

WORK PROGRAMME

CEFTA Subcommittee on Agriculture Including Sanitary and Phytosanitary Issues

2016

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INTRODUCTION

The Work Programme of the Subcommittee on Agriculture and SPS summarizes the mandate and scope of the Subcommittee, underlines its priorities and spells out the major activities planned for the one-year period.

In line with CEFTA and SEE Strategy 2020 goals, in its capacity of the Chair, Kosovo^{*} is fully committed to carry on with the work of its predecessors in both areas – facilitation of the agricultural trade and improvement of cooperation in sanitary and phytosanitary domain, with the following priorities of the Chairmanship in specific:

- i. Trade Promotion,
- ii. Enhancing Transparency.

In the year 2016, at least one regular meeting of the Subcommittee is envisaged which does not *a priori* exclude holding of other *ad hoc* meetings, workshops and roundtables that could be convened to discuss any item based on the expressed interest.

1. THE SUBCOMMITTEE AS A PART OF CEFTA STRUCTURES

1.1. Mandate and scope

In its last meeting in November 2015, the CEFTA Ministers, recognizing the present priorities in implementation of CEFTA requires a high level coordination between CEFTA structures and the relevant national authorities of CEFTA Parties; and effective inter-Ministry coordination in each CEFTA Party, decide to adjust the CEFTA Subcommittees and amend their Terms of References.

In this regard, the CEFTA Subcommittee on Agriculture including Sanitary and Phytosanitary Issues established by the Joint Committee Decision No. 1/2015, has the task to contribute the promotion of trade and facilitate trade in agricultural products within the region and to discuss and coordinate to the maximum extent the policies on agriculture and the protection of plant health, animal health and food safety and other relevant areas in accordance with CEFTA Agreement.

Its main mandate is to:

- Ensure instruments to facilitate the exchange of information between the CEFTA Parties and informing the CEFTA Joint Committee regarding changes in their respective agricultural policies pursued or measures applied, which may affect the

^{*} This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

conditions of agricultural trade among them as provided for in CEFTA 2006

- Review the implementation of Additional Protocols among CEFTA Parties liberalizing trade in agricultural products
- Deal with complaints by a Party concerning the possible discriminatory application by other Parties of measures contrary to the CEFTA Agreement
- Recommend steps and solutions to remedy the problems
- Bring the unresolved issues to the attention of the Joint Committee
- Propose initiatives in CEFTA to promote regional trade in agricultural products
- Promote development of regional supply chains in agriculture sector in CEFTA
- Act as focal point in CEFTA structures to coordinate technical assistance initiatives in CEFTA in relation to trade promotion in agricultural products.

1.2. Organisation of Work

Members of the Sub-committee will be senior civil servants from Ministries responsible for agriculture and/or from respective administrations responsible for these issues.

The members can also meet on an *ad hoc* basis if and whenever needed. Moreover, the number of workshops, roundtables or consultations can be organised on the request of interested Parties. The Chair will accommodate any need from the Parties to organize additional events to support the fulfilment of its objectives.

In addition one SPS experts meeting is envisaged to be held in late autumn of 2016.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP

Kosovo* has identified the objectives of its Chairmanship of CEFTA Subcommittee on Agriculture and SPS as follows:

- 1) To promote trade in processed agricultural products through identifying the actions to be taken in a number of selected supply chains.
- 2) To enhance transparency of the existing SPS databases and to provide further statistical data in agricultural trade

3. PRIORITIES OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP

The Chair of the Subcommittee is committed to work on the activities started in previous years by its predecessors and will introduce some new ones in order to secure the fulfilment of its objectives.

The Chairmanship of Kosovo* has identified the following priorities under the objectives of trade promotion, and one in relation to transparency.

Main Priorities:

3.1. Trade Promotion

Priority 1: Ensure assistance in analyzing supply chains in CEFTA for the purpose of promoting trade.

In this endeavour, the Subcommittee will undertake all supporting actions to facilitate short term technical assistance in analyzing supply chains in CEFTA, and to take up the outputs of the ongoing ones. The main purpose of the Chairmanship of Kosovo* in this regard will be to analyze how the decisions and tools available by CEFTA would be utilized for promoting trade in selected supply chains in agricultural trade.

3.2. Enhancing Transparency

Priority 2: Enhancing transparency of the existing database and through extending statistical data base in agricultural trade in CEFTA

Kosovo* will put special emphasis on the priorities related to transparency in the framework of 10th Anniversary of CEFTA, in order to increasing their awareness of CEFTA.

Thus, the Subcommittee will keep the existing SPS Database updated. Furthermore, the Subcommittee will decide what type of statistical data on trade in agricultural products could be collected in addition to the existing ones in consultation with CEFTA Parties and the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP

Objective 1: Trade Promotion

Priority 1: Ensure assistance in analyzing supply chains in CEFTA for the purpose of promoting trade.

Activity 1: Follow-up the GIZ Project on Promotion of Trade in the Wine Sector

The Moldovan Chair took a initiative in 2015 to start a new project with the objective to promote trade in agriculture products, with the objective to single out areas of possible performance improvement in the wine sector in CEFTA and to provide CEFTA Parties with recommendations on policy tools and instruments to promote competitiveness and export

performance of the CEFTA wine sector.

Thus a validation workshop with the scope to present findings and recommendations for value chain upgrading and export promotion as well as for the trade policy measures to be undertaken in order to enhance trade and competitiveness performance of the sector, is to be organised under the Chairmanship of Kosovo* in February 2016.

In the framework of this project, the Chair of the Subcommittee is committed to undertake an active follow-up of an action plan to be developed, according to the received recommendations, in order to straighten the cooperation in the sector and increase export performance and integration into the global market.

Activity 2: Analysing new supply chains in CEFTA to promote trade in agriculture

The Subcommittee on Agriculture and SPS will give its full support to identify a new group of agricultural products by a mapping of the Regional Value Chains within CEFTA. Therefore, the Subcommittee will be the main CEFTA body to initiate discussions with international organisations which will implement this project.

Additionally, as one of the main priorities of Vienna Western Balkans Summit 2015 is to promote trade integration and boost competitiveness in the region, the Chairmanship will coordinate the development of the economic corridors in agricultural trade, in line with the Vienna Summit Conclusions.

Objective 2: Enhancing Transparency

Priority 1: Enhancing transparency of the existing SPS database and through developing a new statistical database in agricultural trade.

Activity 1: Updating SPS Database

The Chair of Subcommittee will initiate a process to check the status of information provided by each CEFTA Party in SPS Database. If necessary, the Chair will formally ask all CEFTA Parties to provide updated information to the Database.

Activity 2: The development of a statistical database for agricultural trade within CEFTA.

As regards to the transparency, the Chairmanship of Kosovo* will continue to give its support to the well-functioning of the CEFTA Transparency Pack. The SPS Database, as one of its components, contains a comprehensive record of the key laws and bylaws as well as the specific measures in the sanitary, phytosanitary and veterinary field are available to the wider circle of users.

Moreover, in cooperation with Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe (SWG), which main objective is to promote sustainable agriculture and rural development in SEE region, the Chairmanship will develop a comprehensive statistical database for agricultural trade. The new database on agricultural trade would be part of CEFTA Management Information System.

Taking in consideration the Memorandum of Understanding signed between CEFTA Secretariat and SWG for collaboration in the activities in the area of agriculture, rural development and food safety, the Chairmanship of Kosovo* considers the following forms of cooperation between CEFTA and SWG may be used:

- Informing about the activities related to the agricultural and food safety areas,
- Informing regarding the potential activities of cooperation and matters of mutual interest,
- Providing and transferring of knowledge, know-how and experiences,
- Joint identification, planning and implementation of projects/programs.

Activity 2: Establishment of a mechanism for exchange of information.

The Chairmanship will support the establishment of a mechanism with the aim to exchange of information in the process recorded in the EU alignment process in the relevant acquis chapters.

5. EXPECTED RESULTS

The results of the Kosovo* Chairmanship are expected to lead to the following corresponding to the two objectives mentioned above:

1) Trade Promotion

- CEFTA Parties are aware about the main bottlenecks and constraints faced by private sector in their trade activities
- An action plan which will lead CEFTA Parties to increase export performance of the CEFTA wine sector is developed
- A new group of agricultural products is identified and discussions are initiated to implement new project related to CEFTA supply chains.

2) Enhancing Transparency

- CEFTA Transparency Pact is kept updated
- Statistical database for agricultural trade is developed in cooperation with SWG
- The mechanism to exchange the information between Parties is established

6. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The tentative calendar for the year 2016 is as follows:

MEETING/EVENT	DATES	PLACE
Regional Conference on Wine Sector	February	Prishtina
Ad hoc technical meetings	February-October	CEFTA Parties
Tenth meeting of the Subcommittee on Agriculture and SPS	October/November	Prishtina