

## **Executive Summary**

### **XII CEFTA TBT Working Group meeting**

#### **held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015.**

The twelfth meeting of the CEFTA TBT Working group held in Belgrade on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015, was attended by the representatives of : Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo\*<sup>1</sup> together with representatives of CEFTA Secretariat. Representatives of Montenegro and Moldova did not attend the meeting. List of the participants can be found in Annex 2.

Having in mind that Serbia has the chairmanship under the CEFTA Subcommittee for NTBs and TBT in this year, and that the Ministry of Economy of Serbia chairs the Working group on technical barriers to trade, Ms. Jelena Popovic, the Assistant Minister of Economy of the Republic of Serbia, chaired this meeting.

#### **1. Overview on the activities and the results achieved in the CEFTA TBT Working Group**

Ms Borislava Jaksic, representative of CEFTA Secretariat, presented overview of the activities and achieved results of the CEFTA TBT WG from its establishment till nowadays and review of performed activities, initiatives, analysis, studies and projects. She also informed about legal framework as a basis for establishing and operation of TBT WG, particularly elaborated the application of Article 13. of the CEFTA Agreement by the TBT Working Group (TBT WG). In addition, she presented main topics under discussion in TBT WG, as well as strategic orientation of CEFTA Subcommittee on NTBs and TBT in TBT area.

Mr. David Norris, project manager of new „Quality Infrastructure in the Western Balkans” project, funded by SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), stated that the project will support each of the CEFTA Parties depending on the level of harmonization and implementation of the EU legislation which they have reached. Having in mind that CEFTA parties are at present on different stages of harmonisation, only when all parties reach the same level of compliance with the relevant EU legislation, the Mutual Recognition Agreement could be signed.

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<sup>1</sup> \*- This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

## **2. Overall framework of trade facilitation activities in CEFTA and ongoing negotiations on the Framework Agreement on Simplification of Border Controls in All Clearance Stages, Electronic Exchange of Information, Mutual Recognition of AEOs (FWA)**

Representatives of Customs Office pointed out that the most important issues regarding the agreement are legislation alignment as well as technical equipment for exchange of information.

They explained in detail the manner of functioning and the purpose of Systematic Electronic Exchange of Data system – SEED system. The system of data exchange is functioning already. They also highlighted that all legislative provisions regarding Authorised Economic Operators (AEOs) are fully in line with EU Acquis. Currently three companies in the Republic of Serbia and one from Macedonia have gained AEO status.

## **3. Presentation of CEFTA Trade Facilitation Agenda in the framework of Addressing and Eliminating Non-Tariff Barriers**

Mr. Umut Ergezer presented CEFTA trade facilitation agenda with a special emphasis on current state of play in ongoing negotiation on Framework Agreement.

He pointed out that all commitments in the period of 2008-2013. have been met by CEFTA. He also presented new challenges that have to be fulfilled in the period 2014-2020, in line with SEE 2020, which headline targets were explained.

## **4. Adjustments of CEFTA Structures in Relation to Challenges of SEE 2015-2020**

Mr. Umut Ergezer presented the needs for adjustments of CEFTA structure in relation to challenges of SEE in 2015-2020. He explained in detail objectives of proposed CEFTA structure, limitations of the current structures and challenges expected.

## **5. Wrap-up and task deadlines for TBT WG members**

The Chair underlined three most important issues discussed on the meeting.

The first one was about results of CEFTA achieved from 2008 up to now. Ms. Popovic concluded that the main progress has been made in the area of transparency but still the system is to be established with the aim of further

elimination of TBT between CEFTA countries.

The Chair expressed gratitude to all members for their active participation and informed them that the draft minutes of the meeting will be circulated by the Secretariat.