1st European Civil Society Forum on Trade and Sustainable Development

report
The 1st European Civil Society Forum on Trade and Sustainable Development organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) took place as a hybrid meeting on 29 March 2022.

This report and its recommendations are not reconciled conclusions but reflect the discussions and different speakers’ view.

We thank Celia Pessaud for the visuals for this forum, which were sketched during the sessions following the discussions.
Introduction

Since the presentation of the 15-point action plan on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) in 2018, the trade world has moved on and so has the TSD debate. The Green Deal is an overarching policy goal also for the EU trade agenda. Institutional players like the European Parliament and Member States call increasingly for ambitious TSD reform, responding to the longstanding and pressing demands of civil society. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted trade flows in an unprecedented manner unveiling major problems in global supply and value chains, often linked to non-compliance with TSD commitments. The first ever TSD-related dispute settlement case put the current system to its institutional litmus test. The new Chief Trade Enforcement Officer (CTEO) created high expectations for greater focus, resources and new legislative tools to better implement and enforce TSD commitments. Meanwhile EU trade partners like Canada and the U.S. have adopted strong enforcement instruments in their own Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) or, like New Zealand, have tabled ambitious proposals in EU trade talks, ensuring trade works for all.

Trade is put at the frontline for a range of issues on the table, from pressure for resilient and sustainable supply chains, through speeding up action on climate change, to ensuring workers’ rights and decent work, and addressing rising inequalities and supporting sustainable livelihood. New testing times of a global pandemic and Russia’s war in Ukraine cause turmoil in global markets and supply chains, and raise concerns about energy resilience and food security especially in the developing world.

There is a feeling that ongoing trade tensions will cripple countries' economies, and progress on the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is falling behind the target, with a risk to miss many of the 2030 goals the international community has set. Tensions and preoccupations in the world of trade are thus evolving and so is the range of TSD challenges.

Strong Civil society voice

At this critical moment in international discussions on TSD, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) held the First European Civil Society Forum on TSD under the French Presidency of the Council of the EU. This was a platform bringing together civil society with academia, EU and international institutions to discuss innovative ideas and concrete recommendations on the future of the EU’s trade policy. Two roundtables framed a series of breakout sessions covering TSD topics from substantive rights to monitoring, enforcement and much more, inviting participants to voice their views on the finish line of the Commission’s review of the 15-points action plan and designing of the future EU policy on TSD.
In her opening remarks, **EESC President Christa Schweng** reaffirmed the Committee’s commitment to being a driving force for an ambitious TSD debate that reflects the high expectations of civil society. The EESC’s active work highlights opinions on Trade and Sustainable Development – including **Next Generation TSD, The design of a New Multilateral Matrix, Minimising the risk of deforestation, Mandatory due diligence, Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism** - as well as the Committee’s engagement and outreach at WTO level. President Schweng underlined the need for the TSD provisions to live up to their commitments; The EESC would thus suggest an ambitious review, featuring a revamped sanctionable enforcement approach, stronger civil society monitoring, innovative instruments and an increased leverage for TSD. She particularly committed the EESC to support and strengthen the Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs).
TSD: Where are we and where do we want to go?

Opening the first round of debates, an experienced panel of institutional, social partner and civil society speakers took stock of current TSD policies and framed the expectations for their review.

The debate was moderated by Carolyn Deere-Birkbeck, Senior researcher at the Graduate Institute’s Global Governance Centre and Director, Forum on Trade, Environment and the SDGs, TESS.

Main issues addressed

• The challenges for TSD in the current international context and with regard to the war in Ukraine.

• The linkage between the TSD review and the EU’s wider trade policy and a range of initiatives taken, such as legislation on mandatory due diligence, and also the EU’s role in the multilateral agenda.

• The usefulness of building an international trade regime, which would serve sustainable development in the long term and support the kind of partnerships this would require.

• The necessity to get TSD chapters right in the negotiations of EU Free Trade Agreements.

• The EU’s TSD policy being viewed from outside the EU and what this might mean for EU leadership.

• The importance of trade and sustainability for the European businesses and the high ambitions in Europe regarding all aspects related to sustainable development.

