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The policy of developing and countries with economy in transition requires a focus on raised efficiency and productivity, alongside more efficient sustainable use of the available natural resources; moving towards higher value-added production processes; and identification of sectoral priorities that have potential for growth as well as on needs of enterprises that will have the greatest impact on international competitiveness of their economies. Only in this way, through the support of companies and increasing their competitiveness, enabling better access to financial resources, improving the business environment and better compliance of the education system with labor market needs, it is possible to achieve long-term sustainable growth.

Challenges have an impact on output performances of companies which are, among others, related to trade integration (reduction of the foreign trade deficit and stronger promotion of exports, productivity (resource efficiency) and innovation (strengthening of linkages between science and industry aiming to create and implement innovation). Additionally, better exploitation of available resources, and development of high value added new products within industrial sectors is necessary, as well as improvement of institutional infrastructure and better connections and organization within small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as those are key to driving growth and innovation in service economies.

In particular, some of the challenges are the following:

- ✓ To improve the business environment through the improvement of the existing regulatory framework by reducing administrative procedures and formalities, abolishing discriminatory requirements such as nationality or residence requirements, where it is necessary, abolishing particularly restrictive requirements such as economic needs tests that require businesses to prove to the authorities that there is a demand for their services and reviewing other burdensome requirements which may not always be justified, such as territorial restrictions;
- ✓ To ensure involvement of the private sector in preparation of the relevant legislation in order to provide the basis for a broad understanding of a “market-based approach” to enhancing productive capacities;
- ✓ To valorize the potential for the development of primary agricultural production and, in this regard, to expand the range of processing production and to establish an appropriate link to the development of rural areas;
- ✓ To create the preconditions for launching production with higher stages of processing and joint market entry, in order to create greater value through the production and export of market competitive and innovative products of high degree of finalization;
- ✓ To improve the management of resources (natural and public) as important factors of the economy;
- ✓ Foreign Direct Investment is a necessary development component, but they are needed "smart" orientation, for example in the information and communication technology sector;
- ✓ Transport, housing and construction, infrastructure and environment are in focus as a precondition for economic growth;

- ✓ The level and structure of the labor force qualification needs to be improved and adapted to the needs of the labor market, meaning economic development;
- ✓ A dual education system needs to be strengthened and, therefore, to "produce" a more qualified workforce;
- ✓ To lead a just social protection policy and strengthen the healthcare system; and
- ✓ Public administration should be in the function of creating a favorable business environment by using information and communication technologies, enhancing competitiveness and attracting foreign direct investments.

The role of services in economic growth and job creation calls for greater government attention to improving services' performance and furthering their expansion. Most importantly, this implies reforms to domestic regulation, liberalization of international trade and investment, and a reorientation of relevant government programmes to meet the needs of service industries more effectively.

Services also play an important intermediary role. Well-established financial, transportation and distribution systems, for example, are critical for the smooth functioning of all businesses and, for that matter, governments. In the field of international trade, although services themselves are not as widely traded as manufactured goods, they are associated with, and support, every export and import transaction. In the absence of such services, international trade would grind to a halt. Additionally, modern manufacturing is a heavy user of services inputs, and its competitiveness relies on access to state-of-the-art suppliers at the best price. The OECD Trade in Value Added (TiVA) database shows that services represent more than 50% of the value added in gross exports, and over 30% of the value added in exports of manufacturing goods – services are deeply imbedded in manufactured goods being traded all over the world today. For example, better services provision, particularly in ICT, logistics, and financial services, has reduced the trade and coordination costs associated with greater geographic dispersion of global value chains (GVCs). More services components is likely to strengthen the competitiveness of an entire value chain, including both production and services activities, because more people are able to specialize in certain tasks along the chain and coordination is more effective. High-quality ICT infrastructure—fast, reliable telecommunications networks and broadband access—has become more universally widespread, reducing the costs of coordination for GVCs. Some services are needed early in the chain (e.g., research and development); some are needed at the end (retailing, maintenance and repair); and some are needed at every stage (telecommunications and financial services). Individual manufacturers often require a full spectrum of services.

Inappropriate regulation makes firms less likely to innovate and to adapt the quality and mix of goods and services to changing consumer needs. The direct results of inappropriate regulation in a particular sector are likely to be lower productivity, higher costs, higher prices, misallocation of resources, lack of innovation and poor service quality.

