

**14<sup>th</sup> JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Ministerial Conclusions**

16 December 2020

We, the authorized representatives of the CEFTA Parties, present in the 14<sup>th</sup> Joint Committee Meeting, express firm commitment to maintain and upgrade trade flows and relations underpinning them, even in challenging times such as this, marked by pandemics of the Covid-19.

We praise the work performed by the CEFTA Parties and CEFTA Secretariat and our partners, Transport Community, European Commission and Regional Cooperation Council, in the swift agreement and implementation of the Green Lanes and Green Corridors, and encourage the work on the extension of the Green Lanes and Green Corridors initiative to the border crossing points with neighbouring EU Member States.

We welcome ratification of the Additional Protocol 6 by four Parties, creating the conditions for its entry into force in January 2021. We encourage the remaining Parties to complete their domestic processes as soon as possible for Additional Protocol 5 and Additional Protocol 6, to be able to benefit from the facilitated trade in goods and services as provided by these Protocols.

We commend launching negotiations on CEFTA Dispute Mechanism so far referred as the Additional Protocol 7 on CEFTA Dispute Settlement, seeking to improving the system for settling the disputes in CEFTA and we urge the Parties to take constructive and active part in the negotiations with a view of completing the process by mid-2021. At the same time, we expect all the Parties to take active approach towards resolving the issues recorded in the Market Access Barriers Database. To this end, the Parties should enter into consultations, as soon as possible and the Secretariat stands ready to support these efforts.

We commit to take all the necessary activities that would enable faster inclusion of our economies into the European value chains in the post pandemic period, facilitating the trade in goods and services, and start the implementation of the new issues referred in the CEFTA 2006 and its Additional Protocols.

We welcome the Action Plan on Establishing the Common Regional Market, adopted at the Sofia Summit in November. We expect all Parties to benefit from the implementation of the trade related component of the CRM and we invite the Secretariat to draft the CEFTA Roadmap with aim to be adopted at the next CEFTA Joint Committee.

We welcome the publication of the SEED+ contract notice and we support inclusion of Moldova into the SEED+. We further commit to secure all the necessary measures for seamless implementation of the SEED+.

We agree to coordinate the activities as regards extending the network of FTAs and update the rules of origin in the light of the latest developments under the auspices of the Pan-Euro-Mediterranean Convention on rules of origin and exit of the United Kingdom from the EU, to preserve the zone of cumulation and facilitate trade to the maximum possible extent.

We endorse the CEFTA E-commerce Roadmap setting out key features of the regulatory dialogue on electronic commerce and invite Subcommittee on Trade in Services and Subcommittee on Customs and Rules of Origin to propose appropriate measures. We commend launching the regulatory cooperation in tourism seeking to address key barriers in this sector, including introducing mutual recognition of licenses based on EU rules and practices.

We welcome moving forward on mutual recognition of professional qualifications, prepared jointly by CEFTA and RCC Secretariats and instruct the Subcommittee on Trade in Services to develop disciplines for establishment of the general system of mutual recognition for a pilot profession, based on the EU model and scope, to be gradually extended to other professions. We instruct the Secretariat to prepare first draft of the Joint Committee Decision by end of January 2021.

We welcome the commitment to reduce trade costs in the region and instruct the Secretariat to prepare proposal in light of given obligations and instruments provided by the CEFTA 2006 including the Additional Protocol 5 by end-January 2021.

We welcome the commitment to remove work permits for intra-company transfers and services suppliers and instruct the Secretariat to prepare first draft in light of given obligations and instruments provided by CEFTA 2006 including the Additional Protocol 6 by end-January 2021.

We thank the European Commission for the additional funding adopted through Action Programme for the year 2020, action EU4 Business: Fostering regional economic integration, and assure the cooperation of all the Parties in implementation of these Programmes.

We welcome the progress made in the administrative strengthening of the CEFTA Secretariat and urge the Parties to speed up the work of the administrative functioning of the CEFTA structures streamlining the activities in accordance with the new tasks.

We instruct the Secretariat to prepare first drafts of all other documents planned for the adoption during 2021 Chairmanship by end of March 2021.

We welcome the Memorandum of Understanding between CEFTA Secretariat and Southeast European Cooperative Initiative and instruct the Director of the CEFTA Secretariat to sign the document. The Memorandum aims to enhance cooperation in the fields of trade and transport facilitation.

Taking into account the importance of the role of the CEFTA Secretariat, and the implementation of the EU Action Grant we approve the annual budget of CEFTA Secretariat for 2021 in the amount of 1,198,000.00 EUR as submitted by its Director.

We welcome the following documents adopted in this meeting:

- Decision no. 2/2020 on Establishing a common logo for CEFTA Parties' Authorised Economic Operators
- Decision no. 3/2020 on the CEFTA Open Fund

Adopted in Sarajevo, on 16 December 2020, in the presence of all CEFTA Parties.