

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON COOPERATION

**between the
CEFTA Secretariat
and the
Western Balkans 6 Chambers Investment Forum (WB6 CIF)**

Hereinafter referred to as 'the Signatories'.

RECOGNIZING that the signatories are directing their efforts and would like to join their engagements to advance the creation of a Regional Common Market as specified in the Common Regional Market Action Plan (CRM AP) under the Berlin Process, with the ultimate goal of acceding the EU;

CONSIDERING that they have been working toward eliminating barriers to trade and facilitating and promoting trade flows in the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA);

REAFIRMING their dedication to support economic growth and regional economic integration of the Western Balkans and fulfil this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in a spirit of cooperation and on the basis of mutual understanding,

have hereby agreed as follows:

I. Purpose

The purpose of this MoU is to further develop established good relations, in order to create a framework for cooperation between the CEFTA Secretariat and the Western Balkans 6 Chambers Investment Forum (WB6 CIF) through which they shall continue to exchange appropriate information and expertise.

The establishment of the mutual framework for cooperation aims to improve mutual coordination, efficiency and effectiveness in the areas of common interest – advancement of the regional economic integration through the Common Regional Market, support to the timely

and effective implementation of the New Growth Plan for the Western Balkans and to the enhancement of the convergence between the Western Balkans and the European Union - through:

- the facilitation of trade and removal of non-tariff barriers to trade, and
- the promotion and facilitation of trade in services and goods in CEFTA 2006 for the purpose of deepening regional economic integration through the Common Regional Market.

II. Background

CEFTA Secretariat provides technical, professional and administrative support to the Joint Committee and to any committee, sub-committee, expert group or other body established by the Joint Committee as requested, supports the Chair in Office of CEFTA in the organisation and follow-up of all meetings of the Joint Committee and its appropriate bodies. In addition, CEFTA Secretariat co-ordinates donor-funded assistance for regional trade policy activities including the development of requests for assistance as agreed by the Chair and/or the Joint Committee and monitors progress made.

The WB6 Chamber Investment Forum (WB6 CIF) is a legal entity incorporated in 2017 as an association headquartered in Trieste, representing a joint association of chambers of commerce from the Western Balkans established as a platform for cooperation within the framework of the Berlin process, with the aim to provide a joint voice to the business community and to facilitate inter-business contacts and promote the Western Balkans as one market and investment destination.

III. Framework for Cooperation

The signatories hereby recognize the importance of mutual cooperation and pledge to join their efforts in:

- 1) Strengthening the public-private dialogue to advance the development and monitor the implementation of the Common Regional Market Action Plan and the CEFTA framework in order to contribute to the formation of the Common Regional Market,
- 2) Promoting available instruments and mechanisms provided by CEFTA to the private sector economic operators, thereby maximizing the benefits of intra-CEFTA business operations,
- 3) Supporting digitalization and the using of digital tools for conducting business in CEFTA,
- 4) Developing other points of joint interest that lead to the establishment of the Common Regional Market as a stepping stone to full EU membership.

In order to enhance and structure their cooperation and coordination and the sharing of expertise, with the goal to build better synergies and advance their objectives, the signatories agree on the following:

- To assign a contact point for the purpose of the implementation of this MoU,
- Share information on topics of common interest,
- Jointly engage stakeholders to pursue the above-mentioned goals,
- Organize joint events in order to increase the visibility of the reform processes in the Western Balkans,
- Consult and cooperate in planning, implementing and monitoring of their activities,
- WB6 CIF pledges the involvement of businesses through its member chambers network, identifying specific topics of interest to the business community of the CEFTA, facilitation of business to government dialogue in line with the goals set in this agreement and the promotion of joint activities,
- CEFTA Secretariat pledges to request advice and inputs in preparation of its proposals for ongoing and future reforms and enhancements that are carried out in the CEFTA framework.

IV. Visibility

The Signatories will support visibility following a reciprocal approach. Visibility will be given to the signatories according to their role within joint activities and pursuant to applicable rules.

V. Entry into force, revision and duration

This MoU will take effect from the day of its signing and shall remain in force for a period of four years.

This MoU may be amended by written consent of both Signatories.

VI. Non-binding nature

This MoU, which is not legally binding, in no way restricts any Signatory from pursuing similar activities on its own or from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organisations, and individuals. It does not create any obligations for any Signatory or third Party.

VII. Liaising and Communication

Each Signatory will appoint an official contact point who will coordinate the activities of each Signatory in carrying out this MoU. The Signatories will notify each other of the name and contact details of the official contact point 15 days from the date of signature of this MoU.

VIII. VII Final provisions

This document is signed in two (2) original copies in the English language, one to remain with each Signatory.

Place and date: Brussels, 27 April 2024



CEFTA Secretariat – Danijela Gačević



WB6 CIF – Lulzim Rafuna