



## **Fifth meeting of the EU-Chile Joint Consultative Committee**

**Videoconference, 15 May 2020**

### **FINAL DECLARATION**

*The EU-Chile Joint Consultative Committee held its fifth meeting on 15 May 2020, in the run up to the negotiating round on the modernisation of the EU-Chile Association Agreement. The members of the JCC discussed the following issues: the state of the COVID-19 crisis and its impact on trade and investment, decent work and the informal economy and the Sustainable Development Agenda; support mechanisms to tackle COVID-19 through bilateral and multilateral international cooperation; and the importance of strengthening the role of the Joint Consultative Committee as part of the strategic partnership between the EU and Chile.*

*The Declaration is addressed to the political authorities of the EU and Chile, as well as to the joint bodies established by the EU-Chile Association Agreement.*

#### **1. The COVID-19 crisis and its impact on cooperation, trade and investment, decent work and the informal economy, and the Sustainable Development Agenda**

The JCC members:

##### **1.1 On cooperation:**

- 1.1.1 Emphasise that the health, economic, human, social and political crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic presents the international community with a historic challenge, and will have profound consequences for all aspects of bilateral relations between the EU and Chile.
- 1.1.2 Point to the importance of supporting international cooperation and multilateral solutions to the present crisis. Welcome the contributions by both Chile and the EU to the coordination work undertaken by the United Nations, the G-20, the G-7, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the international financial institutions.

1.1.3 With a view to the new negotiating round on the modernisation of the Association Agreement, reiterate that, in this new phase of relations between the Parties, the form of cooperation should be rethought, without reducing it, as it offers opportunities for the alliance between Chile and Europe.

1.1.4 Are aware that Chile has been undergoing a profound social and political crisis, the consequences of which – together with other causes – are generating deep inequality and a lack of opportunities for the majority of the population. This is reflected in demands for urgent structural changes, not least to the current Political Constitution, the continuation of which will be submitted to a plebiscite at the end of this year.

## 1.2 **On trade and investment:**

1.2.1 Support the call by the United Nations Secretary-General for the international financial institutions to provide the resources needed in the fight to halt the spread of COVID-19 as quickly as possible, to work together to minimise the social and economic impact of the disease and to cooperate in laying the foundations for a recovery that builds a more sustainable and inclusive economy.

1.2.2 Highlight how important it is that the Parties do all that is necessary to mitigate the consequences of the crisis caused by COVID-19 by using all legal, institutional, political, economic and social instruments to prevent our economies falling into recession and to support economic recovery and employment once the pandemic has been brought to a halt.

1.2.3 Support the invitation from the co-presidents of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat) to governments, central banks and regional development banks to make use of all instruments at their disposal, including fiscal and monetary measures.

1.2.4 Point out that, in EU-Chile relations, foreign direct investment is a powerful factor for positive economic and social development.

## 1.3 **On decent work and the informal economy:**

The JCC members:

1.3.1 Underline that the COVID-19 crisis threatens the livelihoods of many employed, self-employed, informal and unemployed workers. Emphasise in the this regard, together with the ILO, that the crisis is exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, and that the political responses must ensure that help reaches those workers and businesses that most need it in order to guarantee social stability.

1.3.2 Restate the vital importance of promoting decent work, innovation and entrepreneurship with decent living and working conditions that comply with international standards and conventions laid down by the ILO, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

1.3.3 Conclude that this new period, and the pandemic and its consequences, are changing conventional forms of interaction in society, and businesses and jobs must adjust to them. These changes are driving the shape of labour relations, which should be followed closely in both Chile and the EU in order to prevent the growth of informal and precarious working and to ensure that they bring improvements to both the protection and the quality of people's lives.

#### 1.4 **On the Agenda for Sustainable Development:**

The JCC members:

1.4.1 Call, at this time of crisis, for solidarity and cooperation between the two Parties.

1.4.2 Consider that there are fundamental issues – protecting the environment, promoting worker safety, guaranteeing the sustainability of businesses, promoting gender equality, protecting consumers, promoting partnerships with the general public, facing up to challenges and fully seizing the opportunities offered by technology – which are even more important in times of crisis, but which are at risk of being overlooked.

1.4.3 Emphasise that an appropriate regulatory framework that covers the whole of society is essential, aspiring to fair globalisation, increasing competitiveness and new technologies, leaving no-one behind, eradicating poverty and creating an environment that restores people's trust in political systems and legitimately elected governments.

1.4.4 Note that civil society is an essential and indispensable driver for the necessary transition to a more sustainable society. Social justice – which rests on the foundations of labour law, social security and the practice of making goods and services such as healthcare and education available to the general public in a way that is equal, continuous and accessible – along with citizens' initiatives and community work, are just some examples of how sustainable development can be achieved through a bottom-up approach.

1.4.5 In this regard, reaffirm their interest in and commitment to strengthening EU-Chile strategic partnerships with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, the JCC must be seen as a common tool for implementing the 17 SDGs, a tool which relies on partnerships in order to achieve these goals.

1.4.6 Point out that the modernised Association Agreement must reflect the commitment of the Parties not to encourage trade or foreign direct investment by watering down environmental, labour or health and safety legislation and standards. In this regard, emphasise the important role that civil society can play in evaluating the usefulness and sustainability of investment projects, in overseeing the transparency of their financing and in monitoring their implementation.

## **2. On the proposals for strengthening the role of the Joint Consultative Committee:**

The JCC members:

- 2.1 Urge the Parties to ensure that all stages in the negotiation of the modernised Agreement are more transparent, so that organised civil society can contribute to the process, thereby encouraging the affected socio-economic actors to take ownership of it and fostering the involvement of civil society organisations in framing public policy and ensuring respect for social, economic and cultural rights.
- 2.2 Once again call on the Association Agreement authorities to provide all the institutional political, operational and financial support needed by the Chilean civil society organisations in order to build up their capacity, strength and skills, to enhance their presence in both social and civil dialogue at national level, and maintain operations as a counterpart for European civil society at a bilateral level.
- 2.3 Reaffirm their commitment to continuing to make the EU-Chile JCC a constructive mechanism that focuses on strengthening bilateral ties and coordinating efforts in line with the interests of civil society organisations.
- 2.4 Reiterate their call for the EU-Chile Joint Consultative Committee to be retained in the future modernised Agreement, in such a way that the JCC can express its views on any issue covered by the Agreement, including the trade chapter in the light of current circumstances as announced earlier in Chapter 1.
- 2.5 Highlight its consultative role as a civil society body, which it performs both in response to requests from the Association Council and on its own initiative.
- 2.6 Draw attention to the importance of preserving the JCC as a joint civil society body of both Parties, and of full respect for its independence.
- 2.7 Urge the Parties to ensure the operational financing of the JCC.
- 2.8 Call for the JCC to be kept promptly and fully informed at all stages of the negotiations for the modernised Agreement.

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