

**DECISION OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN FREE TRADE
AGREEMENT**

No. 12/2025

on the recognition of qualified trust services

The Joint Committee,

Having regard to Article 40.4 of Annex 1 to the Agreement on Amendment of and Accession to the Central European Free Trade Agreement, done in Bucharest on 19 December 2006 ("CEFTA 2006");

Having regard to the CEFTA Parties' commitments under the Additional Protocol 6 on Trade in Services ("AP 6") and, in particular, its Article 18 on '*Electronic commerce*', which affirms the CEFTA Parties' obligation to maintain a dialogue on regulatory issues raised by electronic commerce, which is to address, *inter alia*, the recognition of certificates of electronic signatures issued to the public and the facilitation of inter-Party certification services,

Considering that the *CEFTA Roadmap for Regulatory Dialogue on Electronic Commerce* foresees the creation of a general framework for the recognition of electronic signatures and other trust services, which would set up general standards and be modelled according to the European Union's regulations in this field,

Recalling that CEFTA Parties have identified as a priority the recognition of electronic signatures and other trust services as key enablers of electronic commerce,

Emphasising the important role of the CEFTA Parties' ongoing approximation to the EU *acquis* with respect to rules on digital identity and trust services,

Has decided as follows:

Article 1

Purpose

This Decision seeks to facilitate electronic transactions within CEFTA through the recognition of qualified trust services.

Article 2

Scope

- (1) This Decision applies to qualified trust service providers established in a CEFTA Party.
- (2) This Decision does not apply to the provision of qualified trust services that are used exclusively within closed systems resulting from a Party's regulations or administrative guidelines, or from agreements between a defined set of participants.

Article 3

Definitions

- (1) For purposes of this Decision and its implementation, the following definitions shall apply:
- (a) “electronic signature” means data in electronic form which is attached to or logically associated with other data in electronic form, and which is used by the signatory to sign;
 - (b) “qualified electronic signature” means an advanced electronic signature that is created by a qualified electronic signature creation device, and which is based on a qualified certificate for electronic signatures;
 - (c) “qualified electronic signature creation device” means an electronic signature creation device that meets the requirements laid down in Annex II to the European Union’s *Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market*;
 - (d) “certificate for electronic signature” means an electronic attestation, which links electronic signature validation data to a natural person and confirms at least the name or the pseudonym of that person;
 - (e) “qualified certificate for electronic signature” means a certificate for electronic signatures, that is issued by a qualified trust service provider and meets the requirements laid down in Annex I to the European Union’s *Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market*, as amended by *Regulation (EU) 2024/1183*;
 - (f) “trust service” means an electronic service normally provided for remuneration, which consists of any of the following:
 - (a) the issuance of certificates for electronic signatures, certificates for electronic seals, certificates for website authentication or certificates for the provision of other trust services;
 - (b) the validation of certificates for electronic signatures, certificates for electronic seals, certificates for website authentication or certificates for the provision of other trust services;
 - (c) the creation of electronic signatures or electronic seals;
 - (d) the validation of electronic signatures or electronic seals;
 - (e) the preservation of electronic signatures, electronic seals, certificates for electronic signatures or certificates for electronic seals;
 - (f) the management of remote electronic signature creation devices or remote electronic seal creation devices;
 - (g) the issuance of electronic attestations of attributes;
 - (h) the validation of electronic attestation of attributes;
 - (i) the creation of electronic timestamps;

- (j) the validation of electronic timestamps;
- (k) the provision of electronic registered delivery services;
- (l) the validation of data transmitted through electronic registered delivery services and related evidence;
- (m) the electronic archiving of electronic data and electronic documents;
- (n) the recording of electronic data in an electronic ledger;
- (g) “qualified trust service” means a trust service that meets the applicable requirements laid down in the European Union’s *Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market*, as amended by *Regulation (EU) 2024/1183*;
- (h) “trust service provider” means a natural person or an organization who provides one or more trust services either as a qualified or as a non-qualified trust service provider;
- (i) “qualified trust service provider” means a trust service provider who provides one or more qualified trust services and is granted the qualified status by the supervisory body;
- (j) “attribute” means a characteristic, quality, right or permission of a natural person or of an organization or of an object;
- (k) “CEFTA List of Trusted Lists” means the list providing the qualified trust service providers and qualified trust services recognised through the CEFTA Recognition Framework;
- (l) “validation” means the process of verifying and confirming that data in electronic form are valid.
- (2) For purposes of this Decision and its implementation, any other definition provided for in Article 3 of *Regulation (EU) No 910/2014*, as amended by *Regulation (EU) 2024/1183*, shall be considered for purposes of clarification.

Article 4

Recognition of qualified trust services through the CEFTA Recognition Framework

- (1) The CEFTA Sub-Committee on Trade in Services shall recommend to the Joint Committee to recognize as equivalent to a qualified trust service issued by a trust service provider from a CEFTA Party any qualified trust service issued by a trust service provider from another CEFTA Party, provided that the Additional Protocol 6 has entered into force for that Party and the trust service provider and the trust services meet the applicable requirements laid down in the relevant EU regulation.
- (2) The CEFTA Sub-Committee on Trade in Services shall make a recommendation referenced in Article 4 of this Decision based on the related report from the Working Group on Digital Cooperation.
- (3) The Working Group on Digital Cooperation shall determine the requirements and develop the methodology to recognize a trust service provider established in a CEFTA Party and the provided

qualified trust services. The Working Group shall endeavor to prepare a first draft of the requirements and methodology within one year of the entry into force of this Decision.

- (4) The applicable requirements shall correspond to those set out in the relevant EU regulation, as adapted to the CEFTA context.
- (5) The methodology shall regulate, inter alia, the application for recognition, the initiation of the procedure, the assessment with the requirements, the revocation/suspension of recognition, and the establishment of a CEFTA List of Trusted Lists.
- (6) The CEFTA List of Trusted Lists shall be made available on the CEFTA website and kept up to date.

Article 6

Review

- (1) The Sub-Committee on Trade in Services shall monitor and review the application of this Decision and shall submit an annual report to the Joint Committee.
- (2) The CEFTA Secretariat shall support the review and the preparation of the report.

Article 7

Entry into force

This decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

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Adopted in Pristina on 16 December 2025 in the presence of all CEFTA Parties.