The Government of Montenegro is making efforts towards increasing the level of competitiveness for international investment market, therefore special attention in particular to improving the efficiency of the state administration, reducing the costs of administrative procedures and shortening their duration. In this regard, the Government of Montenegro at the session of June 1st 2017 adopted the Decision on the establishment of the Competitiveness Council, with the main task of coordinating activities in the implementation of the priority reform measures defined in the strategic development documents, which are in the function of removing key obstacles for greater competitiveness and faster economic growth of Montenegro.

In the part of regulatory reforms, the application of the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) is continuous, with an aim to set prerequisites in order to reduce, resolve or even prevent the new barriers from happening. In this regard, from the formal introduction of the RIA into the Montenegrin regulatory system on January 1, 2012 to December 1, 2017, the Ministry of Finance gave over 2,000 opinions on draft acts and the accompanying forms of the report on the conducted analysis of the RIA, from both aspects, implications on the business environment and the impact on the state budget.

In the area of implementing the recommendations of the “Guillotine Regulations”, the recommendations are being continuously implemented, where the level of implementation, from the first adopted Action Plan (May 2012) to September 31, 2017, amounted to 1,231 out of the total accepted 1,446 recommendations, which represents a level of fulfillment of 85.13%. It is a project that refers to comprehensive analysis of Montenegrin regulations, from the aspect of simplifying administrative procedures, improving the business environment, as well as faster and better realization of citizens' rights and obligations before the state administration bodies. The specificity of the Montenegrin Guillotine Regulations, in relation to the countries in region, is the comprehensiveness, because in addition to a number of economic regulations and standards, it also concerns the reform of the misdemeanor system, the inspection procedure and the equalization of administrative procedures.

Recognizing investment policy as one of the key elements for development and improvement of the country's economy, amendments to the 2014 Foreign Investment Act have been made to improve the investment environment of Montenegro, meaning greater inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI), as well as secure reliable FDI information, in order to monitor progress which will definitely contribute to creating conditions for higher inflows of domestic and foreign investments. Potential for economic growth has been recognized in the sectors of tourism, energy, transport, agriculture and manufacturing Industry, which are identified as strategic priorities for development of Montenegro.

Montenegro is a WTO member since April 2012 and it is a signatory of Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with the EU, CEFTA 2006, EFTA, Ukraine and Turkey. Those agreements define approach to the commodity market, except in agreement with Ukraine, which has a broader scope and regulates trade in goods and services. Furthermore, we have finalized negotiation on enhancing the scope of the FTA with Turkey to the market access of agricultural goods and trade in services.

Recognises the importance of trade facilitations, the 2018–2022 Trade Facilitation Strategy, with the detailed Action Plan for its implementation, was adopted in 2018 for the purposes of simplification, harmonization and reduction of the duration and costs of procedures in cross-border trade. In this way, all the obligations laid down in the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and CEFTA Additional Protocol 5 were consolidated, including the obligations related to trade facilitation arising from the process of Montenegro's accession to the EU. Implementation of the trade facilitation measures set out in the strategy will lead to the elimination of administrative inefficiencies and bottlenecks in cross-border trade, which is expected to have an indirect positive impact on the growth of exports and a direct impact on boosting economic competitiveness. Besides the Trade Facilitation Strategy, trade facilitation measures are closely connected and will have an impact on implementation of the measures set out by the Integrated Border Management Strategy and the Business Strategy of the Customs Administration. Moreover, from the perspective of Montenegro's accession to the EU, implementation of trade facilitation measures is particularly important for meeting the requirement of Negotiating Chapter 30 – External Relations, Chapter 29 – Customs Union, Chapter 12 – Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policy and Chapter 24 – Justice, Freedom and Security, which addresses border controls. For that reason, all measures will be implemented in full compliance with the EU model. In addition to this, the National Committee for Trade Facilitation has been established in 2015. The Committee functions on the co-presidency basis between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy. The Committee

consists of representatives of 17 different bodies while 6 of them are representatives of various private sector associations. Its role is to monitor and coordinate reforms related to trade facilitation at the national level.

In order to fulfill the basic goals of agricultural development in Montenegro, which would ultimately need to have a sustainable and competitive sector, which encourages balanced economic development in rural areas support, while maintaining the stability of rural population income and maintenance stability in food supply produced by the highest standards of food safety, Montenegro continued to invest in the agriculture sector. Annual national support through measures of Agro budget has continued the amount of support in the period 2012-2017 have increased, and it has been harmonized with the WTO Agreement on Agriculture.

