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**CENTRE FOR CO-OPERATION WITH NON-MEMBERS  
TRADE DIRECTORATE**

**Working Party of the Trade Committee  
Trade Relations with Economies in Transition**

**MEETING ON STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING REGIONAL AND MULTILATERAL TRADE IN  
SERVICES IN TRANSITION ECONOMIES: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE BALTIC STATES, RUSSIA  
AND SOUTH EAST EUROPE**

**Report of the Meeting**

**Paris, 3-4 December 2003**

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## Introduction

1. The meeting addressed three ongoing projects carried out by the Trade Directorate on trade in services in transition economies -- the CCNM Baltic Regional Programme, Russia Programme and South Eastern Europe project (financed by the Swedish International Development Agency - SIDA). The content and emphasis of these programmes vary, as they reflect different stages of the reform process in individual countries and regions, but all have the purpose of encouraging the integration of transition economies into the multilateral trading system and consider trade in services as one of the major elements in this process.

2. Over 50 officials, business representatives, academics and researchers participated in the event (see the attached list of participants). In addition to OECD Delegates to the Working Party of the Trade Committee, representatives of international organisations and high trade officials from the Baltic States, South Eastern Europe (SEE), Russia and Kazakhstan took part in the discussions.

3. The meeting achieved its main objective, i.e. to encourage the sharing of experiences among transition economies on strategies for development of the services sector and the exchange of views on good practices for enhancing trade in services at the regional and multilateral levels. Participants considered the experience of the Baltic States in developing their service sectors and promoting trade in services. They discussed the concrete options for regional co-operation in services in the SEE countries, which were developed and proposed by the OECD in the framework of its Project on Trade in Services in the SEE undertaken on behalf of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Moreover, the experience of Russia illustrated the importance of applying sound regulatory principles, such as transparency and non-discrimination, for the development of a healthy environment for trade in services.

4. In his opening remarks, Mr. Luis Carderera, the Chair of the Working Party of the Trade Committee, welcomed the participants. He emphasised that outreach events of this type are an integral part of the Trade Committee activities and represent a priority area for the OECD. Mr. Jean-Marie Metzger, Director for Trade, noted that the geographical diversity and the sectoral focus of the Trade Committee projects discussed at this meeting reflect the growing importance of the service sector in domestic economies and foreign economic relations of all transition economies. He observed that the different geographic perspective and broad analytical approach should allow a productive exchange of best practices for services development, trade expansion and services trade liberalisation within the multilateral and regional context.

5. Session I of the meeting examined the regional and multilateral experiences of the Baltic States and the SEE countries in liberalising trade in services. Session II addressed regulatory issues related to multilateral and regional liberalisation of trade in services in the selected regions and countries. Session III focussed on good practices in intra-regional cooperation in trade in services.

### **Session I: Promoting regional integration in trade in services and the role of the multilateral trading system**

6. In introducing the first session, Mr. Carderera underlined that the successful experiences of the Baltic countries provide valuable insights into a number of much-debated issues about liberalisation of domestic markets and trade, notably the relationship between autonomous liberalisation, multilateral disciplines and regional co-operation and domestic regulatory policies. To facilitate the debate, discussions first focussed on the assessment of the Baltic countries' experience, followed by comments on the proposed strategies to develop regional trade in services in the SEE countries.

a) *Assessment of the Baltic countries' experience*

7. Ms. Blanka Kalinova from the OECD Secretariat introduced the background material prepared for this part of the discussion, explaining the objectives and methods adopted in the Trade Committee Baltic project. The work began with business surveys of the environment for trade in services in each of the Baltic States and then focussed on case studies of four specific sectors (telecommunications, banking, electricity and airfreight) in order to take into account considerable the heterogeneity of services. A comparison of the Baltic countries' multilateral commitments under the GATS with those of other countries and an analysis of the impact of regional disciplines facilitated an assessment of their experience and highlighted possible lessons for other countries. The success of the Baltic countries in rapidly developing their service sectors and expanding trade in services was explained in part by their willingness to open their economies through ambitious multilateral commitments. Market opening was viewed by policymakers in the three countries as a precondition for modernisation of services and their integration into the world economy and trade. Their success was also attributed to the powerful impact of EU regulatory disciplines, which was due to detailed regulatory guidelines and specific implementation modalities embodied in the EU *acquis communautaire*. Participants were invited to comment on the Secretariat's policy proposals highlighted in the document CCNM/TD(2003)5, particularly those concerning the impact of FDI and the implications of EU accession for the service sector.

8. The Head of the Latvian delegation, Mrs. Zaiga Liepina, Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Economics, stressed that services are particularly important for small economies, and their development has been critical for the Baltic countries. She identified several future challenges, such as pursuing liberalisation of natural monopolies, sharing of best regulatory practices and coping with new EU harmonisation directives concerning services. Mrs. Liepina observed that the Latvian authorities have developed efficient consultation procedures with the business community, including with foreign investors, and are currently working on an export promotion strategy in the area of services.

9. The representatives of Estonia and Lithuania acknowledged that trade liberalisation, structured through GATS and EU disciplines, provided a major impetus to the development of services, reflected in their increasing share in employment, their attractiveness for foreign investors and their dynamic export growth. They identified the further promotion of trade in services as an important priority, noting the success that the Baltic countries had achieved in promoting tourism in the region. It was also noted that under EU guidance the Baltic countries have made a considerable progress in improving the regulatory framework for services, adopting in some cases innovative approaches, such as the creation of a multi-sectoral regulatory authority in Latvia.

