

LSE RESEARCH ON SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE (LSEE) & CEFTA

BEST PAPER COMPETITION

INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE: OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CEFTA AND THE COMMON REGIONAL MARKET

Since the signing of the CEFTA agreement in 2006, the Free Trade Agreement has played an important role in promoting international trade in South Eastern Europe. It has contributed to economic integration, trade facilitation, the growth of regional trade flows and created a unified economic space attractive to foreign direct investors and mobility of professional service providers. Intra-regional trade has increased substantially in the fifteen years since the signing of the agreement while the share of trade within the region has also been on the rise. Trade liberalisation within CEFTA has promoted market competition and fostered integration across sectors and industries in the region. It has also encouraged FDI flows both from outside the region and from within. Moreover, CEFTA has facilitated information sharing and collaboration with regard to customs and trade policies more generally, thus encouraging political dialogue, institutional approximation and capacity building among the Parties of the region.

As elsewhere, the Covid-19 pandemic has adversely affected economic activity and trade in the region. This experience has highlighted the important role of intra-regional trade and the need for further regional cooperation and trade liberalisation. Within the proposed Common Regional Market new mechanisms to facilitate trade are being developed including mutual recognition of certificates and testing for industrial and agricultural products, Authorised Economic Operators, and mutual recognition of professional qualifications and financial services. New initiatives related to free trade in services, free movement of persons, regional e-commerce, and Green Lanes to ensure unimpeded flow of goods during the COVID-19 crisis are being launched. Further measures are being taken to remove non-tariff barriers and support competition regulators.

To celebrate 15 years of the CEFTA agreement, LSEE, the Research Unit on South Eastern Europe at the London School of Economics, and CEFTA are launching a paper competition on the theme "*International Trade in Southeastern Europe: Obstacles and Opportunities for CEFTA and the Common Regional Market*". We invite original scientific papers that address any issues relevant to the theme of the competition. Suggested topics include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Trade liberalisation and economic growth
- Institutional quality and regional trade flows
- Role of CEFTA in creating the Common Regional Market

- Trade in agricultural goods in the CEFTA region
- Trade in services (tourism, postal and financial services)
- Mutual recognition of professional qualifications
- Regional trade, the digital economy and e-commerce
- Trade facilitation and risk management
- Competition, state aid and non-tariff barriers
- The impact of CEFTA on bilateral and regional trade and investment flows
- Regional trade policies and the COVID-19 pandemic
- Bilateral investment flows and regional value chains
- Legal, social and environmental issues of trade in the CEFTA region
- The political economy of CEFTA and the EU integration progress
- Comparisons with FTAs in other regions

The competition is open to papers from all fields of the social sciences, including but not restricted to economics, geography, development, political science, public administration, law, management, business studies, environmental studies, industrial relations, and international studies. The competition is open to researchers holding, or studying towards, a PhD (doctorate) degree who are currently affiliated to an accredited higher education institution, or an equivalent public or private research institution or organisation. Co-authored papers are eligible but, to be considered for the award, the lead author should meet all eligibility criteria. Papers should be of a standard academic format, in line with disciplinary practices, and should not exceed 10,000 words (including tables, footnotes and references).

Papers will be reviewed by a Selection Committee of academics affiliated to LSEE and coordinated by the CEFTA Secretariat. One 'best paper' award (worth €3,000) will be awarded to the paper that is deemed to be of the highest quality on the basis of scientific rigour, clarity of analysis and presentation, and policy relevance. The scientific committee will also grant up to two commendation awards (worth €2,000 and €1,000) for runner-up papers. The decisions of the committee are final. Winning authors (one per paper) will be invited to present their papers and receive their awards during the CEFTA Week in Skopje in November/December 2021. Submitted papers will be considered for publication, with the agreement of the authors, in the discussion paper series [LSEE-CEFTA Research Papers on International Trade](#) and in a special issue of the refereed academic journal [Economic](#)

[Annals](#) published by the Faculty of Economics at the University of Belgrade, subject to standard refereeing practices.

Guidelines for submission:

Full papers should be submitted electronically in anonymised form **by 30 September 2021 (16:00 GMT)** to lsee.ceftanetwork@lse.ac.uk. The subject line of the email should read “CEFTA@15 competition” only, and all application material should be in MS Word format.

Terms & Conditions

The award will be made by a Selection Committee comprising academics from LSE Research on South Eastern Europe solely on the basis of the submitted paper and against the following criteria: relevance and impact (for/on policy developments in the context of CEFTA – weight: 20%), technical quality of the paper (setting up hypothesis, clarity of the work, methods and techniques appropriately applied, etc – weight 50%), novelty (contribution to better understanding the topics – weight: 10%), results and conclusions (quality of discussion and presentation, validation of the conclusions – weight: 15%) and presentation (is the paper well organised and clear – weight: 5%). Applicants must provide a separate title page containing the title of the paper, a 250-word abstract together with up to five keywords, the names of the author(s) and their institutional affiliation, contact details indicating corresponding author, and short bio of each of the author(s).

The Selection Committee is solely responsible for approving the eligibility of applications and reserves the right to request additional information from the applicants. In all cases, the decisions of the Selection Committee will be final. The Committee reserves the right not to make any awards or to adjust the number of awards it makes.

The successful authors will be invited to present their paper in the proceedings of the CEFTA Week, which will take place in Skopje in November/December 2021. The costs of one author of each winning paper will be covered by the CEFTA Secretariat if the event is held *in situ*. Successful authors are required to submit their paper for publication to the [LSEE-CEFTA Research Papers on International Trade series](#) and to undertake the necessary revisions, to the extent possible, following a review process. Copyright of the original work will remain with the author(s). LSEE and the CEFTA Secretariat retain the right to publicise a summary of the results, with full acknowledgement to the author(s) of the research, on their websites and other publicity outlets.

The author(s) should provide full acknowledgement to the LSEE/CEFTA award in all future publicity and outputs stemming from the paper receiving the award.