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COMPROMISE 2007

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January 14, 2009

Serbian Chamber of commerce: CEFTA valid only with Unmik

KosovoCompromise Staff

The CEFTA agreement does not view Kosovo as a state but as an UNMIK customs territory, says the Serbian Chamber of Commerce.

“Serbia adheres to what is written down, which means that if the agreement signatory is UNMIK, goods emanating from that territory have to be accompanied by a declaration stating ‘UNMIK Kosovo’,“ says Dejan Jovic, the Chamber’s adviser for regional cooperation.

“This way Kosovo’s declaring itself as a state that we don’t recognize, and that’s why we’ve blocked the entry and transit of goods from that territory,“ Jovic said.

Jovic was one of the chief negotiators in creating a bilateral trade agreement in the region to substitute the CEFTA agreement.

In his opinion, the Serbian authorities’ decision to block the entry of goods from Kosovo from December 3 was justified as the sale of goods carrying a “Kosovo Customs“ declaration constituted a breach of the CEFTA agreement.

The adviser believes that a potential embargo on goods entering Kosovo from central Serbia would be a very harmful measure for companies on this side of the administrative line, given the level of trade, although, he pointed out, consumers in Kosovo could also encounter difficulties in quickly finding a substitute for Serbian goods.

Jovic stressed that CEFTA did not offer the Kosovo authorities the possibility to block goods or increase taxes for goods coming from Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina by 10 percent, which were two options being considered by Kosovo officials as a counter-measure.

Nevertheless, he said that the problem ought to be solved at international level, through CEFTA institutions like the Joint Committee or the Arbitration Court .