10. An important issue raised by some participants was the implications of the EU regulatory framework and harmonisation applied by new EU members for third countries. According to the Russian representative, Ms. Elena Danilova from the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the question of the regulatory competence of national versus EU authorities has practical consequences for trade relations between Russia and the new EU members. Several speakers expressed the opinion that although a precise differentiation between the EU and countries' competencies is not always easy, the development of the EU single market for services will be beneficial for all operators, including non-members.

b) *Strategies to develop regional trade in services in South East Europe (SEE)*

11. Ms. Nora Dihel from the OECD Secretariat presented a paper on the proposed strategies for regional co-operation in services in SEE [CCNM/TD/SEE(2003)8], which highlights concrete options for regional co-operation, developed on the basis of the results of the first phase of the project and consultations with experts from these countries. These options intend to respond to the request on co-

operation in services trade<sup>1</sup> presented in the SEE Ministerial Statement that was adopted on 13 November 2003, in Rome. The proposed strategies to reform and liberalise trade in services range from initial/preparatory plans to more advanced co-operation measures at a sectoral, modal and/or horizontal level. The paper emphasises, however, that regional integration should not be considered an end in itself but rather an instrument for achieving a set of national and global goals and objectives. SEE policy representatives were invited to discuss these different options and provide guidance for the selection of an adequate strategy.

12. Mr. Vladimir Gligorov, Senior Economist at the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, summarised as follows some key challenges related to the services sectors reform in SEE:

- The diversity in the level of development is significant in South Eastern Europe, probably higher than among the Baltic countries.
- In many cases, the region is more connected to the outside world, than within the region. Outward trade, mainly trade with the EU and in some cases Russia, is more important than intraregional trade.
- There are a number of problems with the public governance structures in the Balkans.
- Almost all regional initiatives such as the Stability Pact, the Investment Compact, etc. have been initiated from outside. The region has shown little capability of producing regional initiatives. The interest in regional co-operation is less important than other types of co-operation, such as with the EU or the WTO.
- By differentiating among SEE countries, the EU tends to introduce distortions in the region. Only a common EU policy vis-à-vis the SEE countries could increase their interest in regional co-operation.

13. Mr. Vasile Radu, Director General at the Ministry of Economy and Commerce, Romania, focused on the debate about regionalism versus multilateralism. He pointed out that Romania's main approach for trade liberalisation is based on multilateralism, underlining that such an approach could generate the highest benefits. Against this background, Mr. Radu enumerated the various liberalisation measures undertaken in the context of GATS negotiations. He mentioned that Romania's regulatory regime is more liberal than that reflected in the GATS specific schedules given its extensive autonomous liberalisation commitments and the process of adopting and implementing the EU *acquis*. He also stressed that, in fact, all SEE countries have to adopt the *acquis communautaire* as part of their EU accession objective. The European Agenda and the Stabilisation and Association process are the main driving forces behind the SEE countries' adoption of modern legislation that addresses market failures and ensures social objectives in services sectors. Therefore, an acceleration of the process of adoption of the *acquis communautaire* could be beneficial not only as a catalyst for more rapid progress towards compliance with the criteria for the future EU accession, but also in terms of increased economic efficiency.

14. In summing up the interventions, the Chair pointed out that, according to the OECD paper, at the regional level, regulatory co-operation is of special interest given the limits encountered at the multilateral level in addressing regulatory issues. With respect to market access and national treatment commitments, a synchronised liberalisation policy and combined efforts to promote the region through a *regionally co-*

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1. With respect to regional co-operation in services, the SEE Ministerial Statement requests: "Formulate options, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, to broaden and deepen regional co-operation in the field of services including facilitating the free movement of economic operators, bearing in mind the importance of the development of services for national economies."

*ordinated MFN strategy* seem to be more beneficial. Rather than offering preferential treatment to foreign companies located in the other SEE countries, a better strategy would be to attract firms from outside the region that have the potential to invest and generate development in the region. MFN commitments seem to generate higher benefits. A concerted regional strategy in the framework of multilateral liberalisation negotiations could generate additional bargaining benefits to the region as a whole.

15. Referring to the Secretariat's proposals and related discussions, the Chair noted the concrete proposals for pursuing regional co-operation, in particular the idea of creating a special Services Task Force and using some present initiatives, such as the MARRI (the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative) or Investment Compact initiatives for increasing regulatory cooperation. The EU's major role as a key player in the region was mentioned by all speakers. They underlined the bilateral conditionality promoted by the EU in terms of future integration (which rewards those countries that have successfully mastered the challenges of political and economic reform) and the resulting perception of some SEE governments that regional co-operation is a substitute for EU membership. Participants agreed that the rapid adoption of the *acquis* is the way of getting closer to the SEE's final objective, namely the future accession to the EU. Additionally, the Chair stressed the need to develop a regional culture.

16. Mr. Yanis Tsorbatzoglou, SECIPRO Coordinator, Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, indicated that the creation and implementation of any regional co-operation scheme has to be accompanied by sustained outreach campaigns in order to demonstrate the benefits from such co-operation to the general public and familiarise it with the main issues that need to be addressed. The representative from Russia noted that any regional co-operation initiative has to comply with GATS provisions (mainly Article V of the GATS).

17. Mr. Per Wijkman, Technical Adviser, Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, agreed that the SEE countries look outside rather than inside the region, and that the initiative for regional trade liberalisation also came mainly from outside, reflecting weak political will and regional disparities. He also said that various forms of regional integration must be corroborated with multilateral liberalisation strategies and regional co-operation viewed as a prerequisite for EU membership and a tool to enabling a more rapid implementation of the EU requirements. In this context, Mr. Wijkman indicated that the formal membership negotiations of the EFTA countries with the EU became much shorter due to the EEA negotiations. He concluded that the political will of the SEE countries is extremely important to pursuing regional integration and the countries should be fully aware that this process could well be a shortcut to accession to the EU.

