

CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE

4TH CSD MEETING ON THE TRADE AND TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE

Date: 12 May 2023

Time: 14:00-15:30 CET

Location: Webex

A. LEAD SPEAKERS

- Matthias Jørgensen, Head of Unit, US and Canada, DG TRADE, European Commission (replacing: Rupert Schlegelmilch, Director, DG TRADE)
- Thibaut Kleiner, Director, Policy strategy and outreach, DG CONNECT, European Commission

B. MODERATOR

Civil Society Coordinator - Transparency, Civil society and Communication Unit, Directorate-General for Trade, European Commission

C. STATE OF PLAY OF PREPARATIONS OF THE TRADE AND TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL COOPERATION

The Commission provided a detailed state of play of the preparations of the EU-U.S. Trade and Technology Council ahead of the fourth ministerial meeting on 30-31 May 2023 in Luleå, Sweden. The ministerial meeting was an opportunity to take stock of progress and provide a steer to further cooperation.

On the technology side, there were three major themes emerging for the upcoming ministerial – collaboration in the field of emerging technologies, including in areas such as artificial intelligence or standardisation efforts in the field of e-mobility; human rights and values in the digital environment, where work is focused on addressing disinformation or promoting transparency and accountability of online platforms; and connectivity and digital infrastructure, where EU and US continue to promote secure connectivity projects in third countries.

On the trade side, the ministerial would focus on three areas – advancing the sustainability agenda through the Transatlantic Initiative on Sustainable Trade, making trade easier by continuing the work on conformity assessment and promoting the use of digital trade tools; and lastly on how to ensure that transatlantic trade continues to promote security and underpin economic prosperity by further collaborating in the field of export controls, investment screening or addressing non market policies and practices as well as cases of economic coercion.

D. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond van België was interested in the standardisation work in the TTC and whether this could be a basis for collaboration with further partners, such as India. The Commission explained that the collaboration starting as bilateral promoting compatibility and avoiding unnecessary trade barriers with the aim to promote uptake on international standards in emerging technology areas.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik was interested in hearing more details about the Transatlantic Initiative on Sustainable Trade and the work programme that would expand on this new initiative. The Commission explained the main objectives, which are to bolster the transatlantic marketplace; take steps to make the supply chains for the clean economy more resilient and to strengthen cooperation between us on advancing the green transition globally. The aim is to put the collaboration on a stronger and longer-term footing.

Software Alliance enquired on the progress in the various digital files, notably on the progress of the collaboration on health data. Furthermore, they expressed firm support to the initiative to promote use of digital tools to facilitate trade.

European Semiconductor Industry Association (ESIA) requested for more information on the cooperation in the semiconductor sector. The Commission explained that actions are focused on implementing the previous work, notably the subsidy transparency exchange of information and the early warning mechanism for disruptions on the market.

SpiritsEUROPE asked for an update on the work on the Global Sustainable Arrangement on Steel and Aluminium and the implementation of the Understanding on Large Civil Aircraft. **CEFIC** was interested in updated on the Critical Minerals Agreement, as another ongoing workstream for the EU-US trade cooperation.

European Economic and Social Committee then raised several questions, regarding the sustainability work. Notably they called for involvement of stakeholders in the process, notably emphasising the role of the social partners in this process. What is more, they were interested in understanding the role of the Coalition of Climate Ministers. Finally, they were interested in the issue of forced labour and whether this could be an issue between EU and US. The Commission responded that stakeholders will be consulted and that social partners have a dedicated platform in form of the Trade and Labour Dialogue created by the TTC. The TALD first focused on forced labour and now was moving to the topic of green transition.

Anti-Slavery International closed by complementing the questions on forced labour. Specifically, they were interested whether the discussion also explored the possibility of mutual recognition of decisions made on either side of the Atlantic.
