



## *Conclusions*

### *5th Joint Meeting of the European and Georgian Domestic Advisory Groups under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement*

**Tbilisi – Brussels, 9 July 2020**

The representatives of the European and Georgian Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs), set up under the Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Georgia, held their fifth joint meeting on 9 July 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting took place virtually.

The participants expressed their commitment to fulfilling the mandate laid down in the Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter of the Association Agreement to monitor the implementation of the chapter and to provide advice to the parties to the agreement.

The two DAGs discussed the following issues:

- labour
- environment
- economic pillar of sustainability

They agreed that these issues would remain high on the agenda of the DAGs as long as the necessary measures had not been taken in Georgia to regulate the situation in a satisfactory manner and in accordance with international and European standards.

With regard to *labour-related questions*, they specifically:

1. highlight the importance of social dialogue and of effective functioning of the tripartite social commission in Georgia, particularly in relation to social and economic recovery policies, including the discussion on the support for anti-crisis measures received from the European Union;
2. point out the need to provide Labour Code reform or any labour-related reform through the social partnership tripartite commission;
3. underline the fact that the new legislation on labour inspection, minimum wage, working time and non-discrimination must fully respect international and European standards;
4. stress the need to enlarge the scope of labour inspection so that it also covers working rights<sup>1</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> With reservations from the American Chamber of Commerce with regards to the enforcement process for labour rights.

5. call, in the light of the current pandemic, for a more sustainable and resilient social protection system, which has to be developed in close discussion with the social partners;
6. stress the role of the freedom of association in labour relations and encourage government to promote collective bargaining in the country;
7. call for the adoption of a new amendment to the Labour Code fully in line with the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, which is vital for ensuring basic protection of workers and which has the potential to lay the groundwork for further improvement in the coming years.

With regard to the *environment-related issues*, the DAGs:

1. support the adherence of Georgia to the European Green Deal, which must not be seen as an additional cost but as a clear economic, environmental and climate opportunity;
2. encourage better use of renewable energy, taking into account the natural wealth and variety of natural resources in Georgia; support renewable energy sources diversification, especially wind and solar sources, as well as energy efficiency and environmentally friendly technologies;
3. call for the introduction of tax and other measures encouraging better use of renewable energy in Georgia;
4. highlight the need to conduct an in-depth dialogue on the future of industries with all relevant stakeholders, and the social partners in particular;
5. recommend the government of Georgia to take measures to decrease carbon dioxide emissions from the transport sector.

With regard to the *economic pillar of sustainability* under the provisions of the TSD chapter, they

1. emphasise the role of business and corporate responsibility in building resilience post COVID-19;
  2. stress the added value of tourism for Georgia and hope for a speedy recovery of this sector as it creates jobs and growth. They underline the need for tourism to respect high sustainable development standards, including on the protection of the environment and labour;
  3. support development and promotion of bio/organic production and its export potential through co-financing certification schemes and costs, tax incentives and prioritisation within government funding programmes.
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