18. Mr. Bernard Hoekman from the World Bank noted that it is important to differentiate intra-regional integration aimed at expanding intraregional trade from intra-regional co-operation that seeks to deal with a regulatory reform program. He stressed that the latter will probably generate the most important gains. Consequently, even if the potential for intra-regional trade is low, the indirect effects of the services agenda focussing on the costs reduction for firms located in SEE markets can be in fact substantial. The services agenda would also have a large impact on improving the competitiveness of the region on the EU and world markets. In terms of strategy to be adopted, the choice is between (a) a comprehensive integration in compliance with GATS provisions (mainly the GATS Article 5) and (b) a more limited regulatory co-operation. As regards the first approach, the potential problems of consistency with Article 5 would disappear if the different types of policies that affect services trade and investment are implemented on an MFN basis. With respect to the second option concerning regulatory co-operation, the establishment of a Services Task Force or special Working Group could be helpful. Such a Service Task Force would be however useful only if it goes beyond only information sharing and undertakes the analysis and peer review to estimate the costs and benefits of alternative options. Mr. Hoekman also stressed that such a Task Force should include not only the representatives of the government and the private sector, but also experts and analysts from think tanks and academia.

19. The representative of Bulgaria, Mrs. Rouslana Stoyanova, Head of Division, Ministry of Economy indicated that, in terms of proposed strategies, her country would support regional initiatives concerning regulatory co-operation and transparency issues. Market access and national treatment liberalisation of services trade should be dealt with at the multilateral level. Also, she indicated that her country supports the idea of establishing a regional forum for consultation and exchange of information on regulatory issues, which could take the form of a Services Task Force under the auspices of the Working Group for Trade Liberalisation and Facilitation in the framework of the Stability Pact. Such a forum could also be used for exchanging information. Also, Bulgaria is supportive of establishing a network of country contact points. The Lithuanian representative informed the participants of the successful promotion of transparency in the context of the Council of the Baltic Sea (which includes Russia) with the establishment of a portal on regulations in all participating countries, which seems to be very useful, especially for SMEs. In concluding this session, the Chairman underlined that, though there are some similarities between the SEE and Baltic regions, for example the importance of EU dimension, some important differences, such as the lack of regional mentality within the SEE countries, prevent simply transposing the procedures and experiences from one region to another.

## **Session II: Regulatory issues related to trade in services**

20. This session addressed in detail the regulatory issues related to multilateral and regional liberalisation of trade in services. While general regulatory principles were addressed in the study on Russia, the regional dimension of regulatory co-operation was explored in the cases of the Baltic States and the SEE countries.

### *a) Regulatory issues: OECD work and the ongoing regulatory reform review of Russia*

21. Mr. Anthony Kleitz, OECD Secretariat, summarised the OECD regulatory principles and the experience of the APEC-OECD Regulatory Co-operation Initiative in setting up a mechanism that addresses transparency and regulatory issues. He described the OECD work on regulatory principles, which emphasises the link between domestic regulation and trade and focuses on the regulatory reform reviews of individual OECD Member Countries and most recently, in Russia. In the area of trade, the analysis is undertaken on the basis of the OECD Efficient Regulation Principles for Market Openness--transparency, non-discrimination, avoidance of unnecessary trade restrictiveness, use of internationally harmonised standards, recognition of equivalence of others countries' regulatory measures and application of competition principles. Since December 2000, the APEC-OECD Regulatory Co-operation Initiative has raised awareness of the importance of regulatory reform. The main proposal of this initiative is the creation of an Integrated Checklist to help countries self-assess their progress in implementing the common (APEC and OECD) principles of regulatory reform. This initiative could serve as an example in setting up a SEE regional mechanism that addresses transparency and regulatory issues.

22. The representative from Macedonia, Ms. Neriman Dzeladini, Head of Department for European Integration, Ministry of Economy, stressed her country's need to receive guidance on regulatory and legal issues, especially with respect to the adoption and implementation of EU directives and regulations. The Russian representative described three recently adopted Russian laws, which ensure the compliance of the country's legal framework with WTO/GATS disciplines and improve considerably the business environment in Russia. These new laws concern currency regulations and controls, the State regulation of foreign trade activities and labour activity in the Russian Federation. Several other regulatory and legal measures are under preparation, she said, and the country has also made progress in putting regional laws and regulations into conformity with its national trade policy. The Secretariat emphasised that, while the creation of an adequate legal framework is indeed a necessary first step, regulatory reform focuses on implementation issues. A business representative from Romania gave some concrete examples that illustrate the importance for the business community of a proper enforcement of predictable laws and

regulations. Several participants noted the problems faced by services providers with inadequate national regulations or lack of enforcement of regulations related to intellectual property rights.

b) *Regulatory issues relevant for regional cooperation in SEE*

23. Ms. Snezana Zubic-Petrovic, Senior Advisor, Federal Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations, Serbia and Montenegro discussed the main regulatory priorities that need to be considered by the SEE countries in opening up their services markets as well as the relevance of other initiatives (such as the APEC-OECD initiative) in setting up a mechanism for addressing regional issues more effectively. She indicated that in the case of Serbia and Montenegro, in addition to the various constraints for regulatory co-operation at the multilateral level mentioned in the OECD study, the absence of a clear strategy in the area of services represents a further problem, especially in the context of the country's WTO accession process. She emphasised that regional co-operation should be viewed as an interim phase in the process towards the WTO and EU accession. In the first phase the accent should be put on regulatory co-operation initiatives. In this context, the creation of a Service Task Force (or Services Experts Group), composed of national services experts, under the auspices of the Working Group for Trade Liberalisation and Facilitation, could represent a useful step. This Group could be responsible for considering the national positions of the SEE countries in a global context and developing regional/multilateral/collaborative responses to common problems and challenges.

