



Domestic Advisory Group under the EU-Canada CETA

Ottawa, 19 March 2024

**JOINT STATEMENT**  
**of**  
**CANADIAN AND EUROPEAN UNION (EU) DOMESTIC ADVISORY GROUPS (DAGS)**  
*established under the Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) Chapters of the EU-Canada*  
*Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)*

Following our DAG-to-DAG meetings on 18 and 19 March 2024 and the Civil Society Forum (CSF) hosted by Canada on 18 and 19 March 2024, the Domestic Advisory Groups of Canada and the European Union jointly state the following :

1. We express our joy to be able to meet in Ottawa, in unceded and unsundered Algonquin Anishinaabe territory, reigniting once again our enthusiasm for collaboration between our DAGs. Throughout the two days, we exchanged insights into the progress of our respective DAGs' work since our last joint meeting in Brussels in April 2023, and pinpointed areas of mutual interest for productive cooperation on shared priorities. The horizontal integration between the EU and Canadian DAGs (both Environmental and Labour) remains robust and energized.
2. We thank the European Commission and the Government of Canada for their reply to our joint statement issued on 20 June 2023, sign of strong engagement acknowledging the importance of civil society's role in monitoring the implementation of the TSD chapters of CETA. We duly take note of it and hope to receive in-depth and timely replies in the future as well. To further boost our vertical integration through cooperation and exchanges, we express our intention to invite the Parties' co-chairs to take part in a regular dedicated session in our future DAG-to-DAG meetings.
3. We are looking forward to the meeting of the CETA Committee on TSD that will take place online on 10 and 11 April. We welcome the continued involvement and active role accorded to the DAGs Chairs and Vice-Chairs, whose participation and input can contribute considerable added value to the success of the meeting and the identification of meaningful deliverables. We stress the importance of engagement between the Parties and the DAGs in conjunction with the CSF, especially if the CSF and the TSD Committee are to be de-coupled in the future.
4. To better harness their full potential, we also call on the Parties for a more meaningful, inclusive and timely planning of the CSF, the meeting with the chairs and the vice chairs in conjunction with the CSF and their participation in the TSD Committee.



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5. We call on the Parties to maintain an ambitious vision and strategic use of CETA. Furthermore, we stress the importance of finding innovative and forward-looking solutions in international trade, especially in the current challenging global environment exacerbated by the climate and biodiversity emergencies, the erosion of labour standards, the rise of forced and child labour, energy crises, inflation and increased cost of living, fragmentation of global value chains, progressive erosion of the multilateral and rules-based order, and, in particular in the European context, the war against Ukraine.
6. To demonstrate the positive impacts that shared rules and values have on our trade and investment flows and on fostering economic progress, as well as on social development, decent jobs, labour rights, public services and the distribution of wealth, we encourage and call for the development and the publication of concrete data at granular levels. We also call for in-depth impact assessments of CETA on both sides, based on relevant and pertinent indicators that include holistic, social, environmental, labour, cultural and other aspects such as gender intersected with age, ethnicity, etc. We stand ready to participate and assist the process. We welcome the ex-post evaluation of CETA launched by the European Commission.
7. Both the EU and Canada have been affected by multiple crises in recent years, which have put at risk their competitiveness at global level. As this may affect their ability to make the digital and green transitions a reality, we call on accrued joint efforts of the EU and Canadian partners to work on creative and constructive solutions that deliver decent jobs to increase sustainable competitiveness and sustainability also from an economic point of view.
8. We have long urged for the effective enforceability of the TSD chapters and reiterate our call upon the CETA Parties to work to make progress on the TSD early review foreseen in the JII and to keep the DAGs closely informed and involved.
9. We reaffirm the importance of the multilateral, rule-based trading system with a well-functioning WTO at its core. We welcome the alignment between Canadian and European negotiators during the recent 13<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference<sup>1</sup> in Abu Dhabi and appreciate their efforts to achieve positive outcomes. However, we express our disappointment over the results and regret the absence of compromises on important issues like a comprehensive agreement on global fisheries subsidies, agriculture reform, and meaningful progress on the dispute settlement mechanism as well as for the final Ministerial Declaration not to include meaningful language on trade and sustainable development and on trade inclusiveness. We encourage both the Canadian government and the EU Commission to engage constructively with all WTO members in the lead-up to the next Ministerial Conference in Cameroon in 2026. We urge the EU and Canada to continue their efforts for a robust reform of the organisation and to find a permanent solution to the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions, as a priority.

