



ReSPA

Regional School
of Public Administration

BUILDING TOGETHER
GOVERNANCE FOR THE FUTURE

Seasonal School on EU Accession Negotiation – Chapter 29: Customs Union

21-24 June 2021 (Online)

ReSPA activities
are funded by the
European Union



Background

The 2021 Seasonal School on EU Accession Negotiations is hosted by the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), in cooperation with European Commission DG TAXUD "Taxations & Customs" and CEFTA Secretariat.

This School is devoted to Chapter 29 – Customs Union. The event is a unique opportunity for teams dealing with EU accession negotiations from across Western Balkans administrations to come together, connect online, exchange views, network, share ideas, and discuss current and future challenges related to the accession process in specific Chapter 29.

In this regard, the specific purpose of the Seasonal School is to **improve the knowledge and professional skills** of participants dealing with EU affairs related to the Chapter 29 – Customs Union of EU Accession Negotiations process and to provide them the opportunity to network with colleagues from the region who already developed important experiences in negotiations.

What to expect?

This Seasonal school on EU accession negotiation is particularly devoted to challenges in accession negotiation of Chapter 29 – Customs Union. **This Chapter is in cluster 3 Competitiveness and inclusive growth.** Two of ReSPA Members (Montenegro and Serbia) already negotiate accession to the EU. **There were no opening benchmarks for this Chapter in the case of Montenegro and Serbia. Both countries have three closing benchmarks, similar in structure and content:** to continue to adopt legislation in the remaining areas requiring further alignment, apply its customs rules consistently and efficiently across its customs offices, and reach sufficient progress in developing all the required IT interconnectivity systems. At the same time, two ReSPA Members (Albania and North Macedonia) are waiting on opening the negotiation process, this topic is very interesting for their administrations. Also, for the representatives of governments of BiH and Kosovo* this topic is very attractive.

All presentations at the School will be delivered for the most relevant **experts from DG TAXUD**, and in addition to that, **CEFTA experts will present the results of the work of this organization in the area of trade facilitation.**

The objectives of this ReSPA Seasonal School on EU Accession Negotiations:

- To deepen the knowledge on the accession negotiation process and negotiation technics, and understanding of the issues covered by particular negotiation Chapter 29 – Customs Union;
- To equip participants with concrete experience from Montenegro and Serbia with lessons learned on dealing with opening negotiation and work on closing benchmarks related to Chapter 29;
- To build connections among participants for future regional cooperation, because the improvement of regional cooperation is fundamental to the accession process of the regional aspirants for EU membership.

Who shall attend?

This Seasonal School will bring together representatives of governmental institutions (Ministries of Finance, Customs offices, Coordination structures established for the EU accession negotiations process from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, senior to mid-level professionals). They have or will have an active role in ongoing or future accession negotiation processes. The participants from Montenegro and Serbia will take an active part in presenting their experiences.

Joining us online

Due to the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, this year Seasonal School on Accession Negotiations will be organized online through the Zoom Platform.

Zoom Norms

To make the convening as fruitful as the in-person one would have been, we are hoping you will contribute by following a few simple Zoom norms:

- Find a quiet place with no distractions to participate in the sessions.
- Avoid sitting with your back to the window or having any backlights.
- Avoid the webcam looking up at you. Stack a bunch of books under your laptop until you can look at that camera directly, straight ahead.
- When joining a Zoom meeting, please use your full name and Country in the title so that speakers and other attendees can identify you easily.
- Microphones are sensitive, particularly at close range. Use the mute button if you will not be speaking for some time.
- Please use the chat function to make comments and ask questions throughout the sessions.

Confidentiality and Social Media policy

All sessions of the Seasonal School will be recorded, and specific sections might be posted online in ReSPA channels, including, but not limited to the ReSPA website, ReSPA Social Media, in line with ReSPA privacy policy. Participants can share non-confidential information that was discussed during the Seasonal School, but not who shared it or who was attending the Seasonal School, in order to preserve their confidentiality and increase openness of discussion.

The same principle should extend to any social media post participants would like to make about the Seasonal School. ReSPA encourages the participants to share that they are attending this event, but we would like to ask you to please refrain from sharing any confidential information that was discussed or any of the other attendees' identity.

This is where all our sessions will take place. During breaks, we will create breakout rooms to facilitate small group conversations or one-on-one meetings between participants.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

DAY I: Monday, 21 June 2021

- 10.00 – 10.05** **Welcome and Introduction**
- Dragan Djurić, ReSPA Programme Manager – Coordinator
 - The representative of the European Commission (TBC)
- 10.05 – 10.50** **EU Binding Tariff Information.**
- Frank Vandenborre (TAXUD, European Commission)
- 10:50 – 11:10** **Discussion**
- 11:10 – 11:55** **CEFTA Database of BTIs issued by the Customs Administrations of its parties. What´s next?**
- Edna Karadža, SEED and Project Manager
- 11:55 – 12:15** **Discussion**

DAY II: Tuesday, 22 June 2021

- 10:00 – 10:45** **Chapter 29 (Customs Union acquis) closing benchmarks. What are the legislative, administrative, and IT requirements for a candidate country? Lessons learned from past enlargements.**
- Antonio Blanco (TAXUD, European Commission)
- 10.45 – 11:00** **Discussion**
- 11.00 – 11.45** **Experiences from Serbia or Montenegro (both countries have opened negotiations on Chapter 29)**
- Stojanka Milošević and Azra Bećović, Customs Administration of Montenegro
 - Representative of Serbia
- 11.45 – 12.15** **Discussion**

DAY III: Wednesday, 23 June 2021

10:00 – 11:00 **EU Tariffs suspensions and quotas**

- Emmanuel Kokolakis (TAXUD, European Commission)

11.00 – 11.30 **Discussion**

11.30 – 12.15 **Tariff suspension and quota management in the Western Balkans**

- Experiences from the region

12.15 – 12.45 **Discussion**

DAY IV: Thursday, 24 June 2021

10.00 – 10.45 **The Pan Euro Mediterranean transitional rules of origin**

- G. Dorey, A. Marinescu (TAXUD European Commission)

10.45 – 11:00 **Discussion**

11:00 – 11:45 **The impact of the PEM transitional Rules of Origin for CEFTA parties.**

- Olivera Ceni Bardiqi, Junior Technical Expert on Trade Facilitation

11.45 – 12.15 **Discussion**