24. Ms. Zubic-Petrovic agreed that given the diversity of services sectors and the different policy issues raised by the modes of services supply, it is important to coordinate these efforts with the establishment of national groups of sectoral experts who represent the ministries and agencies with responsibilities in the specific sectors as well as the regulatory, migration and investment authorities in charge of the legal and regulatory frameworks for services trade, migration and FDI in all SEE countries. Other stakeholders such as representatives of the business community have to be involved in the process. As a next step, it is important to create consultation mechanisms that enable the exchange of information preparing the countries for the selection of the regional co-operation approach, be it horizontal or partial, based on sector/mode/task-specific issues. She noted that the creation of such a Services Task Force could be supplemented by a common website, similar to the common portal created by the Baltic States. The Services Task Force should have detailed terms of reference for exploring the possibilities for regulatory co-operation. The sharing of experience with more advanced countries could be also helpful, including the forthcoming capacity building seminars to be undertaken within the OECD project. Referring to the experience in the area of trade in goods, she indicated that despite some sceptical views, regional co-operation in the area of services has also a good chance to succeed.

25. The representative from Macedonia identified sectors such as telecommunications, banking, transport, and energy, as priority areas for regulatory co-operation at the regional level. She also pointed out the usefulness of exchanging information with countries that are in a more advanced stage of implementing regulatory reforms, as it is the case of Macedonia's co-operation with Slovenia in this area. She supported the creation of a Services Task Force, emphasising that this group should initially deal with regulatory issues. Also, given the practical problems in understanding the role of regulatory co-operation in the area of services, she stressed the role of capacity building seminars in supplementing the creation of the Services Task Force.

26. Ms. Liliana Deac, Director at Romania's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, drew attention to several already existing tools, such as the database on Trade and Transport Facilitation, and stressed the importance of using them to avoid duplication. She also supported the creation of a Services Task Force, but stressed the importance of ensuring transparent structures and involving the business community in this process. The idea of a regional Services Task Force that would encourage a regional regulatory system

working in synergy and address practical problems was also supported by participants representing the business community. Ms. Snezana Filipovic, Minister Plenipotentiary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Serbia and Montenegro), reiterated the need for a strong political will to implement regional co-operation and urged the SEE countries to adopt a pragmatic and flexible approach for regional co-operation.

27. Concluding this session, the Chair indicated that there was a clear message concerning the important role of the EU dimension in shaping the transition economies' trade policy. He also underscored a consensus among participants concerning the creation of a SEE Services Task Force that should be responsible for selecting and implementing the options for regional co-operation in services. In the first phase the accent could be put on regulatory co-operation initiatives and creation of national sectoral experts groups.

c) *The EU impact on the service regulatory framework*

28. Mr. Alf Vanags from the Baltic International Centre for Economic Policy discussed key lessons from his analysis of the EU impact on the service regulatory framework in the Baltic countries [CCNM/TD/(2003)7]. He noted that the development of the regulatory framework for services in "new" countries such as the Baltic States has been to some extent easier than in mature economies with more developed service sectors. Compared to the GATS commitments, the adoption of the EU *acquis communautaire* played indeed a key role in shaping the regulatory framework for services in candidate countries, in part because of its mandatory character. However, the absence of the unified institutional model in the EU means that tensions between the competencies of national and EU authorities can arise. According to Mr. Vanags, the EU accession process has not necessarily encouraged the regional coherence as individual countries negotiated separately their accession. However, it could be questioned whether a coordinated strategy of foreign investors, leading, for example, to the dominance of the same investors in the banking sector in the three countries, could be an element creating a regional identity.

29. The representatives of the Baltic States generally agreed that the EU integration process has helped to increase transparency and improve the services regulatory framework in the region and, as a result, their service sector has seen dynamic development. The predominance of foreign ownership, in some cases like telecommunications, quite concentrated does not seem to threaten competitive pressures. It was also underscored by several speakers that the adoption of the EU *acquis communautaire* was a challenging task for the national administrations, but also financially expensive for businesses and especially SMEs. The ongoing single market process in the EU will continue to be demanding for the Baltic countries. A key problem will be to take into account the complexity of the service sector and promote harmonisation, while maintaining flexibility for legitimate regional diversity.

### **Session III: Good practices in intra-regional cooperation in trade in services**

a) *Intra-regional cooperation in the Baltic States*

30. Mr. Eitautas Bartuskevicius, Director, Baltic Consulting Group (Lithuania), specialised in marketing and training activities in the Baltic region, presented his paper, which describes recent developments in intra-regional co-operation in the Baltic States in different sectors, taking into account both government and business-driven initiatives [see CCNM/TD(2003)8]. He underlined that in most cases, the main impetus for regional co-operation came from the governments, but increasingly the private sector has also become involved.

