

CENTRAL EUROPEAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

FOURTH JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

12 November 2010
Belgrade, Serbia

Ministerial Conclusions

On the occasion of the fourth CEFTA Joint Committee Meeting under the Chairmanship of the Republic of Serbia:

WE, Ministers and authorised representatives, note the positive effects of the implementation of the Agreement on Amendment of and Accession to the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) on our economies. At the same time we recognize the importance of introduction of the new trade topics, such as trade in services liberalisation, which will contribute to the enhanced mutual economic cooperation and competitiveness of the entire region;

We are also fully aware of some challenges that hinder the implementation of the Agreement, particularly in the area of free movement of goods/recognition of customs stamps and sanitary and phytosanitary issues, and determined to engage promptly in bilateral talks on all pending issues in order to enable Parties to fully benefit from the Agreement;

WE give our support to the up-grading of the Agreement in the area of further liberalisation of trade in agricultural products by interested CEFTA Parties and look forward towards its positive impact on intra-regional trade;

WE are pleased to acknowledge that as of 1 May, 2010, the laws on public procurement in the CEFTA Parties incorporate the principles of equality of all suppliers, effective competition and no less favourable treatment of CEFTA suppliers on domestic markets;

HIGHLY appreciating the importance and benefits of promoting trade worldwide, we strongly support the launching of the CEFTA Trade Portal and are eager to encourage its successful functioning in the years to come;

WE also acknowledge the progress in the implementation of the Agreement as presented in the reports of the Chairs of the Subcommittees and Working Groups attached to these Conclusions;

WE express our will and full readiness to commit ourselves in the following areas:

Appreciating the results achieved in liberalisation of trade in agricultural products, the interested Parties are ready to undertake all the necessary actions, including initialling, signing and ratification of the Additional Protocol and Annex 10, having its implementation in the first quarter of 2011;

Recognizing the increasing role of the services in mutual trade and taking into account relevant provisions of Articles 27 and 29 of the Agreement, we instruct the Working Group on Trade in Services established by the Decision No.4/2010 to perform necessary activities and submit to the Joint Committee appropriate recommendations in the first half of 2011 in order to define the common interests and goals for entry into mutual negotiations;

Promoting policies that will have as a goal mutual trade without obstacles, we pursue actively with the identification and elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade by implementing a multilateral monitoring framework and using the benefits of CEFTA Trade Portal in enhancing the transparency;

Recognizing that some of the SPS measures cause disturbing effects on trade, we request experts to explore possibilities for identifying feasible solutions for concluding bilateral/plurilateral/multilateral mutual recognition agreements among sanitary and phytosanitary services having as a basis positive experience of agreements already concluded among the Parties;

In order to reduce the non-tariff barriers in the area of technical regulation, we are determined to cooperate and exchange experiences on priority EU technical legislation to be adopted with the objective to consolidate mutual trade interests with respective national EU approximation plans. Fulfilling our commitment spelled out in the Article 13.3 (b) of the Agreement, we ask the experts to align and make operational a notification system of technical regulations, conformity assessment procedures and standards as of 1 January 2011;

We express our readiness to continue with the regular reviews of the competition rules in our legislation while working on improving the cooperation between competition authorities;

Finally, we commit to work together on defining and implementing a common format of notification of State Aid, with the objective to set up a notification system which could become operational in 2011;

WE highly appreciate the intention of the European Commission to co-finance the functioning of the CEFTA Secretariat for the period from September 2011 to September 2014.

AFTER due consideration, we decide to adopt the symbol introduced under the Montenegrin Chairmanship as an official logo of CEFTA.

WE adopt:

- Decision No. 1/2010 on Amendment to the Decision No.7/2007 Mandate of the Secretariat
- Decision No. 2/2010 on Financial Contributions of the CEFTA Parties to the Budget of the Secretariat for the period 1 September 2011 - 31 August 2014
- Decision No. 3/2010 on CEFTA Secretariat Staff – contract renewal
- Decision No. 4/2010 on Establishment of the Working Groups

In the presence of representatives:

Republic of Albania

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Republic of Croatia

Republic of Macedonia

Republic of Moldova

Montenegro

Republic of Serbia

The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo on behalf of Kosovo in accordance with United Nation Security Council Resolution 1244

In Belgrade, 12 November 2010