In addition to the funds that are financed from national funds, Montenegro has, since 2012, started the project of supporting investments in agricultural farms, the so-called MIDAS Project (Montenegro Institutional Development and Agriculture Strengthening) implemented with World Bank, by co-financing principle. Within this project they are mostly supported investments in the construction of new facilities, the purchase of machinery, the modernization of production, and the level of support amounted to 6.47 million euros. In the continuation of the MIDAS project, for the preparation of agricultural manufacturers for the implementation of rural development programs (IPARD program – Instrument for Pre- Accession Assistance in Rural Development), the Ministry, with the support of the World Bank and European Union, implements the IPARD like. Through the implementation of the project, support has been provided the amount of EUR 3.6 million, of which EUR 2.7 million is financed from EU funds.

In addition to aforementioned and in order to increase competitiveness on the national and international market, as well as to increase the export capacities of the Montenegrin economy, the Ministry of Economy carries out financial and non-financial support measures. During 2019, the Ministry of Economy will implement the "Program for improving the competitiveness of the economy", which aims to develop business entities and increase their competitiveness, which should create a strong, competitive and export-oriented economy. The Program for improving the competitiveness of the economy for 2019 envisages the implementation of program lines of financial support:

1. Program line for innovation promotion,
 2. A program line for the introduction of international standards,
 3. Software line for the modernization of the manufacturing industry,
 4. Cluster Development Program Line,
 5. Program line for incentives for direct investments,
 6. Software development line for crafts,
- two Non-Financial Support Program lines:
7. Program line for providing mentoring services,
 8. Program line for the development of entrepreneurship,
- as well as two program lines, which will be simultaneously promoted and implemented:
9. The Business Zones Regulation, and
 10. Promotion of increasing the competitiveness of products and services.

The total funds for the implementation of program lines in 2019 amounts € 1,64 million. In order to respond to the demands of the economy, and support those activities and types of business for which entrepreneurs have shown the highest interest, in order to enhance their competitiveness and productivity, budget re-directing between the program lines is enabled; the volume of documentation submitted is reduced, and one significant part will be obtained by the Ministry ex officio from other

state bodies; applicants will have the opportunity to supplement the documentation, and the Public Call will be open almost by the end of the year, so that all users who meet the criteria can carry out their activities.

In order to enable Montenegrin companies to "enter" and position on the international market, it is necessary to be competitive in the local market, to quickly adopt new technologies, to have an accelerated cycle of production, quality products, to be flexible in changing the business companies, to know other markets and characteristics of their demand. **Therefore, the placement of products and services is one of the biggest challenges for manufacturers in the conditions of growing competition in the open market.** Recognizing the difficulties encountered by producers in overcoming challenges in the segment of product placement, and on the basis of common results that are continually realized in improving production and competitiveness, the Government of Montenegro, in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro and in partnership with retail chains and producers, in 2018, launched a program for promoting products called "Kupujmo domaće - Buy Homemade", which aims to find as many competitor products as possible at the domestic market made by both, large and small producers.

It is evident that when entering the foreign markets, Montenegrin companies continue to face various obstacles such as: lack of information on markets, the problem of finding potential customers and partners, procedures, etc. In addition, they are faced with more complex rules and procedures of foreign trade operations and the challenges of harmonization with foreign law and technical regulations in export markets (e.g. binding rules of contract law, customs procedures, technical regulations and standards). To this end, within the framework of the Strategy for the Development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Montenegro 2018-2022, within the strategic objective 4 "Strengthening the competitiveness of the economy", measures for stimulation/promotion of exports are envisaged, of which:

- Support for participation in international markets;
- Providing information and educational support on international markets;
- Encouraging MSME to engage in international public procurement;
- Strengthening economic diplomacy in the process of establishing contacts with potential business partners and increasing exports;
- Promoting and providing advisory support for business improvement through digitization;
- Promote the use of e-commerce in MSME business;
- Promotion of the introduction and application of quality standards in business; and
- Strengthening activities to promote the implementation of intellectual property rights.

Support to small and medium-sized enterprises for the purpose of their internationalization and expansion into new markets includes: presence and presentation at foreign fairs, advisory services for placing a particular product or service on the new market, participation in various international events, conferences and business meetings. We also emphasize the active participation of the European Entrepreneurship Network, which includes the provision of practical information and assistance to MSMEs in order to find partners more easily in international markets.

