

Brussels, 09-07-2020
(PRES.CAB)(2020)D/1835

President Ursula von der Leyen
President
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels

Dear President,



The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is a strong advocate for free, fair and rules-based trade and we unreservedly support the EU's commitment to multilateralism. Like the Commission, we are committed to the proper implementation and enforcement of existing and future trade agreements. We thus warmly welcome the commitment to appoint a Chief Trade Enforcement Officer "to monitor and improve the compliance of our trade agreements", to "report regularly on the state of play" and "keep the European Parliament and the Council abreast of all developments."

Indeed, trade agreements must fulfill their objectives for Civil society to continue supporting our trade strategy and so we must ensure that our trading partners abide by their commitments. As indicated in a number of recent and upcoming EESC opinions¹ (Footnote 1), we believe there is a significant untapped potential in such agreements which, if fully achieved, could create hundreds of thousands of jobs across the Union. The economic and social challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic have made this even clearer.

With our extended networks across the EU and beyond, the EESC has acquired valuable experience in monitoring agreements' implementation and our members have taken a great interest in their enforceability (as you will notice from our latest opinions on trade). We are active across the spectrum of agreement and topics, and have even in some instances, like the Western Balkans, set up wide networks warning us to Rule of law violations for instance. Various structures and bodies, notably the Follow-up Committee on International Trade and Domestic Advisory Groups, are eager to engage with, and stand ready to support the work of, the new Chief Trade Enforcement Officer and their team.

¹ 2020 Opinion on [‘The role of the EU’s trade and investment policies in enhancing the EU’s economic performance’](#); 2018 Opinion on [‘Trade and sustainable development chapters \(TSD\) in EU Free Trade Agreements \(FTA\)’](#). The EESC is also due to adopt an opinion on the [implementation of Free Trade Agreements \(FTA\)](#) at its July 2020 plenary.

We believe that the Chief Trade Enforcement Officer is front and center to ensuring the proper implementation and enforcement of our trade agreements. While we understand the complexities of any organisation restructuring and senior staff reshuffle, we do regret that the appointment has not yet been made. We hope that you can use your good offices to ensure that an appointment is made as soon as possible so that we may reap the benefits that we are certain the office-holder can deliver.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,



Luca JAHIER

CC: Mr Phil Hogan, European Commissioner for Trade