undertake corrective measures according to the recommendations of the external audit.

2. PRIORITIES OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP

In accordance to four defined objectives for 2017 the Chairmanship of Serbia has identified following priorities:

Objective 1: Contributing to the smooth implementation of CEFTA

Priority 1: Consolidating the Implementation of CEFTA

CEFTA Parties reiterated during the Joint Committee meeting in Podgorica on 9 December the aim towards establishing a regional economic area in CEFTA. Such aim can progressively be turned into an action by consolidating the CEFTA agendas of trade facilitation, trade in services, and free movement of experts. In this regard, the Committee of Contact Points will avail itself as the main platform to discuss the first draft of consolidated agenda and action plan to be produced by the CEFTA Secretariat. If necessary, the Committee of Contact Points will call for joint meetings with other CEFTA Structures.

Priority 2: Programming of CEFTA Technical Assistance and allocation of funds to specific programming priorities

The CEFTA Committee of Contact Points will continue acting as the programming committee of CEFTA related technical assistance. Thus, the Committee will be in charge of not only determining the priorities of CEFTA technical assistance in 2017 but also on coordination of donors' assistance according to the priorities of the consolidated agenda of CEFTA.

Objective 2: Strengthening monitoring mechanisms of CEFTA

Priority 3: Facilitating Business and Investment Environment in CEFTA

The Committee of Contact Points will undertake the necessary follow-up and corrective actions of the on-going technical assistance contract regarding the monitoring of the implementation of state aid and competition related provisions of CEFTA.

The Committee of Contact Points will plan the monitoring missions on implementation of CEFTA rules on public procurement and IPR and will report to CEFTA Joint Committee the results.

Priority 4: Improving efficiency and effectiveness of dispute settlement procedures

Serbia shall foster the discussion among Parties on the ways to strengthen the implementation of dispute settlement mechanism under CEFTA in order to regulate its legal and procedural aspects more precisely which is a key factor for deepening of CEFTA.

In this regard, the Serbian Chairmanship will explore the option to amending the CEFTA Open Fund in a way to allow financing of the CEFTA arbitration mechanism in case CEFTA Parties mobilize arbitration to solve their bi-lateral trade disputes.

Objective 3: Enhancing public-private sector dialogue and strengthening the dissemination of information and processing of the available information regarding the implementation of the Agreement.

Priority 5: Ensuring strong platform for the dialogue between the international/regional private sector and CEFTA Structures

The CEFTA Committee of Contact Points will serve as the main entry point of private sector for the CEFTA related information. The Committee will discuss the most appropriate ways to enhance dialogue with the private sector within CEFTA Structures.

Objective 4: Strengthening the institutional capacity of CEFTA Secretariat

Priority 6: Planning the future of CEFTA Secretariat

At the CEFTA Joint Committee Meeting held in December in Podgorica, CEFTA Parties acknowledged the efforts made by the CEFTA Secretariat to increase its institutional capacity and noted the

importance of uninterrupted functioning of the CEFTA Secretariat

In this regard, the Serbian Chairmanship is committed to initiate discussion among CEFTA Parties about the actions for mitigation of short, medium and long term risks for the functioning of CEFTA Secretariat. The aim is to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Secretariat in a sustainable manner and to propose the changes in its structures, budget, and mandate, if necessary.

3. ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP

Objective 1: Contributing to the smooth implementation of CEFTA

Priority 1: Consolidating the Implementation of CEFTA

Activity 1: Adoption of the consolidated agenda merging actions of trade facilitation, trade in services, and free movement of experts

The Committee of Contact Points in coordination with the Committee on Trade Facilitation, and the Subcommittee on Trade in Services shall elaborate and process the draft consolidated agenda with an Action Plan to have it finalised by the Deputy Ministers Meeting.

Activity 2: Synergies with SEE2020

In referring to the synergies with SEE2020 the economic corridors development shall be continued in order to support the political processes (Berlin process and WB6), serious financial investments in connectivity, paralleled with the ongoing transport and trade facilitation advances. The Conclusions of the Vienna and Paris Western Balkans Summits have called upon RCC to coordinate the development of the economic corridors concept together with CEFTA, SEETO and participating governments.

Priority 2: Programming of CEFTA Technical Assistance and allocation of funds to specific programming priorities

Activity 1: Donor Coordination

In order to support the consolidated agenda, a Donor Coordination meeting is to be organised by the Committee of Contact Points.

Donor coordination will determine the best levels of allocation of funds to specific programming priorities of the consolidated agenda: trade facilitation, trade in services, free movement of experts, and if necessary, investment.

Activity 2: Adoption of the Programming Document for CEFTA Technical Assistance

As part of the programming procedures, which are expected to be adopted in March 2017, the Committee of Contact Points will adopt the programming document for CEFTA Technical Assistance in 2017.

In this regard, the Committee will determine the programming priorities and will approve the procurement pipeline of the CEFTA Secretariat.

Objective 2: Strengthening monitoring mechanisms of CEFTA

Priority 3: Facilitating Business and Investment Environment in CEFTA

Activity 1: Committee to be a central coordination point of the CEFTA implementation

The Committee on Contact Points will act as the central coordinator of all official CEFTA information flows including correspondence, meetings and information requests, reports and proposals relating to CEFTA. All information/requirements coming from the CEFTA Secretariat, and all international organisations in relation to the Agreement, towards each CEFTA Party, will be communicated through the national CEFTA Contact Point, and vice versa.

Furthermore, the Committee will be devoted to strengthen the position of the national Contact Points who need to be exclusive focal points for all information flows from the respective CEFTA Party to the CEFTA Secretariat and vice versa.