31. Ms. Guoda Stepanoviciene from the Lithuanian Free Market Institute differentiated three main levels of intra-regional co-operation—State initiatives, joint State business initiatives, and business-based initiatives. For State initiatives, success has been mixed, as the negotiations on an FTA among the Baltic

countries had not been finalised. Joint State-business actions, which are usually necessary in sectors in which state involvement remains important, has been quite efficient in promoting regional co-operation in some areas, such as tourism or even education services. However, the persistence of border barriers to trade in sectors such as electricity or railways shows that more efforts are required at this level. The third and increasingly important form of intra-regional co-operation is business-based initiatives, which have developed for instance in business newspapers, television and legal services. Although foreign investors often play a leading role in this area, the Baltic business community is becoming more actively involved, for example in retail trade and tourism. International business co-operation has also been motivated by limited national resources and the need for joint efforts when using the EU structural funds. The limited size of national markets also encourages co-operation among investors. Several Baltic representatives provided concrete examples of regional co-operation, some particularly successful (customs and tourism) and others, such as the effort to establish a regional business school in Riga, less successful. The contribution of the regional Chambers of Commerce was also underlined.

*b) Experience in SEE*

32. Mr. Yanis Tsorbaglou presented the World Bank led Trade and Transport Facilitation Programme in SEE (TTFSE) and commented on the role of the trade facilitating activities in enhancing regional co-operation in SEE. The TTFSE fosters trade by promoting more efficient and less costly trade flows across the countries in SEE and provides EU-compatible customs standards. He showed that the program seeks to reduce non-tariff costs to trade and transport, reduce smuggling and corruption at border crossings, and strengthen and modernise the customs administrations and other border control agencies. This is realised by using a train-the-trainer approach as well as distance learning initiatives. Also, a number of public outreach activities are organised in order to provide information to the general public.

33. Ms. Liliana Deac commented on Romania's experience with the Transport and Trade Facilitation programme. She also addressed some other issues related to the role of the business community in influencing regional co-operation, such as the present and potential role of the Association of the Balkan Chambers and the Black Sea Economic Co-operation. For example, a database was created in the context of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation initiative and serves as a useful tool for sharing information about the participating countries and the business opportunities. She mentioned that the creation of a separate trade group and a tourism group is currently being discussed. The priorities are to increase communication and transparency in the region, and create a common branding for the region. With respect to the proposed Services Task Force, she enumerated sectors such as IT, insurance for business and leasing as being of major importance from a business perspective. The Task Force could be a catalyst to enhance regional culture and increase communication between the existing contact points.

34. Mr. Per Wijkman from the Stability Pact pointed out some similarities between the Baltic countries 10 years ago and SEE today, namely the fact that regional cooperation is initially much more political rather than economically and business-driven. One of the big advantages of the network of free trade agreements in the area is that foreign investors can look at the area as a single market, thus contributing to an increase in the role of foreign businesses in the region. Nevertheless, the experience of the Baltic States shows that in the next stage, local businesses should be better organised. At this stage, in SEE the main lobbying groups are the chambers of commerce of the foreign businesses. Since this is an extremely important step in formulating policies, business and government need to work together. The role of the business community was further emphasised by representatives from Serbia and Montenegro and Romania.

35. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Raed Safadi from the OECD Secretariat indicated that the Baltic region and the SEE countries share a common objective, EU membership. Therefore, the experience of the Baltic States could offer a helpful example to the SEE countries. With respect to the SEE countries, the

OECD presented several options for co-operation in the area of services. The countries have to select the way to move forward and to enforce the chosen mechanisms in order to realise their objectives: EU membership, which is the road to integration to the world economy. Mr Wijkman from the Stability Pact reiterated that it is important that the SEE countries ensure the continuity of the project initiated by the OECD. He stressed that it is the role of the countries in the region to put the results of the OECD studies to use as they are the owners of the process.

36. In summing up the session and the meeting, the Chair noted that given the special characteristics of services, liberalisation commitments need to be complemented with a series of principles related to regulatory reform. He stressed the need to involve the business community in the regulatory process in order to ensure that the rules are clear, predictable and transparent. Finally, he mentioned the important role played by the EU integration process in implementing regulatory reforms in all the transition economies participating in the meeting, underlying the importance of both public and private support to the regulatory reform and market liberalisation processes.

**PARTICIPANTS LIST FOR INFORMAL MEETING OF THE WORKING PARTY: TRADE RELATIONS  
WITH ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION**

**3 December 2003 - 4 December 2003  
OECD, Paris**

<b><u>Chairman / Chairman</u></b>	<p><b>Mr. Luis CARDERERA SOLER</b>          Conseiller Chef de l'Office Économique et Commercial.          Permanent Delegation Spain          22, Avenue Marceau          75008 Paris          France</p> <p>Tel : + 33 (0) 1.44.43.30.31          Fax : + 33 (0) 1 40 70 06 54          Email : luis.carderera@parisocde.ofcomes.mcx.es</p>
<b><u>Belgique / Belgium</u></b>	<p><b>M. Frank DUHAMEL</b>          Secrétaire d'Ambassade          Délégation Permanente          14, rue Octave Feuillet          75116 Paris          France</p> <p>Tel : + 33 (0) 1 56 75 34 56          Fax : + 33 (0) 1 56 75 34 70          Email : frank.duhamel@diplobel.be</p>
<b><u>Bulgarie / Bulgaria</u></b>	<p><b>Mrs. Rouslana STOYANOVA</b>          Head of Division          Ministry of Economy          Multilateral Trade and Economic Policy and Regional          Cooperation Directorate          8, Slqvyanska str.          1000 Sofia          Bulgaria</p> <p>Tel: +359 2 940 7724          Fax : +359 2 981 4915          Email : R.Stojanova@mi.government.bg</p>
<b><u>Corée / Korea</u></b>	<p><b>Mr. Song-Jun OHM</b>          Counsellor          Permanent Delegation to the OECD          2/4 rue Louis David          75016 Paris          France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0) 1.44.05.20.55          Fax: +33 (0) 1.44.05.21.75          Email: songjunohm@hotmail.com</p>
<b><u>Croatie / Croatia</u></b>	<p><b>Mme Bozena GAJICA -UZELAC</b>          Senior Counsellor          Ministry of Economy          Trade Policy and Foreign Economic Relations Department          Ulica grada Vukovara 78          10000 Zagreb          Croatia</p> <p>Tel : 3851 6106 932          Fax : 3851 6109 114          Email : bozena.uzelac@mingo.hr</p>