Sustainability is an integrated part of trade policy – not an obstacle

Bernd Lange,
Chair of the International Trade Committee at the European Parliament

TSD is about international standards

Luisa Santos,
Deputy Director-General at BusinessEurope
Speakers’ general recommendations

- Consider **sustainability as an integrated part of trade policy** and not an obstacle.
- Focus on **sustainable partnerships** to improve the situation on the ground.
- Encourage **stronger cooperation with stakeholders**.
- Continue to **engage in multilateral fora to keep the dialogue and ensure a level playing field**; organisations like the WTO, the ILO and the UN are vital, but difficult to move forward as consensus is needed.
- Put more emphasis on **bilateral trade agreements and autonomous measures** to stabilise sustainability at a time when multilateralism is in danger.
- Engage with and convince trading partners that trade agreements and **TSD chapters are beneficial to both parties of the agreements**.
- Use **autonomous initiatives** to ensure products placed on EU market meet sustainability criteria (deforestation, due diligence etc.). This is key to transforming EU trade policy, and **not to be seen as protectionist measures**.
- Focus on the importance of how the EU agenda is perceived outside the EU and what that means in terms of need to **consult carefully with trading partners** and consider various way they could be brought on board.
- Advocate **international standards** and not only “EU values”, and **use an inclusive approach**.
- Adopt a more **holistic approach**, and **integrate autonomous initiatives, human rights and environment protection in the FTAs** as a main tool of EU external policy providing essential policy space to promote sustainability at global level.
Specific recommendations

• **Pre-conditions for ratification:** ratification of ILO core conventions, UN conventions and the Paris Agreement already during the negotiation phase.

• **Implementation:** need for concrete binding and enforceable roadmaps for implementation with tangible milestones.

• **Monitoring:** strengthen the role of civil society, in particular in monitoring progress on the ground, and consider expanding the unique role of the Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs) in the FTAs.

• **Enforceability:** improve the complaint mechanism, providing for the possibility of sanctions as a last resort and a tool to bring about change; promote the political will to enforce existing labour provisions and draw inspiration from other trade partners’ models with enforceable labour clauses.

• **Leverage:** improve TSD chapters to serve as a leverage for environmental protection, including specific obligations in relation to the European Green Deal.

• **TSD Chapters’ vague language:** use a more specific language in the agreements in relation to labour, human rights and environment to facilitate implementation, monitoring and enforcement.

• **Single Entry Point:** provide more specific information regarding the procedure, timing and criteria for opening investigations for complaints.

• **Country by country approach:** establish a country-by-country approach to adapt to specific challenges as well as to the context and situation of the trading partner.

• **Impact assessments:** conduct sustainability and human rights impact assessments.

• **Dialogue:** explore opportunities for dialogue and consultation with stakeholders, including the involvement of private sector.
Breakout sessions

The Forum was an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss horizontal and cross-cutting issues, seeking sustainable solutions. To give space for genuine engagement, the event comprised four breakout sessions or “labs” under the overarching themes of TSD substantive rights and of monitoring, enforcement and the involvement of civil society. The objective was to break the silos and have a debate to steer recommendations, rather than just a long list of presentations.

Experienced and knowledgeable rapporteurs from think tanks, academia and the media on each lab ensured that issues and questions raised found their way in the concluding roundtable debate and this report.
TSD substantive rights: is the overall frame fit for purpose?

Isabelle Garzon, Director of Studies and Development at the Jacques Delors Institute, moderated the lab focussing on environment and climate, bringing civil society, academic and institutional views into the debate about “How can trade catch up with environment and climate agenda and how to steer work forward?”

Rob Francis, Borderlex, followed the session as rapporteur.

Main issues addressed

• The need for a paradigm shift, with the EU’s sustainable objectives being complementary with its trade objectives; it has started but needs to be steered.

• The parallel approach between environment and trade discussions has created silos and made it difficult to connect the two today; How to mainstream sustainable development beyond TSD chapters? How to ensure coherence?

• Autonomous trade policy measures versus multilateral action by the WTO and FTAs. What is more effective? Are they compatible? FTAs may allow to go further on sustainability than multilateral and unilateral measures.

• How to avoid the perception of the EU engaging in “cultural colonialism” or paternalism, even if what is being pushed by the EU are truly international standards?

• How to ensure adequate technical support and finance on trade to third country parties?

Speakers’ recommendations

• Sustainability needs to improve trough TSD chapters but we also need a horizontal approach (to be included in other chapters of the trade agreements) in order to ensure coherence.

