

**The speech of Mr. Stefan Odagiu, Deputy Prime-minister, Minister of Economy of
the Republic of Moldova for the ministerial meeting on trade
(Sophia, 20th of June, 2002)**

Dear Mr. chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Honorable Audience,

I am very much delighted to participate in this ministerial meeting. I would like to bring my sincere gratitude to the Stability Pact's Secretariat and to the Government of Bulgaria for the opportunity to share information, ideas dealing with the future perspective cooperation with a view of fulfilling the undertaken commitments.

Implementing the commitments, undertaken by the Republic of Moldova on the 27th of June 2001 at the time when the Memorandum of Understanding on the trade liberalization and facilitation was signed, a draft model of the Agreement has been sketched and has been distributed through diplomatic channels to signatory countries in April this year.

Likewise, this document has been made available to the members of the Working Group at Washington in May, current year. This draft agreement corresponds all in all to WTO's requirements as well as to the recommendations made by the Stability Pact's experts. In general almost of countries responded to the initiative of the Republic of Moldova. The Republic of Yugoslavia backed up our draft with some minor modifications that particularly referred to the MFN treatment applied to trade relationships that during the transitional period will not be treated under a free trade principle.

At their turn, Croatian part presented for discussion its own draft of agreement that has been examined and totally supported by Moldova's authorities.

Concurrently, it is noticeable that in some technical aspects the draft of the Croatian side is a great deal more extensive than that of ours. Along with the trade in goods and

services, the document contains provisions regarding investments and special safeguarding measures. In these conditions, I would like to stress that the Agreement on Trade Liberalization and Facilitation presented by Croatia does not contradict the economic interests of the Republic of Moldova, and on this reason we regard the beginning of bilateral negotiations on the annexes to that agreement as a stringent necessity.

Therewith, taking into consideration the approaching deadlines for the negotiations and signing of the FTAs, we request from the signatory parties to accelerate the discussion process on the draft agreement remitted by the Republic of Moldova and to start negotiations on its provisions at Chisinau, starting with the coming July.

In these conditions, the Republic of Moldova endorses its readiness to implement the commitments undertaken on the time of signing the Memorandum of Understanding and as an outcome of the latest to create a friendly environment for the development of trade in the region.

Thank you very much for attention.