<p><b><u>Espagne / Spain</u></b></p>	<p><b>Mr. Fernando MIER DURANTE</b>          Chef de Service          Ministère de l'Économie          Sous-Direction de Commerce International de Services et de          Commerce Électronique.          Paseo de la Castellana, 162          28046 Madrid          Spain</p> <p>Tel : + 34 91 583 56 17          Fax : + 34 91 349 52 26          Email : fernando.mier@sscc.mcx.es</p>
<p><b><u>Estonie / Estonia</u></b></p>	<p><b>Mr. Martin LAAN</b>          Attaché          Ministry of Foreign Affairs          Islandi väljak 1          15049 Tallinn          Estonia</p> <p>Tel : +372 6317 200          Fax : +372 6317 288          Email : martin.laan@mfa.ee</p>
<p><b><u>Etats-Unis / United States</u></b></p>	<p><b>Ms. Helen RECINOS</b>          Advisor for Trade and Agriculture          Permanent Delegation to the OECD          19, rue de Franqueville          75116 Paris          France</p> <p>Tel : + 33 (0) 1 45 24 74 28          Fax : + 33 (0) 1 45 24 74 84          Email : recinoshg2@state.gov</p>
<p><b><u>Fédération de Russie / Russian Federation</u></b></p>	<p><b>Mrs. Elena DANILOVA</b>          Director          Ministry of Economic Dev. &amp; Trade          Department for Trade Policy and Multilateral Negotiations          18/1 Ovchinnikovskaya Nab.          113324 Moscow          Russia</p> <p>Tel : +7095 950 18 92          Fax : +7095 950 18 67</p> <p><b>M. Ivan PROSTAKOV</b>          Chef de la Délégation          Délégation Économique et Commerciale de la Russie en France          49 Rue de la Faisanderie          75016 Paris          France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 47 27 51 71          Fax : +33 (0)1 45 53 68 56          Email : rustrade.paris@wanadoo.fr</p>

	<p><b>Ms. Natalia ORESHENKOVA</b>  First Secretary  Ministry for Foreign Affairs  Department for Economic Cooperation  Russia Smolenskaya-Sennaya 32/34  Moscow  Russia</p> <p>Tel : 007 241 28 98  Fax : 007 253 90 88</p> <p><b>Ms. Olga SOKOLKINA</b>  Expert  Ministry of Economic Development and Trade Russia  18/1 Ovchinnikovskaya nab.  113324 Moscow  Russia</p> <p>Tel : 007 095 950 94 76  Fax : 007 095 950 94 76  Email : sokolkina@yandex.ru</p> <p><b>M. Vladimir PECHENEVSKIY</b>  Expert  Délégation Economique et Commercial de la Russie en France  49, rue de la Faisanderie  75116 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 45 53 33 50  Fax : +33 (0)1 45 53 68 56  Email : Rustrade.paris@Wanadoo.fr</p>
<b><u>Finlande / Finland</u></b>	<p><b>Mr. Tuomas TAPIO</b>  Second Secretary  Permanent Delegation to the OECD  6 rue de Franqueville  75116 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 45 24 71 71  Fax : +33 (0)145 20 63 04  Email : tuomas.tapio@formin.fi</p>
<b><u>Grèce / Greece</u></b>	<p><b>Mrs. Sofia DIVI</b>  First Secretary  Permanent Delegation to the OECD  15, Villa Said  75116 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 45 02 24 05  Fax : +33 (0)1 45 00 71 55  Email : s.divi@greece-oecd.org</p>

<b><u>Hongrie / Hungary</u></b>	<p><b>Ms. Ágnes JÁNSZKY</b>  First Secretary  Permanent Delegation to the OECD  140, avenue Victor-Hugo  75116 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : + 33 (0) 1 53 65 65 00  Fax : + 33 (0) 1 47 55 80 60  Email : agnes.janszky@delhongrie-ocde.fr</p>
<b><u>Italie / Italy</u></b>	<p><b>Mr. Claudio PADUA</b>  Attaché aux Affaires Commerciales  Délégation Permanente auprès de l'OCDE  50, rue de Varenne  75007 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : + 33 (0) 1. 44 39 21 58  Fax : + 33 (0) 1. 42 84 08 59  Email : claudio.padua@rappocse.org</p> <p><b>Mr. Natalino LOFFREDO</b>  Head of Unit  DG Trade Policy  Ministry for Foreign Trade  Italy</p> <p>Tel : 0039 06 59 93 25 90  Fax : 0039 06 59 93 26 66  Email: l.loffredo@mincomes.it</p>
<b><u>Kazakhstan / Kazakhstan</u></b>	<p><b>Mr. Vadim SHAKSHIKBAYEV</b>  Chairman  Ministry for Industry and Trade  Transport Tower  Astana 473000  Republic of Kazakhstan</p> <p>Tel : 007 3172 29 90 34  Fax : 007 3172 24 19 01</p> <p><b>Mr. Galimjan AMIROV</b>  First Secretary  Embassy of Kazakhstan in Paris  59, rue Pierre Charon  75008 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 45 61 52 09  Fax : +33 (0)1 45 61 52 01  Email : g.amirov@amb-kazakhstan.fr</p>

