

## **DECLARATION OF THE PRIME MINISTERS OF THE CEFTA COUNTRIES (PORTOROŽ, SEPTEMBER, 12 - 13, 1997)**

The Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Slovenia, conscious of the significance of mutual economic co-operation within the Central European Free Trade Agreement and wishing to further promote the free trade among the signatory countries, met in Portorož, the Republic of Slovenia, on September 12 - 13, 1997.

The Prime Ministers appreciated with satisfaction that for the first time the Prime Minister of Romania participated as a regular member since Romania has become a Party to the CEFTA as from July 1, 1997.

The Prime Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia participated at the meeting as guests.

The Prime Ministers of the CEFTA countries appreciated the perceptible contribution of the Central European Free Trade Agreement to the development of mutual trade among the signatory countries. In this respect the Prime Ministers have expressed:

- their satisfaction with the application of the Additional Protocol No. 4 to the Central European Free Trade Agreement concerning the new rules of origin, diagonal cumulation in particular, which has been provisionally applied from January 1, 1997;
- their satisfaction with the application of the Additional Protocol No. 5 to the Central European Free Trade Agreement concerning the liberalization of trade in industrial products and the implementation of the Harmonized System 96, which has been provisionally applied from January 1, 1997;
- their opinion that the negotiations on the liberalization of trade with agricultural products between the Republic of Slovenia and all other actual CEFTA Parties are approaching the conclusion that means that Slovenia shall abolish exemptions on January 1, 2000. The Prime Ministers expect that the Additional Protocol No. 6 to the CEFTA will be finalized in accordance with the rules of liberalization applied within the provisions of the CEFTA and will be signed in due time so that its provisions could be applied from January 1, 1998.

In respect to Poznan, Brno and Jasna Declarations to widen the areas of economic and commercial co-operation the Prime Ministers have agreed:

- to continue the mutual co-operation in the development of the CEFTA functioning, including the mutual interpretation of some articles of the Central European Free Trade Agreement by the Joint Committee;
- to accelerate the bilateral negotiations concerning the certification of industrial and agricultural products, including mutual recognition of test results and certificates with the aim to conclude the bilateral agreements possibly in the year 1998;
- to continue the discussion on the possibilities of co-operation in the field of trade in services;

- to continue the mutual co-operation in the field of free movement of capital;
- to continue providing support for organizing conferences on investment opportunities in the CEFTA countries and other promotional activities.

The Prime Ministers agreed that a comprehensive analysis of the CEFTA functioning since its creation five years ago would positively contribute to better co-operation in the coming years and instructed the experts to start the necessary preparations.

The Prime Ministers agreed to launch the accession negotiations with the Republic of Bulgaria.

The Prime Ministers have exchanged their views on approaching negotiations on accession to the European Union.

The Prime Ministers agreed that the next meeting of the Prime Ministers of the CEFTA countries shall take place in the Czech Republic in the fall of 1998.

Portorož, September 12, 1997.

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