“With the TSD review, we have a unique opportunity to shape trade policy in a more sustainable way. We do not have to choose between more trade or the SDGs. Both can be mutually supportive if we dare to think out of the box and manage to convince our partners that it is also in their interests.

Saskia Bricmont, Member of the International Trade Committee, European Parliament
Evidence shows that the EU outsources economic, social & environmental impacts abroad, notably through trade. It is time to seek genuine sustainability through the EU trade policy, matching our sound legal basis, strong political commitments, and loud civil society demands!

Our recommendations for EU FTAs to deliver on sustainability globally cover strengthened SIAs and ex-post assessment processes, operationalised TSD Chapters and suggestions to unbox sustainability from its dedicated section.

Antoine Oger, Head of the Global Challenges and SDGs team at the Institute for European Policy (IEEP)

- There is a need for **tailor-made TSD chapters** based on realities on the ground, with **systematic ex ante sustainability impact assessments** in partner countries with civil society participation.
- The **reinforcement of civil society organizations** is needed from the very beginning of the FTA negotiations.
- We need to **break down the silos**.
- The objectives of the approaches at multilateral, bilateral and unilateral level should be aligned.
- Directorate-General (DG) Environment, and other DGs (CLIMA, INTPA), to be included in trade negotiations so that their expertise is taken into account.
- We need a **comprehensive approach**:
  - A full range of tools (commonly agreed roadmaps and milestones, ex ante sustainability impact assessment, ex post reviews along with civil society).
  - Sanctions to be used as a last resort.
  - Consider **pre-ratification requirements from trade partners** when negotiating trade deals.

**Actions and next steps**

For the European Commission:

- Present the new TSD approach to current EU trade partners once it is finalised.
- Involve other DGs apart from DG Trade in FTA negotiations and implementation (e.g. DG INTPA, ENV, CLIMA).
- Develop a thorough review of sustainable chapters of bilateral trade agreements.
- Openness: Specific countries face specific challenges. Level of openness welcomed and requested regarding the involvement of civil society and the European Parliament. The possibility of sanctions as a last resort needs to be addressed.
For international organisations:

- Sustainability is not only about environment but there is a social dimension, e.g. Vietnam FTA and the reference to ILO core labour standards.

- If it is generally accepted that climate protection is a worldwide priority, WTO must include the climate and environmental topics in its agenda.

For EU trading partners:

- Create incentives for partners to sign free trade agreements.

For other stakeholders:

- Civil society participation in ex-ante sustainability assessments and the FTA negotiation process.

“If it is generally accepted that climate action is a worldwide priority, the WTO must include the climate and environmental topics in its agenda!”

Andrés Barcelo, Member of the EESC and rapporteur of the CBAM opinion.

Alice Tipping, lead on Sustainable Trade and Fisheries Subsidies at the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), moderated the lab focussing on the labour dimension of TSD, with experts from business and the ILO steering input around the question of “How can trade catch up with social agenda and how to steer work forward?”

Professor James Harrison, University of Warwick, followed the session as rapporteur.

Main issues addressed

- Reference to the ILO Labour Provisions in Trade Agreements Hub and that social and labour provisions in trade agreements in principle cover:
  - Enforcement of labour laws
  - Commitment to not derogate, waive, lower labour laws, or act in a protectionist manner
  - Access to courts and tribunals
  - Access to remedies
• Transparency and public awareness of labour laws
• Upholding of International Conventions and Declarations
• Do FTAs contain the right kind of labour and social commitments and are they tackled in the right way?
• How to make the rights contained in the FTAs a reality?
• Institutional role of the ILO
• Pre-ratification conditionality as a leverage for ratification of ILO core conventions
• Collaboration as a part of the implementation work

Speakers’ recommendations

On labour and social commitments in the FTAs:

• ILO Core Conventions should continue to be seen as central and as a bare minimum level of commitments in FTAs; a broader range of commitments could also feature in trade agreements, such as proper wage policies (to reduce inequalities), working time (under forced labour), occupational safety and health (OSH). Consideration should be given to how actionable these commitments are and therefore how meaningful.

• Need to focus not only on core labour standards but also on those rights contributing to build up necessary institutions to deliver on these rights; collective bargaining and freedom of association also play a role as enablers of other rights.

• To make the rights contained in the FTAs a reality, proper institutions must be in place in the different countries to make sure that the fundamental rights are implemented and enforced (governance institutions).

• Labour inspectorates are a key institution and social dialogue is a critical process.

A responsible management of Global Supply Chains requires practical, suitable and risk-based approaches that will take into account their specific nature. This is key to change working conditions in reality and all stakeholders must be involved.

Emmanuelle Butaud-Stubbs, Secretary General of ICC France
On the role of the ILO:

• The ILO should continue to be the primary organisation responsible for protecting and promoting labour rights, and FTAs should play a complementary role.

• ILO supervisory decisions, reporting processes etc. should be central to monitoring processes in EU FTAs as well as in WTO monitoring processes.

• The ILO could identify challenges and problems and help inform the right design of interventions to be required.

On pre-ratification conditionality:

• Pre-ratification conditionality of core labour conventions to create leverage on countries to ratify ILO core Conventions.

On collaboration:

• Well-framed and efficient collaboration is key to overcome the implementation challenge (collaboration already included in certain but not all labour standards).

• A sectoral approach can be efficient to address key challenges faced by a sector, especially in global supply chains; it is important to frame this dialogue and involve the national actors and the social partners in the implementation.

Actions and next steps

For the European Commission:

• Put the implementation of fundamental social and labour rights on top of the agenda.

• ILO’s work on the implementation of the fundamental conventions in member states should be more central to FTAs and more regularly used in enforcement procedures.

Free Trade Agreements and TSD chapters are to be seen as a vehicle to promote the development of economies by countries for their own people.

Labour inspection and social dialogue are key tools to promote labour rights.

Ratification of ILO conventions shows countries’ commitment to be held into account. The best way to overcome common challenges is well framed and efficient collaboration.

Corinne Vargha, Director of the Standards Department, International Labour Organization
• Inclusion of OSH in future FTAs to be considered in case of its inclusion in the fundamental principles and an element of the 1998 ILO Declaration, following the ILO Conference in June 2022, and need to reflect upon how this would affect existing trade agreements.

For international organisations:

• Continued cooperation between the ILO and the European Commission.

• The ILO to play a stronger role in the trade arena and at the WTO: more intense collaboration between ILO and WTO would be beneficial, including an official grant of observer to ILO from the WTO

For EU trading partners:

• By adopting the SDGs, UN member states committed to deliver on all goals, including SDG 8 with clear targets on the progress to be made; countries’ commitments to their own people to deliver on SDGs, also contain references to labour standards in some respect, and the aim is not to satisfy a trading partner; trade is a vehicle to promote the development of economies on both sides (it is not about you and them, we are in this together and how can we work together to deliver on our collective commitment).

• Effective collaboration between trade partners to be developed as a means to ensure implementation.

For other stakeholders:

• States, companies, service providers and trade unions to be involved in sectoral work to improve labour conditions in global supply chains; need to be aware of the specific characteristics of the supply chain as this affects the way labour issues are dealt with - and we should take our share of responsibility in this regard.

• Technology and digital tools to be used in the monitoring exercise.
TSD monitoring, enforcement and the involvement of civil society

Moderator Professor James Harrison, School of law at University of Warwick, steered the lab discussion with the practical input by civil society speakers, following the question of “What framework for an inclusive and efficient monitoring of TSD?”

Rob Francis, Borderlex, followed the session as rapporteur.

Main issues addressed

• DAGs suffer from a lack of human resources, with some civil society stakeholders involved in several DAGs at the same time, and discussions on minor issues can be very time-consuming.

• EU DAGs struggle with unclear procedures and (sometimes) lack of recognition from trade partner governments who feel they should only listen to their own advisory bodies.

• DAGs should work with a wider variety of actors, e.g. the ILO and OECD, when it comes to labour standards.

• Trade and investment can be a driver for sustainable development; European companies in third countries are often “drivers” of sustainable practices.

• Trade agreements are results of negotiations, where partners bring their own priorities and defensive interests to the table.

• How governments involve civil society can differ from country to country; therefore, there is a need to ensure flexibility on the EU side when dealing with the partner country.

Improvement of the DAGs’ capacity to monitor the implementation of FTAs is directly related to the involvement of Civil Society in monitoring of the agreements.

Stefano Palmieri, President of the EESC Section on Economic affairs and rapporteur on the role of civil society in trade agreements.
• Some DAGs work better than others, since this depends on their setup and the counterparts in the partner country.

• The Single Entry Point is an opportunity for civil society to submit complaints but it remains challenging for a DAG to use it, given their organisational setup and the need to agree internally.

Speakers’ recommendations

• Exchanges between the Commission and the DAGs should take place on a more regular basis, e.g. additionally in written procedure over presentations just in meetings.

• DAGs should link up to share best practices, and be encouraged and enabled to learn from each other.

• There should be transparency on the role and functioning of these bodies in partner countries. Their makeup should represent a balance of interests and its members should be fully independent from the government.

• Civil society must be present in all negotiating phases of the trade agreement as an observer, on both the EU and partner side.

• The final trade agreement should include a description of the functioning of the DAG.

• The TSD chapters should be enforceable under the trade agreement’s dispute settlement mechanism (this is not currently the case).

• DAGs should be able to launch investigations themselves, or at least the Commission should respond to their concerns.

DAGs should learn from each other and exchange their best practices. Today’s meeting provides an excellent platform for this exchange.

Representativeness, balance, and independence from governments is crucial for a transparent monitoring of the agreements.

Benedikt Wiedenhofer, BusinessEurope, Chair of Andean EU DAG
**Actions and next steps**

**For the European Commission:**

- Engage with DAGs at an early stage and provide them with enough time to submit feedback.
- Invite the chairs of the relevant DAGs to report the main issues identified by civil society to the meetings of the parties’ TSD Committees within the framework of the trade agreements (this should become a standard procedure under all FTAs, not just some, as is currently the case).

**For international organisations:**

- Organisations such as ILO and OECD, as well as DG INTPA (due to the role of the EU development policy in supporting partner countries), should be invited to provide information during DAG meetings.

**For other stakeholders:**

- DAGs should cooperate with the Commission and EU delegations in order to have more visibility on their counterparts in partner countries. In this regard, it is particularly important that contact details are shared.
- There is a need to increase awareness and interest among environmental NGOs for joining the DAGs, as they are rather underrepresented.
Jean-Baptiste Velut, LSE Consulting Trade Policy Hub, moderated the final lab with civil society stakeholders sharing their experience and insight on the challenges of “Delivering on TSD promises: rights are only as good as their effective enforceability”.

Professor Axel Marx, KU Leuven, followed the session as rapporteur.

Main issues addressed

- Enforcement example #1: The Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) under the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA and successor of NAFTA). Should EU consider the RRM, which deals with upholding the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining at company level? It is considered a strong enforcement mechanism, which can lead to effective change in a company within months. Should the EU consider including a similar mechanism in FTAs?
• Mechanism example #2: pre-ratification of conventions the EU-Vietnam agreement: Should this be strengthened and used more? What are possible advantages and disadvantages?

• Mechanism example #3: tariff differentiation used in some FTAs to better enforce sustainability, for instance EFTA-Indonesia FTA or US-Cambodia Textile agreement. Products, which are produced in a more sustainable manner, receive a lower tariff. Should EU reflect on this approach and how can it be applied in concrete terms?

• Finally, what role for technical assistance and cooperation to enable partner countries to comply with commitments? Should this be increased and how can this be done?

Further issues:

• Should there be a system in which some core labour provisions are prioritised over others?

• To what extent can enforcement be fair? What about enforceability of provisions in developed and developing countries?

• Should partner countries use enforcement mechanisms against the EU in case the EU does not uphold the standards?

Speakers’ recommendations

• Need to look for innovative approaches such as the RRM despite the fact that this is not a perfect mechanism and its scope and application needs to be improved.

• Importance of keeping the EU approach of institutionalised involvement of civil society while fostering the cross-border cooperation among civil society actors in order to strengthen enforcement.

• Need for strong monitoring of TSD chapters and for an adequate response by the Commission to civil society claims that a third country fails to meet its commitments.

Using the weight of a trade agreement so that the workers can uphold their rights through organised trade unions is a way to make a change.

Angelo DiCaro, Director of Research Department of the Canadian trade union Unifor and Canadian Labour DAG member
• Call for urging a third country to first ratify ILO conventions before concluding an FTA with the EU.

• Call to companies for responsible business conduct in third countries and acknowledging the role of business initiatives in this field.

**Actions and next steps**

**For the European Commission:**

• Allow DAGs to contribute more, by granting additional resources for cooperation between partner civil societies.

• Enhance monitoring of TSD chapters and ensure an adequate response by the Commission when a third country fails to meet its commitments.

• Reinforce EU monitoring of trade agreements and reflect on how to stimulate efficient changes – acting on the social conditions seems easier than on environmental conditions.

• Looking for innovative approaches such as the RRM while keeping the specificity of the European approach.

**For DAGs:**

• Reflect on how to make best use of specific mechanisms such as RRM, pre-ratification of conventions and tariff differentiation in EU trade agreements to better contribute to their enforcement.

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Almost decades ago we realised that supply chains need to change and consumers are much more vigilant about where their products come from; from free trade we have moved to sustainable trade.

Stuart Newman, Senior Legal Advisor on Sustainable Trade & Customs, Amfori
Meeting civil society expectations on TSD: delivering on ambitions

Concluding a rich Forum day, moderator Desiree LeClercq, Assistant Professor, Cornell School of Industrial Labour Relations, invited a final round of high-level institutional and civil society speakers to pull together some of the recommendation strings, looking forward to the next steps of the TSD review and bringing in the multilateral level and related challenges of trade and sustainable development.

Main takeaways from speakers

On the tensions between trade policy and sustainable development:

- There is a change of paradigm: we have moved away from labour and the environment as non-trade concerns and now agree that trade should integrate sustainability policies.

- Trade is not an obstacle for social protection and every country is free to pursue social policies in trade so long as they do not manipulate the system to engage in unlawful protectionism.
WTO instruments can already contribute to reduce the tensions between trade and sustainable development, such as:

- Transparency as a mechanism for notification of trade measures in the WTO; the number of notified measures concerning environmental protection is increasing.
- WTO as a place to promote dialogue and negotiation on proposed measures such as EU CBAM.
- As for labour, possibly to consider an interpretive statement under existing WTO rules, affirming for the “public morals” exception to include ILO fundamental labour rights and outline the possible role of ILO determinations in any legal proceedings.

On the possibility to achieve greater coherence between different approaches related to TSD, including at multilateral level:

- Most bilateral and regional trade agreements contain a sustainable development chapter, but approaches differ significantly regarding provisions and enforcement.
- Coherence should not be a goal per se, but it is important to see what is effective and what makes a change on the ground.
- The EU approach is not based on imposing European values, but making sure that international standards are respected (ILO core Convention, Multilateral environmental agreements, Paris agreement).
- The EU is looking also for a holistic approach by adding autonomous measures beyond trade agreements (CBAM, deforestation, corporate social responsibility), which should be respected by economic operators both in the EU and in our trade partner countries.
• For the EU, cooperation and real change is more important than coherence, and the role of the DAGs and their assessments and recommendations are very valuable in this context.

• While cooperation and dialogue should remain the watchwords for TSD, it also needs an enforceable leg.

• Trade agreements provide an important platform, where improvement can be jointly and continuously built over time and, through constructive engagement, change can be best instilled.

• Coherence between the work of the WTO and other international organisations such as the ILO could be useful to ensure that trade works for sustainable development.

**On the civil society priorities for stronger TSD:**

• A next generation TSD should build on the lessons learnt and turn them into an ambitious review of the EU approach.

• Using better the leverage of the trade negotiation process to obtain early ratification of international agreements or at least binding and enforceable roadmaps towards their ratification before the agreement signing.

• Future TSD chapters should have clear language on the TSD commitments and be complemented with more effective enforceability. They should honestly reflect intentions and expectations.

• An integrated approach towards enforcement with both dialogue and sanctions will be the most effective.

• Necessity to link the benefits of tariff reductions in the trade agreements to the progress of TSD implementation and looking beyond traditional TSD chapters, such as having conditional green and social public procurement.

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*Trade policy is not an obstacle to environmental policy and can help to leverage its objectives*

WTO is a place of discussion. It is a space to reduce tensions. A place to promote dialogue on just transition, negotiation, and dispute resolution, with respect to the rule of law

Jean-Marie Paugam, Deputy Director-General at the World Trade Organisation
Our priorities on the TSD review should be met with a fresh mindset which also means breaking down the silos.

An ambitious review must feature a revamped sanctionable enforcement approach with stronger civil society monitoring, using innovative instruments and enhancing the leverage for TSD - a non-paper will not cut it this time.

