

CONCLUSIONS OF THE SUMMIT OF THE PRIME MINISTERS OF THE CEFTA COUNTRIES (PORTOROŽ, 12 AND 13 SEPTEMBER 1997)

At the Summit of the Prime Ministers of the CEFTA countries the prime ministers of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Slovenia co-ordinated and signed a declaration.

The prime ministers began by expressing their satisfaction that for the first time the Prime Minister of Romania participated at the meeting as a regular member.

All the prime ministers agreed that the Central European Free Trade Agreement is generating positive shifts and positive results, and that trade among the signatory countries is growing. They also agreed with the findings that the functioning of CEFTA is less dynamic after the first successful years. Not enough has been done in the last year in the field of free movement of capital, common interpretation of certain articles of the Agreement, liberalisation of trade in services or in the field of mutual recognition of certificates and test results for agricultural and industrial products. Therefore all the prime ministers agreed to continue with these activities in the future.

The prime ministers expressed their opinion that the negotiations on the Additional Protocol No. 6 are approaching a conclusion. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia noted with satisfaction that all the CEFTA signatories agreed to the Republic of Slovenia abolishing all exemptions on 1 January 2000. It is expected that the Additional Protocol No. 6 will be applied from 1998.

Support for organising conferences on investment opportunities in the CEFTA countries and all other activities contributing to the promotion of the CEFTA group was also expressed.

The Polish prime minister proposed a comprehensive analysis of the functioning of the Central European Free Trade Agreement in the five years since its creation. In his words such an analysis could define the problems and thus enable further development, the multilateral nature and flexibility of relations between the signatory countries. His proposal was met with approval by all the prime ministers. It is anticipated that Poland will organise a meeting on the ministerial level for the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (21 December 1992) in Krakow, at the end of December 1997.

The openness of the Central European Free Trade Agreement for the accession of other Central European countries that satisfy the accession conditions was emphasised at this Summit. The prime ministers agreed to launch accession negotiations with the Republic of Bulgaria.

At the Summit the prime ministers exchanged views on accession to the European Union. However, on the request of the Hungarian prime minister they did not bind themselves in the declaration to provide mutual support in the process of joining the European Union.

The Czech Republic will take over the presidency and organisation of the next summit of the prime ministers of CEFTA countries in 1998.

[Quelle: <http://www.cefta.org>]