# **Statement by the EU Domestic Advisory Group (EU DAG), established under the** [**Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapter of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)**](https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/august/tradoc_157228.pdf#page=440)

**to be presented at the Joint Dialogue with Civil Society on 3 March 2023**

1. The EU DAG under the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) reiterates the importance of the Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs) for the fulfilment of the Trade and Sustainability commitments made by the Parties in the EPA. The DAGs are civil society mechanisms established under the Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapter of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).
2. Interaction between the stakeholders, including civil society, is key for good monitoring of the EPA. This should include consultation of civil society and space for civil society on both sides to interact independently. The EPA (article 16.15.3) stipulates that "the advisory group or groups of each Party may meet on its or their own initiative and express its or their opinions on the implementation of this Chapter independently of the Party and submit those opinions to that Party".
3. The EPA (article 16.13.2 c) also specifies "interacting with civil society on the implementation of this Chapter" as one of the functions of the Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development (CTSD), and the sequence of the joint meetings is an important element to allow such interaction.
4. Civil society should in the light of the above be given space to meet *before* the CTSD and to report at the CTSD meeting on their monitoring of the TSD-chapter. Therefore, the Joint Dialogue with civil society should take place before the meeting of the CTSD, and there should be a meeting between the EU and the Japanese DAGs before both the meeting of the CTSD and the Joint Dialogue. This would give to the DAGs the possibility to report on the monitoring to the CTSD, and to the CTSD to report on the implementation to the Joint Dialogue. This is also common praxis under other EU free trade agreements.
5. The EU DAG believes in the value and benefits for both sides of joint meetings and workshops to foster better understanding and help our respective economies to develop and grow more sustainably together avoiding unnecessary obstacles and barriers, and we call on the EU and Japanese governments to facilitate this collaboration, in line with the commitments made by the Parties on civil society engagement in the EU-Japan EPA.
6. Before the Joint Dialogue with civil society next year, we therefore suggest to hold a jointly prepared physical DAG-to-DAG meeting, in Tokyo, with an agreed agenda and a workshop on topics of common interest. Building on earlier exchanges at the JDCS, the EU DAG will elaborate "A scoping study to encourage industries to prepare business for mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence", and this could be one of the topics to be discussed.

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