



**REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA**  
**MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, TRADE AND ENERGY**

**CEFTA Deputy Ministers Meeting**  
**18 June 2013**

Distinguished Deputy Ministers,  
State Secretaries,  
Assistant Ministers and representatives of the CEFTA Parties,

It's a great pleasure to meet with you all in Sarajevo in the CEFTA Deputy Ministers meeting. We proudly acknowledge the efforts vested in CEFTA implementation as a region while we witness that strength is cumulated and weakness diminished. Synergies created with other regional initiatives allow us to grow and prosper together toward the European integration process.

I would like to thank all CEFTA parties for their support and cooperation during the Albanian Chairmanship in 2012 and congratulate Bosnia and Herzegovina for the energy and dynamism put in our agendas for this year.

All we do nationally and regionally makes the region stronger. The data and results teach us where to invest more effort though we don't know always how. Through close cooperation, trust and promotion of regional interest we become closer to each other in Europe.

Allow me to share with you some trade data of Albania during 2012 and first quarter of 2013.

Albania's trade volume in 2012 reached 534 mln Euro with an overall increase of 4.6% compared with 2011. This trend is preserved for both import and export with an increase 4.2% and 5% respectively. The main exporting partners for Albania in 2012 are Kosovo (70%), Macedonia (16%), Montenegro (7%). In import Serbia is the leading importing party (48%) followed by Macedonia (18%), Croatia (14%), Kosovo (11%).

The figures for first trimester of 2013 compared with the same period of 2012 show a decrease of 20% in the total trade volume with CEFTA parties. Should be noted though that import decreased by 60%, giving a direct impact to the decrease of trade volume during the first quarter of this year.

Besides the fact that these figures provide a pessimistic picture they tell the need to deepen the efforts and increase energy toward a more consolidated trade and investment agenda in order to preserve the positive results achieved so far. We all witness the commitment and good will among the parties in the implementation of the obligations stipulated in the CEFTA agreement but as the reality shows trade policy is not an isolated island in the economic agenda of any country.

Albania believes that a combined agenda on trade and investment will be in the benefit of a more sustainable development, better regional networking in response to business community needs and priorities and, therefore greater opportunities for foreign direct investments.

The strategy SEE 2020 is an opportunity for our countries to orient the regional efforts toward the increase of competitiveness, while focusing more as CEFTA structure in pillar I, integrated growth. The approach and level of ambition introduced in pillar I, of the strategy provides a systematic and consolidated agenda in both trade and investment, with the aim of attracting new investment and transform the region in a hub for products or sectors part of current supply chains and new potential regional or international supply chains.

The strategy SEE 2020 pillar I, besides being very ambitious in the programming for 2014-2020 activities, shows the complexity of issues to be addressed. It requires among other things a strong, dynamic and dedicated public administration with a proactive mind-set and open to the inter-institutional cooperation. The role of trade experts showed the results in the successful implementation of CEFTA and their involvement has a new feature, coordination, pro-active and supportive participation to all other areas of expertise.

Engaging in trade in services liberalization, free movement of skilled professionals, etc. which are indeed the domains of many ministries in each CEFTA party, requires constructive debate and coordination at both national and regional level.

Albania is of the opinion that the Deputy Ministers meeting should take a leading role in the monitoring of the SEE 2020 implementation and provide a forum for discussions and new ideas for the future.

We have many challenges ahead and I'm convinced that we have learnt during these years of CEFTA implementation to succeed. The successful implementation of SEE 2020, in particular pillar I, is the next battle to win and I'm trustful that all together we will succeed.

By concluding, I would like to thank the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the hospitality and great organization of the last two days meetings.