<p><b><u>Lettonie / Latvia</u></b></p>	<p><b>Ms. Zaiga LIEPINA</b> Deputy State Secretary Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy Republic of Latvia 55 Brivibas Street LV - 1519 Riga Latvia</p> <p>Tel : +371 7013102 Fax : +371 7280882 Email : liepinaz@lem.gov.lv</p> <p><b>Ms. Inga ERNSTSONE</b> Head of Division Ministry for Foreign Affairs International Trade and Investment Division Brivibasblvd. 36 LV-1395 Riga Latvia Tel : +371 70 16 415 Fax : +371 73 21 588 Email : inga.ernstsone@mfa.gov.lv</p> <p><b>Ms. Diana PUTNINA</b> First Secretary Latvian Embassy 6 Villa Said 75116 Paris France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 53 64 58 18 Email : Diana.Putnina@mfa.gov.lv</p>
<p><b><u>Lituanie / Lithuania</u></b></p>	<p><b>Mrs. Dalia KADISIENE</b> Head of Division Ministry for Foreign Affairs International Economic Cooperation Division 2600 Tumo VAIZGANTO 2 Lithuania</p> <p>Tel : +370 52 362 594 Fax : +370 52 362 586 Email : dalia.kadisiene@urm.lt</p> <p><b>Ms. Rasa ADOMAITIENE</b> Second Secretary Lithuanian Permanent Mission to UN in Geneva 18, avenue du Bouchet 1209 Geneva Switzerland</p> <p>Tel : +41 22 734 51 01 Fax : +41 22 734 50 70 Email : radomaitiene@gkb.com</p>

<b><u>Norvège / Norway</u></b>	<p><b>Ms. Maria T. STORENG</b>  Trainee  Délégation Permanente auprès de l'OCDE  19 rue de Franqueville  75116 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel: +33 (0)1 45 24 97 95  Email: mts@mfa.no</p>
<b><u>Pologne / Poland</u></b>	<p><b>Ms. Katarzyna OYRZANOWSKA</b>  Expert  Ministry of the Economy, Labour and Social Policy  Warsaw  Poland</p> <p>Fax : 0048 22 693 40 28  Email : katoyr@mg.gov.pl</p> <p><b>Mr. Piotr DERWICH</b>  Counsellor  Foreign Economic Policy Department  Ministry of Foreign Affairs  Warsaw  Poland</p> <p>Tel: +48 52 38622  Fax: +48 52 39149</p>
<b><u>République de Moldova / Moldova, Republic Of</u></b>	<p><b>Mr. Octavian CALMIC</b>  Head of WTO Division  Ministry of Economy,  Governmental House, Piata Marii Adunari Nationale 1  MD 2033 Kishinev</p> <p>Tel : +373 22 237249  Fax : +373 22 237650  Email : calmac@moldova.md</p>
<b><u>République Yougoslave de Macédoine / Macedonia, The Former Yugoslav Republic Of</u></b>	<p><b>Ms. Neriman DZELADINI</b>  Head of Department for European Integration  Ministry of Economy of Macedonia  Jurij Gagarin 15  1000 Skopje  FYR Macedonia</p> <p>Tel : +389 2 3093 489  Fax : +389 2 2 3084 472  Email : neriman.dzeladini@economy.gov.mk</p>
<b><u>Roumanie / Romania</u></b>	<p><b>Mr. Vasile RADU</b>  Director General  Ministry of Economy and Commerce  General Directorate for Trade Policies  Str. Ion Campineanu no 16, sector 1  sector 1 Bucharest  Romania</p> <p>Tel : +4021 40 10 502  Fax : +4021 3120 512  Email : vasile.radu@dce.gov.ro</p>

	<p><b>Mr. Florin TUDORIE</b>  Conseiller  Ambassade de Roumanie  5, rue de l'Exposition  75007 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 47 05 10 46  Fax : +33 (0)1 45 50 33 20  Email : florin.tudorie@mae.ro</p>
<p><b><u>Serbie et Montenegro / Serbia and Montenegro</u></b></p>	<p><b>Ms. Snezana ZUBIC-PETROVIC</b>  Head of Department  Federal Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations  WTO, UNCTAD and Commodity Agreements  bul. M. Pupina 2  11070 N Belgrade</p> <p>Tel : +381 11 146 319  Fax : +381 11 311 23 63  Email : snezanaz@fmfer.sv.gov.yu</p> <p><b>Ms. Mila BESTIC</b>  Head of Department  Ministry of International Economic Relations of the Republic of Serbia  Gracacnicka 8  11000 Belgrade</p> <p>Tel : +381 11 3346 112 / 33 46 571  Fax : +381 11 3346 779  Email : mbestic@mier.sr.gov.yu</p> <p><b>Dr. Snezana FILIPOVIC</b>  Minister Plenipotentiary  Ministry for Foreign Affairs  Directorate for Economic, Multilateral Cooperation and Regional Initiatives  24-26 Kneza Milosa  Belgrade</p> <p>Tel : +381113618034  Fax : +381113618041  Email : demric@smip.sv.gov.yu</p> <p><b>Mr. Veselin KOVAC</b>  Advisor  Ministry for International Economic Relations and European Integrations of Montenegro  Ul. Stanka Dragojevic 2  81000 Podgorica</p> <p>Tel : +381 81 242 318  Fax : +381 81 225 591  Email : v.kovac@cg.yu</p>

