



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

CEFTA Deputy Minister's Meeting

Prishtina, 30 June 2011

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentleman,

It is a great pleasure to be in Prishtina and have this meeting organized after many achievements since the last meeting held in Belgrade.

On behalf of the Republic of Albania I would like to thank the Republic of Kosovo for its efforts, willingness and commitment shown during this first half of Presidency and congratulating the Kosovo Government for its dedication to all CEFTA structures.

The year 2011 coincides with the official signing of the additional protocol for the liberalization of agricultural trade. This process is of utmost importance for Albania and we are pleased to note the achievement of our cumulative efforts invested in this process. We believe that the liberalization of agriculture trade will give a new dimension to the trade relations in the region and will provide for new opportunities for our business.

In addition to this, the finalization of the process of Pan Euro Med Convention with respect to the rules of origin brings a new momentum for the regional trade and the trade with our strategic partners outside CEFTA.

We would like to thank our Croatian colleagues for their excellent work and their future commitments in the PEM process. Moreover, we are confident that through the support of our Secretariat and European Commission this process will have only successes.

This year Albania is the chair of the SC on Customs and Rules of Origin and following the developments in the Pan Euro Med we are working closely with the Secretariat and the established CEFTA origin network for additional activities in this area. Albania is working on the multi-annual work program in the area of customs and rules of origin to be adopted during the upcoming Joint Committee meeting.

Albanian trade relations improved further during 2010. Our trade volume represents now 10.2% of our total trade. Exports are increasing constantly and we are optimistic that the rapid and successful implementation of the additional protocol will improve the figures. The shrink of trade during 2009 is over now and 2010 shows increase in both exports and imports. Thus imports increased by 46% and exports by 27% in 2010 compared with 2009.

Our main trading exporting country is Kosovo and main importing country is Serbia.

During 2011 CEFTA Trade Portal concluded its first update and additional work is needed to standardise and harmonise each national page. GIZ support will end in September 2012 and the challenge to continue with this instrument and keep it alive is very important. Albania as the host of this project has prepared in close cooperation with GIZ and the CEFTA Secretariat the action plan for 2011 highlighting the main activities. We invite all CEFTA countries to work closely in every aspect of the CEFTA Trade Portal.

Our agenda is very ambitious in the months to come. The implementation of the additional protocol is quite important. We are worried for the speed of ratification by some CEFTA countries. Albania and Croatia are the only countries that ratified the protocol and I take this opportunity to call for all signatories of the protocol to push forward the ratification process and to

allow our business to benefit from its implementation. I'm confident that the success of the protocol is limited without having all signatories on board.

Also, the continuation of initiatives undertaken under the Sub Committee on NTBs and TBT and Sub Committee on Agriculture and SPS is crucial for the months to come.

Dear CEFTA members,

As you all now next year Albania is the CEFTA Chair in Office and we are working on our Chairmanship priorities. Our objectives and priorities will follow the Kosovo priorities and all activities and initiatives will be build upon a cumulative and follow up approach.

In addition to our well known objectives during our Presidency we will focus in the capacity building in trade development. A two year capacity building programme will be developed to support all actors of public administration dealing with trade policy formulation and coordination. Due to our EU integration agenda I believe that this exercise is well worthy for all CEFTA members.

I would like to thank all CEFTA countries for their continuous efforts, CEFTA Secretariat for the support.

By concluding I would like to thank the Republic of Kosovo for their excellent organization of this meeting and their outstanding efforts during this year Presidency.