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<sup>1</sup> [WTO | Thirteenth WTO Ministerial Conference](#)



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*On enabling climate and nature-positive outcomes through CETA*

10. Only by integrating strong environmental safeguards and promoting sustainable development objectives, the potential of CETA to advance climate and nature-positive outcomes can be harnessed. We therefore welcome the establishment of the Green Alliance, as an additional collaborative effort of like-minded partners to combat climate change, and call for an active role of civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and the CETA DAGs in contributing to its future success.
11. Key to achieving transition to climate-neutral and digitalised economies, the EU-Canada Strategic Partnership on Raw Materials has to continue to foster coordinated policies in securing responsible and timely strategic access to raw materials, their by-products and essential minerals, including in their exploration, extraction, processing, refining and recycling, while applying the highest environmental, social, governance and labour standards, including human rights and the rights of Indigenous Peoples safeguards, and engaging in inclusive discussions and decision-making on responsible raw material policies.
12. It remains of crucial importance to ensure that Indigenous Peoples' rights are guaranteed in all steps, in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ratified by both Parties. In that respect, we reiterate the importance of collaboratively fostering climate and nature-positive outcomes that respect and empower Indigenous sovereignty, support Indigenous-led conservation, Indigenous-led and owned enterprise while mitigating the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities that have not contributed to historical climate change amplifying emissions.
13. We are interested in better understanding innovative and potentially transformative legal mechanisms related to nature rights, including examples of waterways that have been granted legal personhood. In advance of the 2025 CSF to be hosted by the EU, we intend to explore different constitutional examples that integrate the rights of nature (Ecuador, Bolivia) as well as legislative examples (Canada's Magpie River, New Zealand's Whanganui River), and how such approaches could strengthen the standing of Nature under CETA.
14. We acknowledge the EU and Canada's efforts to legislate carbon pricing, as an efficient way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while stimulating innovation and clean growth. We encourage cooperation with regard to third countries, especially in fostering a level-playing field, predictable frameworks and clarity for investors.
15. We call on Canada and the EU to ensure that the green transition is accompanied by what in the EU is defined as just transition and what is outlined in Canada's Sustainable Jobs Plan – i.e. the creation of sustainable, decent and quality jobs accessible for all. We also call for mindfulness on the implications for the rest of the world and ensuring that the green transition does not come at the expense of other regions, namely the Global South, nor Indigenous Peoples within our respective borders.



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### *On Canada-EU Cooperation on Labour*

16. We reiterate the vital importance of enforcing labour rights and protections in trade, in line with internationally agreed standards, including ILO Conventions and the Paris Agreement. As problems on the ground are often not due to lack of legislation, we recognise the need to reinforce efforts on effective implementation and to support civil society with technical assistance, capacity building, awareness raising and exchange of best practices.
17. We welcome the recent EU legislative advancements on prohibiting products made with forced labour and we stand ready to collaborate on stronger due diligence legislation soon, in addition to the Canadian Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act. We call on the Parties to continue to work together towards more transparent and sustainable supply chains that respect human rights. We acknowledge the complexity of combatting forced labour, in services as well as in regard to both import bans and market bans, and encourage the Parties to work together to facilitate and promote cooperation and ensure that systems are efficient to optimize trade. We encourage legislation to address forced labour in all sectors of the economy, including in services.
18. We stress the vital role of effective grievance mechanisms within CETA and emphasize the importance of Access to Remedy, the third pillar of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). In that respect, we advocate for effective corporate due diligence, with provisions to ensure meaningful avenues to transparent, equal, fair, and accessible, including local level mechanisms. Obligations should be clear in setting expectations. We call for further efforts to promote accountability, uphold human rights standards and regulate corporate human rights behaviour. New enforceable remedial approaches should be considered to address potential labour violations related to collective bargaining and freedom of association including the underlying concepts contained in the Rapid Response Labour Mechanism (RRLM) in the Canada-US-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA).

### *On trade, gender and SMEs*

19. We call on the Parties to continue their commitment for trade to benefit all. More specifically, efforts to promote gender equality and strengthened women's and LGBTQ+ economic empowerment should be further promoted. We also encourage the Parties to continue monitoring the impacts of the agreement on gender and gender intersected with other aspects of inequalities.
20. We recommend to the Parties to continue working on ensuring that MSMEs have access to all necessary tools to foster greater exchanges and participation to maximise their capacity to reap the benefits of CETA.



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*On trade, animal welfare, and animal agriculture*

21. We recall that animal production and animal welfare are inextricably linked with ethical, political, economic, environmental and social issues. We encourage the parties to use the regulatory cooperation activities offered by CETA to promote collaboration on the field.

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22. We seek more extensive vertical integration, in respect of the matters raised in this Joint Statement, as between government and civil society represented by the DAGs. We strongly recommend an institutional process to monitor the progress in connection with the content of joint statements from the EU/Canadian DAGs – past, present and future.
23. The EU DAG thanks the Canadian Environmental DAG (CEDAG) and the Canadian Labour DAG and the Canadian authorities for facilitating the organisation of these meetings and for their hospitality. All the DAGs are looking forward to their next joint meeting and to continuing their productive and cordial cooperation.