Also, the overall more favorable business environment will stimulate domestic and foreign investments in all areas of Montenegro to increase export potential, stimulate creativity, strengthen the recognition of Montenegrin products and services, and better position them in the market, and enable the creation of new jobs thus contributing to the economic and regional development of Montenegro. This is one of

the ways in which we want to get closer to businessmen, where through long-term effects we will have a more competitive, innovative and export-oriented economy.

If we speaking about the undertaken international commitments, such as WTO GATS commitments, Montenegro has undertaken commitments in all of the 12 sector groups listed in the Services Sectoral Classification List, and in over 80% of its subsectors. Horizontal limitations in its schedule of specific commitments under the GATS relate to public utilities, limitations on branches, agencies and representative offices, and subsidies. Regarding mode 4, it has taken commitments on intra-corporate transferees, business visitors, and contractual service suppliers.

In most cases, Montenegro's schedule of specific commitments does not contain any sector-specific limitations on market access or national treatment under any of the four modes of supply. Montenegro has taken partial commitments for legal services¹ and services incidental to agriculture, hunting and forestry, fishing, and energy distribution.² Moreover, Montenegro has undertaken a number of "additional commitments" in its schedule. Under communication services, it incorporated the obligations of the reference paper on regulatory principles for basic telecommunications. It also undertook additional commitments in the form of a reference paper on postal and courier services, relating to such aspects as the prevention of anti-competitive practices, universal service and the independence of the regulatory body. This shows the level of openness of Montenegrin market to the WTO members, namely more than 160 members.

The activities in reducing barriers to trade in services include harmonization with the acquis communautaire in the fields related to the free provision of services and protection of competition. In that context, the important activity was the adoption of the Action plan for transposition of the Services Directive in the internal market in June 2015 for period from 2015-2018. Additionally, by the adoption of the horizontal Law on Services in 2017, which transposes the fundamental provisions of the Services Directive into the national legislation, Montenegro establishes a general and legal framework for the services that the Directive refers to. Since the services market very dynamic, this will also ensure the rules for its development and for the emerging services.

Action plan for transposition of the Services Directive in the internal market covers the following sectors:

- I. Sector of trade
- II. Sector of crafts
- III. Sector of civil engineering
- IV. Sector of tourism
- V. Sector of business services
- VI. Sector of Agriculture and Fisheries
- VII. Sector of Education and Sports
- VIII. Sector of culture and media
- IX. Sector of Environment and communal activities

¹ For legal services, Montenegro has taken commitments on consultancy on foreign, international law and domestic law.

² Commitments on services incidental to agriculture, hunting and forestry; services incidental to fishing; and services incidental to energy distribution cover advisory and consulting services.

The relevant legislation coming from the sectors above is amended in a period 2015 – 2018 in order to be aligned with the Services Directive provisions. Namely, 13 laws and 13 by-laws that were fully aligned with the obligations from the Action Plan and 9 laws from the AP were partially implemented.

Based on the SD provisions one of the planned activities in the upcoming period is establishment **of the Point of single contact for services (PSC)** - an e-government portal that allows service providers to get the information they need and complete administrative procedures online. The PSC will be established in cooperation with the Working team for the establishment of the PSC on services (www.euprava.me) to allow future entrepreneurs and existing businesses to easily obtain online all relevant information relating to their activities and complete all the procedures online. The legal grounds for PSC establishment are in the Service Directive 2006/123/EC (Article 6) and in the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council 2005/36/EC of 7 September 2005, as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and Regulation (EU) No. 1024/2012 on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System (Article 57). The aim of the PSCs is to help the European service sector reap the benefits of the Single Market by making national information on rules and formalities, and national procedures available online, including national procedures for the recognition of professional qualification for pursuing regulated professions. The establishment of the Montenegrin PSC would take into account the recommendations and best practices.

With regards to the international cooperation, one of the recent activities in the in the Western Balkans Six (WB6) is Multi-annual Action Plan (MAP) for a Regional Economic Area (REA), endorsed at the Trieste Summit of 12 July 2017, which puts forward a strategic joint agenda for the Western Balkan economies to further regional economic cooperation with a view to unleash the potentials for growth, create conditions for better, transparent and predictable investment climate and improve the overall economic competitiveness of the WB6 economies. The actions introduced in the MAP REA are expected to be implemented until 2020, with some extensions until 2023, focusing on four key components: Trade, Investment, Mobility and Digital Integration.