<p><b><u>Banque Mondiale / World Bank</u></b></p>	<p><b>Mr. Bernard HOEKMAN</b>  The World Bank  1818 H, St. NW  Washington D.C. 20433  United States</p> <p>Tel : +1 202 473 1185  Fax : +1 202 676 9810  Email : Bhoekman@worldbank.org</p>
<p><b><u>Pacte de Stabilité pour l'Europe du Sud-Est / Stability Pact for South East Europe</u></b></p>	<p><b>Mr. Per WIJKMAN</b>  Technical Adviser  Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe  Döbelnsgatan 52, VI  11352 Stockholm  Sweden</p> <p>Tel : +46 8 755 20 56  Email: PER_WIJKAMN@HOTMAIL.COM</p>
<p><b><u>OCDE / OECD</u></b></p>	<p><b>M. Jean-Marie METZGER</b>  Director  Trade Directorate  2, rue André Pascal  75016 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 45 24 89 20  Email : Jean-Marie.METZGER@oecd.org</p> <p><b>Mr. Raed SAFADI</b>  Head of Division  OECD  Trade Directorate  2, rue André Pascal  75016 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 45 24 19 09  Fax : +33 (0)1 44 30 61 59  Email : Raed.SAFADI@oecd.org</p> <p><b>Mr. Anthony KLEITZ</b>  Head of Division  OECD  Trade Directorate  2, rue André Pascal  75016 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 45 24 89 27  Fax : +33 (0)1 44 30 61 62  Email : Anthony.KLEITZ@oecd.org</p>

	<p><b>Mme Blanka KALINOVA</b>  OECD  Trade Directorate  2, rue André Pascal  75016 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 45 24 89 23  Email : blanka.kalinova@oecd.org</p> <p><b>Mr. George HOLLIDAY</b>  OECD  Trade Directorate  2, rue André Pascal  75016 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 45 24 95 30  Email : George.HOLLIDAY@oecd.org</p> <p><b>Ms. Nora Carina DIHEL</b>  OECD  Trade Directorate  2, rue André Pascal  75016 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 45 24 78 11  Fax : +33 (0)1 44 30 61 59  Email : nora.dihel@oecd.org</p> <p><b>Ms. Jacqueline MAHER</b>  OECD  Trade Directorate  2, rue André Pascal  75016 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 45 24 89 12  Fax : +33 (0)1 44 30 61 59  Email : jacqueline.maher@oecd.org</p> <p><b>Mr. Cemal Denizhan EROCAL</b>  OECD  Directorate for Financial, Fiscal, and Enterprise Affairs  2, rue André Pascal  75016 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 45 24 95 65  Email : deniz.erocal@oecd.org</p>
<b><u>Experts</u></b>	<p><b>Mr. Eitautas BARTUSKEVICIUS</b>  CESIM Baltics  Rages st. 27,  Vilnius 2001  Lithuania</p> <p>Tel : +37 0521 51031  Fax : +37 0521 50965  Email : Eitautas@cesim.com</p>

	<p><b>Ms. Liliana DEAC</b>  Director, Foreign Relations Department  Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania and of  Bucharest Municipality  2, Octavian Goga Blvd.  Bucharest  Romania</p> <p>Tel : +40 21 322 95 16  Fax : +40 21 322 95 17/42  Email : deac@ccir.ro</p> <p><b>Prof. Vladimir GLIGOROV</b>  Research Economist  The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies -  WIIW  Oppolzergrasse 6  A-1010 Vienna  Austria</p> <p>Tel : +43 1 533 66 10 23  Fax : +43 1 533 66 10 50</p> <p><b>Mr. Sébastien MIROUDOT</b>  Research Fellow  Groupe d'Economie Mondiale de Sciences Po  2, Square de Luynes  75007 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +33 (0)1 45 49 55 21  Fax : +33 (0)1 45 49 72 57  Email : sebastien.miroudot@sciences-po.fr</p> <p><b>Ms. Berenice PICCIOTTO</b>  External Consultant  65, rue Saint-Sabin  75011 Paris  France</p> <p>Tel : +6 84 05 16 54  Email : picciottob@yahoo.com</p> <p><b>Ms. Inese SADAUSKA</b>  Expert  Ticon Baltica  Skolas Street 11  LV 1010 Riga  Latvia</p> <p>Tel : +371 7289 647  Fax : +371 7820 178  Email : isaduaska@rbi.lv</p>
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	<p><b>Mr. Niels SCHNECKER</b> Managing Senior Partner Schnecker van Wyk and Pearson Blvd ion Ionescu de la Brad n°4 71231 Bucharest Romania</p> <p>Tel : +40 21 230 90 00 Fax : +40 21 230 77 55 Email : niels@investments.ro</p> <p><b>Ms. Guoda STEPONAVICIENE</b> Vice-President Lithuanian Free Market Institute 16a J. Jasinskio 2001 Vilnius Lithuania</p> <p>Tel : +852 552 6262 Fax : +852 526 258 Email : guoda@lrinka.lt</p> <p><b>Mr. Yanis TSORBATZOGLOU</b> SECIPRO Coordinator Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe</p> <p>Tel : +302 310 398 259 Fax : +302 310 398 258 Email : yatso@act.edu</p> <p><b>Mr. Alf VANAGS</b> Expert Baltic International Centre for Economic Policy Studies (BICEPS) Alberta Iela 13 Riga LV-1010 Latvia</p> <p>Tel : +371 70 39 317 Fax : +371 70 39 318 mail : alf@biceps.org</p>
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