

WORK PROGRAMME

CEFTA Subcommittee on Agriculture Including Sanitary and Phytosanitary Issues

2017

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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 active collaboration with other CEFTA Structures and spells out the major activities planned for the one-year period.

In the framework of CEFTA Structures and SEE Strategy 2020 goals, in its capacity of the Chair, Albania 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 Facilitation,
- II. Enhancing Transparency.

This document is the work programme of CEFTA Subcommittee on Agriculture and Phytosanitary Issues, and includes the objectives, priorities of the Albanian Chairmanship and the activities planned for 2017.

1. THE SUBCOMMITTEE AS A PART OF CEFTA STRUCTURES

1.1. Mandate and scope

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 under the framework of the 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 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.

In the year 2017, at least one regular meeting of the Subcommittee is envisaged and two other Joint meetings with Subcommittee on Non Tariffs Measures which does not *a priori* exclude holding of other, workshops and roundtables that could be convened to discuss any item based on the expressed interest.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP

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

- 1) Contribution to the preparation of implementing provisions for the mutual recognition of border documents
- 2) To enhance transparency by developing the new database in agricultural trade in CEFTA region.

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 Albania has identified the following priorities under the objectives of trade facilitation, and one in relation to transparency.

Main Priorities:

3.1. Trade Facilitation

Priority 1: Contribution to the preparation of implementing provisions for the mutual recognition of border documents

The main purpose under the Chairmanship of Albania, is support the work of the Committee of Trade Facilitation, which is responsible to follow-up the parliamentary ratification processes of Additional Protocol 5 in each CEFTA Party, and Subcommittee on NTMs which is CEFTA body to undertake the responsibility of elaborating the implementing provisions for the mutual recognition of border documents in the context of AP 5 through its working groups.

The Chair will take all the necessary actions in case the Chairs of Committee of Trade Facilitation and Subcommittee on NTMs require the contribution of the Subcommittee, especially related to the preparation of draft Decision on the validation procedure with regard to the implementation of mutual recognition of border documents (the ones related to SPS).

In addition to this, in close cooperation with the Sub-committee of Customs and Rules of Origin, the Sub-committee will coordinate the process of signing the Memorandums of Understanding between CEFTA Parties national authorities for exchange of information, in order to be conducted timely and prepare draft Decision on the validation procedure with regard to the mutual recognition of Border Documents and Procedures.

The Subcommittee will undertake all supporting actions to facilitate short term technical assistance in analysing supply chains in CEFTA, and to take up the outputs of the ongoing ones.

3.2. Enhancing Transparency

Priority 2: Enhancing transparency by developing the new database in agricultural trade in CEFTA region.

The Subcommittee, following the conclusions made from the proposal for development of new statistical database and questionnaire which is circulated to CEFTA Parties, will decide what type of statistical data on trade in agricultural products could be collected and integrated on the database. Through this database Parties will have more accurate and detailed overview on exported and imported agricultural products in CEFTA region.

Furthermore, the Subcommittee will keep the existing SPS Database updated.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP

Objective 1: Trade Facilitation

Priority 1: Contribution to the preparation of implementing provisions for the mutual recognition of border documents

Activity 1: Elaboration of the first draft version of the Decision on Implementing Provisions on Mutual Recognition of Border Documents in the context of AP 5

The Subcommittee under chairmanship of Albania in close cooperation with Committee of Trade Facilitation, Subcommittee on NTMs, and Subcommittee on Customs and Rules of Origin, will contribute to the preparation of the draft decision on the implementing provisions of the mutual recognition of border documents as foreseen by the CEFTA Additional Protocol on trade facilitation.

It is expected that the activity is carried out through the joint meetings with the relevant working groups of Subcommittee on NTMs. The drafts will be ready for the adoption of CEFTA Joint Committee by the end of 2017.

Activity 2: Analyzing new supply chains in CEFTA with purpose of trade promotion.

The Subcommittee will initiate discussions with international organisations for the implementation of project. In this way a specific meeting is to be organised to discuss what would be the potential support for analysing supply chains in the agricultural sector in which trade might be promoted. Depending on the results from this meeting, donor assistance could be mobilised. Furthermore, the subcommittee will give its assistance on selecting a group of agricultural products, by mapping of the Regional Value Chains within CEFTA region.

Based on the priorities of Paris Western Balkans Summit 2016, which is trade promotion in regional market integration and boost competitiveness in the region, the Chairmanship needs to coordinate development of the economic corridors in agricultural trade, in line with the Paris Summit Conclusions.

Objective 2: Enhancing Transparency

Priority 2: Enhancing transparency by developing the new database in agricultural trade in CEFTA region.

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 to give its support to the well-functioning of the CEFTA Transparency Pack. If necessary, the Chair will formally ask all CEFTA Parties to provide

updated information to the Database. 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.

Activity 2: Development of the new statistical database in agricultural trade in CEFTA region.

The Chairmanship will develop a comprehensive statistical database for agricultural trade in CEFTA region. The new database on agricultural trade would be part of CEFTA Management Information System. This database will be constructed by the conclusions which are made by previous Subcommittee, and serve data on agricultural trade products among CEFTA and also help Parties to have clear picture of trade of agricultural products, as addition to other trade statistic data which Secretariat provides.

5. EXPECTED RESULTS

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

1) Trade Facilitation

- Implementing provisions for the mutual recognition of border documents
- Action plan which will lead CEFTA Parties to increase export performance of the CEFTA region

2) Enhancing Transparency

- Statistical database for agricultural trade within CEFTA region is developed
- The transparency mechanism to ensure policy predictability in domain of trade is established
- CEFTA Transparency Pact is kept updated

6. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The tentative calendar for the year 2017 is as follows:

MEETING/EVENT	DATES	PLACE
Joint meeting with SC on NTMs and its working groups	April /May	Belgrade
Ad- Hoc Technical Meetings on NTMs	October	Brussels
11 th meeting of the Subcommittee on Agriculture and SPS	October 10th	Tirana