The implementation of the actions listed is intended to result in a CEFTA rules-based and EU compliant Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans Six. This will enable unobstructed flow of goods, services, capital and highly skilled labour, making the region more attractive for investment and commerce, accelerating convergence with the EU and bringing prosperity to all its citizens. The Regional Economic Area is based on the principles of non-discrimination, creating a level playing field for all within the region.

The question is what the background is. The Western Balkans stands at an important juncture. While the previous decade had brought the region's per capita GDP almost 8.5% closer to the EU average, this convergence has since halted to a standstill, narrowing the gap by only 1% in the first half of this decade. Reform efforts are underway in most of the economies in the region to address internal structural weaknesses, but considerable growth potential can be unleashed through closer economic integration. Growth strategies have more chance of success if they are embedded in a consolidated system of regional cooperation in all relevant areas.

The foundations for a closer regional economic integration in the Western Balkans have already been laid. The EU accession process has aided greater harmonization between the economies as they align their respective legal and institutional systems to those in the EU; South East Europe 2020 as a convergence framework for EU accession was introduced with common regional targets; tariffs and quotas for trade in industrial and agricultural products have been eliminated and advances were made in trade facilitation and negotiations on trade in services in the context of CEFTA; initiatives to remove obstacles for mobility of highly skilled labour are underway; the Connectivity Agenda is helping

integrate the transport and energy systems both within the region and with the EU; and the costs of communications for citizens and businesses have been substantially reduced through ongoing efforts to cut roaming charges.

The development of a Regional Economic Area, as envisioned by this draft Multi-annual Action Plan, foresees the implementation of far-reaching interventions and actions under the following four components:

Trade - The trade policy implemented by the Authorities of the WB6 CEFTA Parties based on the CEFTA Agreement and their bi-lateral Free Trade Agreements with other trade partners ensured a substantial level of trade in goods openness in CEFTA. The trade in goods is liberalized and level of trade openness in our Parties is high. In parallel, during the negotiations of the Additional Protocol 6, significant liberalization of trade in services has been achieved.

WB6 are committed to implement the actions under Action Plan's areas in trade policy to reach the objective to create regional economic area in CEFTA on the basis of the EU compliance to support efforts to attract more investment, decrease the cost of trade and eliminate market access barriers in order to optimize the cost of production. The aim is to transform our Region in which goods, services, investments, and skilled people move freely without tariffs, quotas or other unnecessary barriers, where trade is facilitated higher than WTO Rules, aiming at recognition of all border documents, where applicable (as specified in Additional Protocol 5), procedures, and programmes related to trade once the EU alignment by one or more CEFTA Parties is reached. The CEFTA Secretariat monitors Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) over the region; to do so, a report are to be prepared on an annual basis on the main impediments to trade. The report will in particular reflect the current obstacles faced by companies and breach in the level-playing field that should prevail for companies within the region. CEFTA Parties acknowledge the important role the private sector has to play in the systemic monitoring of NTMs in trade in goods and barriers in trade in services, which the Western Balkans Chamber Investment Forum (WB CIF) will contribute to structure. CEFTA Parties commit further to deepen the collaboration in the areas of dispute settlement, trade facilitation, liberalization of trade in services, electronic commerce, movement of highly skilled people, investment attractive regional environment, full cumulation of origin and duty drawback opportunities. The legal basis is defined in the CEFTA Agreement and the instruments stemming from the Additional Protocols on Trade Facilitation and on Trade in Services; agreements on mutual recognition of professional qualification; on certificates of electronic signature and facilitation of cross-border certification services, regional arrangements on cooperation between regulatory authorities in charge of services; strengthened with more efficient and effective dispute settlement procedures and monitoring mechanism for its full implementation. Regional economic area shall be part of the Pan-Euro Mediterranean Cumulation Zone in equal footing as other Contracting Parties. CEFTA Parties deem necessary to apply full cumulation of origin, by adding production operations instead of the origin of goods, so that in the process of determining the fulfilment, all production operations carried out in the EU and the WB 6 in the process of production are taken into cumulation.