The Committee will follow up, discuss and decide actions to be taken regarding the findings of the Final Report issued under the CPF III 16-05 "Implementation Status of Competition & State Aid".

If necessary, new monitoring projects will be created reflecting the 2017 priorities.

Activity 2: Increase the availability of Data

Under the Serbian Chairmanship the Committee shall discuss the availability of data referred to the implementation of CEFTA and discuss the ways to increase the scope of available data and the possibilities for data processing in cooperation with academia.

Priority 4: Improving efficiency and effectiveness of dispute settlement procedures

Activity 1: Exploratory talks with the aim to launch the negotiations on dispute settlement

The legal counsel hired by the CEFTA Secretariat shall propose initial possible actions for strengthening the implementation of dispute settlement mechanism under CEFTA in order to regulate the legal and procedural aspects of the implementation of CEFTA Dispute Settlement which is a key factor for the deepening of CEFTA. This proposal will be used as a basis for exploratory talks.

Activity 2: Amending the Open Fund to finance the CEFTA Arbitration Mechanism

Upon the initial note of the CEFTA Secretariat, the Serbian Chairmanship will initiate the discussion among CEFTA Parties once the dispute settlement mechanism is conceptualized, on how the CEFTA Open Fund can be amended in a way to allow co-financing of the mechanism in bi-lateral trade

disputes. In case agreement is reached, the Serbian Chairmanship will make the draft Ministerial Decision ready for the adoption by the CEFTA Joint Committee.

Objective 3: Enhancing public-private sector dialogue and strengthening the dissemination of information and processing of the available information regarding the implementation of the Agreement.

Priority 5: Ensuring strong platform for the dialogue between the international/regional private sector and CEFTA Structures

Activity 1: Promoting visibility of CEFTA

The Committee will be a platform for discussion on how Contact Points can deploy a range of communication tools to promote CEFTA and other trade related issues to a wider audience including seminars, workshops and round tables.

Activity 2: Outreach to the private sector and academia in relation to CEFTA

Under the Serbian Chairmanship the public- private sector dialogue shall be enhanced in order to discuss new set of visibility actions.

In reference to the academia, Serbia shall continue the collaboration with the LSEE. Serbia shall benefit to the organisation of a thematic roundtable among academics in order to promote the collaboration between academia and government officials in the policy coordination. Other partners as CEFTA Chambers Forum and Chambers Investment Forum shall be included in the outreach and visibility actions.

Objective 4: Strengthening the institutional capacity of CEFTA Secretariat

Priority 6: Planning the future of CEFTA Secretariat

Activity 1: Adoption of the Procurement Rules

Serbia shall secure the adoption of the procurement rules applied by the CEFTA Secretariat for the technical assistance programmes financed through its budgetary recourses and as planned according to the priorities of CEFTA. The Committee of Contact Points shall contribute to the finalisation of the relevant decision to enforce the application of CEFTA procurement rules.

Activity 2: Follow up steps on the external audit

Under the Serbian Chairmanship a dedicated meeting shall be held in early 2017 to discuss the necessary steps to undertake corrective measures according to the recommendations of the external audit and to give a relevant mandate to the Acting Director for their implementation.

Activity 3: Developing of proposal for functioning of CEFTA Secretariat beyond 2018

Under the Serbian Chairmanship, the Committee of Contact Points shall be engaged in developing of proposal for the CEFTA Secretariat mandate, structure and budget beyond 2018. The Committee of Contact Points shall serve as the main interlocutor to be informed on the progress made in the recruitment of the Director launched under the Montenegrin Chairmanship. Serbia, as the Chair of the Selection Committee shall report to the Committee on the progress made in recruitment campaign.

4. EXPECTED RESULTS

Taking into account all objectives, priorities and activities mentioned above, the outcomes of the Serbian Chairmanship of the Committee are expected to be as follows:

Objective 1: Contributing to the smooth implementation of CEFTA

- The Agendas of Trade Facilitation, Trade in Services, and Free Movement of Experts are consolidated.
- A single Action Plan is produced aiming to create a regional economic area in CEFTA
- CEFTA Technical Assistance is programmed, and donors are coordinated.

Objective 2: Strengthening monitoring mechanisms of CEFTA

- Monitoring mission on Competition and State Aids is completed and the recommendations received.
- New monitoring areas are determined and the monitoring missions are contracted.
- Data availability is enhanced and the available data are processed.
- Negotiations on dispute settlement are launched
- The Open Fund is amended to allow financing the CEFTA Arbitration.

Objective 3: Enhancing public-private sector dialogue and strengthening the dissemination of information and processing of the available information regarding the implementation of the Agreement

- The public-private sector dialogue is improved
- Dialogue with academia is strengthened.

Objective 4: Strengthening the institutional capacity of CEFTA Secretariat

- The CEFTA Secretariat is ready to respond to the challenges beyond 2018

5. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The Chair predicts that that the following issues could appear without possibility to be controlled and therefore may endanger predicted results:

- Each CEFTA Party remains committed to the CEFTA process and its provisions;

- Coordination with all national institutions in charge of the implementation of the Agreement is made timely by the ministries in charge of trade;
- International donors remain committed to support financially the CEFTA.

6. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The tentative calendar for the year 2016 is as follows:

MEETING/EVENT	DATE	PLACE
5 th Meeting of the Committee of Contact Points	6 March , 2017	Belgrade
Donor Coordination Meeting	Week of 15 May 2017	Belgrade
Follow up on Audit Meeting	6 March 2017	Brussels
Steering Committee Meeting	March/April 2017	Brussels
6 th Meeting of the Committee of Contact Points	June 2017	Belgrade
7 th Meeting of the Committee of Contact Points	November 2017	Belgrade