

## **13<sup>th</sup> JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **Ministerial Conclusions**

18 December 2019, Tirana

We, the authorized representatives of CEFTA Parties, present in the 13<sup>th</sup> Joint Committee Meeting, welcome successful start of implementation of the CEFTA Additional Protocol 5. We pledge to strengthen the regional trading system and therefore invite the remaining CEFTA Party to complete the process of ratification of the Additional Protocol 5 as soon as possible. We remind the Parties that implementation of the Agreement including its Protocols and Decisions of the Joint Committee is a key instrument toward inclusive economic growth and development within CEFTA.

We welcome the adoption of the Additional Protocol 6 on Trade in Services and the Decision on AEOs (1/2019) and Recommendation on CEFTA Customs Risk Management Strategy (1/2019) and urge the CEFTA Parties and the CEFTA Secretariat to immediately start the implementation.

Taking into account the importance of the implementation of the AP5 we commend the market surveillance authorities for the development of the timeframe for the mutual cooperation and starting the negotiations on mutual recognition of test reports.

We support the successful process of negotiation on trade facilitation in fruits and vegetables and urge the Parties to finalize the Decision as soon as possible.

Moreover, considering the need for reduced waiting and processing times, improved mobility and consequently, reduced trade and logistic costs, we urge Parties to undertake preparatory actions to implement one-stop-shops, and urge the Parties and the Secretariat to foster the implementation of the SEED+.

We take note of the recommendation based on impact assessment of approximation of CEFTA MFN rates with the EU CET not to align Parties' MFN Tariffs to EU CET.

We take note of the Public Procurement report and recommend the Parties still having the discriminatory treatment in their legislation to make an assessment of the provisions related to their conformity with the relevant provisions of the CEFTA.

We support the CEFTA Committee of Contact Points and Subcommittee on Agriculture including Sanitary and Phytosanitary Issues to continue discussion among CEFTA Parties to agree on the format and scope of reporting subsidies in the agricultural sector to be part of the CEFTA Transparency Pack.

Recognizing importance of regulatory barriers to trade in services, we commit to launching first CEFTA platform for sector specific cooperation among respective regulatory bodies. Furthermore, we launch a regulatory dialogue on e-commerce with a view of tackling barriers to electronic commerce among the parties. To this end, we take note of the expert report on trade regime, legislation and policy measures in the sector of E-commerce.

We commend the work of the CEFTA Parties in the regulatory cooperation and we recommend the opening of sector specific negotiations by May 2020.

We commit to launch negotiations on CEFTA Dispute Settlement Mechanism so far referred as the Additional Protocol 7 on CEFTA Dispute Settlement in February 2020.

We instruct the CEFTA Secretariat to coordinate activities in relation to the subsequent phase of MAP REA.

Taking into account the importance of the neutral and impartial role of the CEFTA Secretariat, and its substantial efforts enhancing its financial management capacity, transparency in its actions and budget implementation, and consolidating its procurement procedures, we approve the annual budget of CEFTA Secretariat for 2020 in the amount of 1,198,000.00 EUR as submitted by its Director.

We welcome the following documents we have adopted in this meeting:

- Additional Protocol 6 on Trade in Services;
- Decision No. 1/2019 on Establishing of the Validation Procedure for the Mutual Recognition of CEFTA Parties' national Authorized Economic Operators' Programmes regarding the Safety and Security (AEOS);
- Decision No. 2/2019 on Establishment of a Selection Committee for the Recruitment of Staff of the Secretariat other than the Director;

- Decision No. 3/2019 on the Contract Extension of the CEFTA Secretariat's Director;
- Recommendation No. 1/2019 on CEFTA Customs Risk Management Strategy.

Adopted in Tirana, on 18 December 2019, in the presence of all CEFTA Parties.