Investment - Greater regional harmonization of investment policies holds significant potential for the economies of the WB6 in boosting growth potential, job creation and economic convergence with the EU and higher growth. There is a significant potential to foster regional economic integration in Western Balkans Six economies, through the development of Regional investment reform agenda. The removal of barriers to regional investment offers the opportunity for economies of scale, geographically diversified businesses, and an overall more efficient allocation of resources within a regional market, thereby fostering the integration of companies from the region in international value chains. Hence, the WB6 are committed to design and implement a regional investment reform agenda which will lead to greater

harmonization of regional investment policies aligned with EU and international standards and best practices, and will provide significant new opportunities for the private sector. The WB6 will consider formalizing this agenda within the CEFTA legal framework upon conducting thorough analysis and proposing options for appropriate instrument(s) acceptable to WB6 economies, based on the content of the agreed regional investment reform agenda. The regional investment reform agenda is intended to contribute and add value to investment reform efforts, and ensure transparent and fair competition among the economies by mitigating a “race to the bottom” whilst not hindering the interests of our economies. The ultimate goal of this work is to improve the attractiveness of the region for foreign and intra-regional business, and hence facilitate higher inflow of investments and generate higher entrepreneurial activity, trade, and ultimately jobs. The regional investment agenda of the WB6 economies will be formulated by prioritizing and sequencing issues in investment-pertinent policies to be addressed through a regional dialogue in short-term, medium-term and long-term timeframe. The private sector, both from the region and inward investors, will be involved with regard to the development, monitoring and promotion of the regional investment reform agenda. The WBCIF will be involved as well in this exercise. Finally, the WB6 economies will develop a common platform for investment promotion and work jointly on presenting the region as a sound investment destination to the foreign business community. Both business people from the region and inward investors would be involved in the preparation of the regional reform agenda.

Implementing the investment agenda will facilitate the uptake by WB6 of economic development strategies linked to smart growth based on knowledge and innovation, using EU experience and smart specialization platforms, green growth, the development of value chains, technology transfers and building a knowledge-based digital economy.

Mobility - Local economic spill-overs are generated by the regional agglomeration of activities—both in innovation-driven industries as well as other service industries that follow high-technology. In order to establish and maintain international competitiveness, the retention and subsequent leveraging of human intellectual capital is of fundamental importance for developing knowledge-based economies in the Western Balkans. In an increasingly global economy, the extent to which international high-skilled mobility channels are formed within the region and between the region and the EU is a question of great importance. Better integration of high skilled professionals and academics into professional and research networks, the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area, will yield significant benefits for the migratory region of Western Balkans.

To this end the Mobility Agenda aims at: removing obstacles to mobility of professionals, through regional mutual recognition agreements of professional qualifications in sectors of mutual interest (doctors of medicine, dentists, architects and civil engineers); removing obstacles to mobility of highly qualified workforce, in particular through joint standards and procedures for automatic recognition of quality assured academic qualifications; and removing obstacles to mobility of students, researchers and academics through joint policies, measures and instruments aimed at increasing academic and research mobility and cooperation.

The Mobility Agenda should be underpinned by enhanced collaboration between science and industry, including the sectors represented by the WB CIF, technology transfer and start up creation, smart specialization strategies, cooperation on regional Centers of Excellence and platforms for the education of young scientists and engineers. Practical steps, such as removal of visas, will contribute to achieving the objective of the Mobility Agenda.

Digital integration - Digital transformation is changing the way we communicate, work, learn and live. It changes the way we do business and interact with WB6 authorities. The use of digital technologies can generate significant benefits in terms of speed, efficiency and transparency across borders in many

different sectors. Exploiting the untapped potentials of digital integration ensures the supply of innovative and competitive services to consumers and businesses and acts as an important lever for socio-economic development, high value jobs generation and a vibrant knowledge-based society.

The WB6 Digital Agenda aims to unlock access to the digital economy by integrating the region into the pan-European digital market. This requires future-proof digitization strategies, an updated regulatory environment, improved broadband infrastructure and access and digital literacy.

Under the digital Agenda, the WB6 will support a regional approach to foster intergovernmental cooperation in digital matters and facilitate the integration within the European Digital Single Market. To this end, the digital agenda aims at: digital infrastructure development and improved regional connectivity; harmonized spectrum policies; coordinated roaming policies towards a roaming free region; enhanced cyber security, trust services and data protection; cooperation in policies that stimulate data economy; upgraded digital skills and accelerated digitization and uptake of smart technologies in our region.

The below chart outlines the policy areas and objectives set forth in the MAP:

