

●Pragomedica, Pragopharma, and Pragooptika are large annual Czech international medical-pharmaceutical fairs which take place in Prague in April.

●Pragodent is an international exhibition of dental products held in Prague in early November.

●MEFA is the largest yearly Czech international medical and pharmaceutical fair, held in Brno in November.

●Slovmedica, Slovfarma, and Slovregula are large Slovak international pharmaceutical-medical fairs held in Bratislava each October.

●SALMED is a trade fair for medical equipment, which takes place in March in Poznan, Poland.

CONSTRUCTION AND RELATED PRODUCTS

Overview

Overall, the CEFTA region's growth rate in the construction sector is expected to hover around 10%, with the possible exception of Hungary, which has a lower rate. The pent-up demand created during the communist period has yet to be met. The prime areas of interest are renovation and expansion of residential housing, commercial buildings, and road and railway infrastructure.

Opportunities and Constraints

There is a good market for certain prefabricated buildings, energy-efficient building materials, lumber, shingles, drywall, doors, windows, siding, roofing materials, plumbing, heat pumps, veneer, and millwork. Technology transfers, especially with respect to prefabricated wood-frame housing, are also sought. Many Central Europeans still consider a wood-frame house to be unstable and a fire hazard; public education is needed to dispel these misconceptions. Assistance in adapting laws and regulations is still required at the institutional level.

Current advances in the construction sector are an indication of a healthy economy. As mortgage financing is introduced, the housing sector will develop further; mortgages are still difficult to obtain, requiring large down payments and carrying high real interest rates. Most CEFTA countries are still in the process of adopting new mortgage laws and regulations.

Certificates for the use of imported material or equipment are required in Poland. Czech approvals for construction materials are based on German DIN standards. While Western standards generally exceed those of the Czech Republic, one should always verify in advance with the post or with one's distributor or importer to be sure Canadian materials or technology are legally acceptable, particularly where electrical fittings are concerned. The entire CEFTA region uses 240V/50Hz.

There is a growing influx of foreign