Tanja Buzek, Chair of the EESC Follow-up Committee on International Trade and Rapporteur on the TSD Review.

- Strengthen civil society’s role and empowering DAGs by clear setup requirements in the agreements themselves, giving DAG recommendations more weight through a structured follow-up process paired with open institutional channels, and equipping them with sufficient resources.

- Pay more attention to the role of civil society actors on the ground in partner countries because EU DAGs need counterparts in order to effectively monitor the agreements.

On the types of supporting measures needed for developing countries to ensure that trade and sustainable development nexus works also for them:

- Developing countries are increasingly interested in sustainable development and related negotiations in the WTO. We need to use WTO tools such as Aid for Trade, technical assistance, special and differential treatment to promote their involvement.

- Developed countries need to help developing countries to de-carbonize their value and supply chains.

- Working on social standards in WTO is more difficult but ILO and WTO should cooperate more closely. ILO technical assistance can be an effective tool in helping developing countries to meet commitments under TSD chapters.

- The EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) is a way for offering developing countries to have market access while requiring of them progress on respect of human rights, labour rights and the environment.

- Engagement of civil society in regional agreements between developing countries and at WTO level will better guarantee that trade is respectful of sustainable development.
• More involvement of civil society in the developing countries is needed to ensure that social and environmental standards are effectively met, and developed countries should support this involvement.

On the outlook for the TSD review and future steps:

• The review of the 15-point action plan on TSD should go beyond a non-paper in order to meet expectations of civil society.

• Coordinating with civil society should continue, and the EESC’s ambition is to turn this Forum into a recurrent event.
Introductory remarks

- Christa Schweng, President of the European Economic and Social Committee

Opening roundtable: Trade and sustainable development: Where are we and where do we want to go?

Moderated by Carolyn Deere-Birkbeck, Senior Researcher at the Graduate Institute’s Global Governance Centre and Director, Forum on Trade, Environment and the SDGs, TESS, this roundtable will set the scene, take stock of where things stand on Trade and Sustainable Development and steer reflections on possible ways forward.

- Bernd Lange, Chair of the International Trade Committee at the European Parliament
- Luisa Santos, Deputy Director-General at BusinessEurope
- Daniele Basso, Advisor, ETUC
- Anaïs Berthier, Head of EU Affairs at ClientEarth

Parallel breakout sessions: TSD substantive rights: is the overall frame fit for purpose?

Lab 1: How can trade catch up with the environment and climate agenda and how to steer work forward?

Moderated by Isabelle Garzon, Director of Studies and Development at Europe Jacques Delors

- Andres Barcelo Delgado, EESC Rapporteur on CBAM
- Antoine Oger, Head of the Global Challenges and SDGs team, IEEP
- Saskia Bricmont, Member of the International Trade Committee at the European Parliament
Lab 2: How can trade catch up with the social agenda and how to steer work forward?

Moderated by Alice Tipping, Lead, Sustainable Trade and Fisheries Subsidies, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

- Corinne Vargha, Director of the Standards Department, International Labour Organization
- Emmanuelle Butaud-Stubbs, Secretary General of ICC France

Parallel breakout sessions: TSD monitoring, enforcement and the involvement of civil society

Lab 3: What should be the framework for inclusive and efficient monitoring of TSD?

Moderated by Professor James Harrison, School of law at University of Warwick

- Stefano Palmieri, President of the EESC Section on Economic Affairs and rapporteur on the role of civil society in trade agreements
- Benedikt Wiedenhofer, BusinessEurope, Chair of Andean EU DAG

Lab 4: Delivering on TSD promises: rights are only as good as their effective enforceability

Moderated by Jean-Baptiste Velut, LSE consulting

- Angelo di Caro, Director, Research Department, Unifor, Canadian Labour DAG member
- Stuart Newman, Senior Legal Advisor - Sustainable Trade & Customs, Amfori

Concluding roundtable: Meeting civil society expectations on TSD: delivering on ambitions

Moderated by Desiree LeClercq, Assistant Professor, Cornell School of Industrial Labor Relations, this roundtable will build on the debates of the day and consider ways forward.

- Maria Martin Prat, Deputy Director-General at the European Commission
- Jean-Marie Paugam, Deputy Director-General at the World Trade Organization
- Tanja Buzek, Chair of the EESC Follow-up Committee on International Trade and Rapporteur on the TSD Review