**DRAFT**

**Rules of procedure of the EU Domestic Advisory Group created under Article 240.4 of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement**

# **Main functions and objectives of the EU Domestic Advisory Group (DAG)**

The EU DAG shall express its opinions, make recommendations and advise on any issue related to the implementation of the Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (AA).

Such opinions, recommendations or advise shall be provided on its own initiative or at the request of the European Commission (the Commission), the Association Committee, the Trade and Sustainable Development Sub-Committee, the joint meeting of the EU and Georgia DAGs or the Panel of Experts (referred to in Articles 243 of the AA).

# **Composition and membership of the EU DAG**

The EU DAG shall be composed of members and permanent observers. The number of members shall be maximum 12, including three EESC members and up to nine members representing European civil society organisations. The number of observers shall not exceed the number of members.

Requests for participation by potential additional observers shall be made to the DAG Chair either directly or through the secretariat. The DAG members will decide on authorisation for such organisations to participate as observers.

The members of the EU DAG shall be appointed for a two-and-half-year term (aligned with the EESC mandate)[[1]](#footnote-1) with the possibility of renewal for members.

A balanced representation of economic, social and environmental stakeholders should be ensured. The members of the EU DAG shall be divided accordingly into three groups – business, labour, and other organisations.

If a seat occupied by an EESC member becomes vacant, a new member will be appointed by the EESC according to its internal procedures.

If a seat occupied by a non-EESC member becomes vacant, a new member shall be appointed by the EU-DAG, based on a proposal made by the Chair after consultation of a relevant sub-group, taking into account the need for balanced representation within the EU DAG.

In case of repeated and not justified absence of one of the organisations in the meetings and work of the EU DAG, the Chair will consult the remaining EU DAG members with proposals for replacing the organisation in question with another one, belonging to the same sub-group.

Organisations belonging to a sub-group may agree on a rotation between members and observers at the end of each mandate.

Under the authority of the Chair, meetings of the EU DAG may be open to the EU civil society organisations that are not members of the EU DAG, in particular for specific discussions that would benefit from additional expertise.

# **Frequency of meetings**

The EU DAG shall meet at least twice a year.

Additional meetings may be called by:

* the Chair on its own initiative
* at least six members of the EU DAG
* DG Trade
* the Trade and Sustainable Development Sub-Committee
* the Association Committee.

Requests for additional meetings shall be addressed to the Chair and the secretariat which will check with DG Trade the availability of financial means.

# **Chair of the EU DAG**

The Chair of the EU DAG shall be elected by a simple majority of its members for a two-and-a-half-year term (aligned with the EESC mandate). The DAG shall select a Chair amongst its three sub-groups on a rotational basis.

The Chair:

* convenes the meetings of the EU DAG
* proposes the agenda of the meetings
* moderates the meetings
* acts as spokesperson of the EU DAG in contacts with third parties.

# **Secretariat**

The main tasks of the Secretariat shall be to support the work of the EU DAG and its Chair, to ensure publicity and communication of the work of the EU DAG and to liaise with the European Commission, the Association Committee, the Trade and Sustainable Development Sub-Committee and the Georgian DAG.

The Secretariat will prepare and send out to EU DAG the minutes and the draft agendas of the meetings.

The minutes will be sent before the next meeting and submitted for approval by the EU DAG members at the following meeting.

The Secretariat shall also be responsible for coordinating on the EU side the organisation of joint meetings of the EU and Georgian DAGs and shall facilitate inter-sessional contacts and cooperation between them.

# **Preparation of agenda for EU DAG meetings**

Agendas of the EU DAG meetings shall be drawn up and proposed by the Chair.

The EU DAG members may propose points to be included in the agenda.

The Secretariat will send out the draft agenda to the EU DAG members and observers at least three weeks before the meeting.

# **EU DAG communications, recommendations and other actions**

The EU DAG may address communications and recommendations related to the implementation of the Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter of the EU-Georgia AA to the Trade and Sustainable Development Sub-Committee, to the parties to the AA, to a Panel of Experts – if it has been convened by the Trade and Sustainable Development Sub-Committee – to the EU institutions, as well as to the Georgian DAG and the Civil Society Dialogue Forum or any other relevant body.

To prepare its communications, the EU DAG may appoint rapporteurs. It may consult academics, international organisations, independent experts or civil society organisations with relevant expertise which are not members of the EU DAG.

Unless otherwise decided, the EU DAG's communications, opinions and reports shall be public documents. They shall be available in the working languages of the EU DAG defined at the beginning of the mandate.

The EU DAG may also publish other documents related to its work that are considered to be suitable for public dissemination.

EU DAG recommendations, communications, opinions, reports and other documents will present the views of the Group reached either by consensus or by majority vote.

The EU DAG may organise other activities which it considers relevant, such as workshops or seminars, including in partnership with other institutions or organisation.

# **Quorum**

A quorum shall exist if more than half of the members of the EU DAG are present and if at least one member representing each sub-group is attending. The quorum will be ascertained at the beginning of the meeting.

# **Voting procedure**

The EU DAG shall strive to take decisions by consensus. In case a vote is called for, decisions will be taken by a simple majority. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall have a casting vote.

One organisation can delegate its vote to another one among the members of the same sub-group.

Members wishing to delegate their vote will inform the Chair before the beginning of each meeting. The secretariat will distribute a list of members and observers for each meeting.

# **Relations with the European Commission and other EU institutions**

The Commission shall be systematically invited to participate in the EU DAG meetings with a view to participate in discussions or to make presentations on specific subjects but shall not be involved in the decision-making.

Depending on the agenda, representatives of the European External Action Service or other EU and Georgian international institutions may be invited.

# **Financing the EU DAG meetings**

The financial aspects of the operation of the EU DAG (namely transport, accommodations, logistics, interpretation and catering) will be dealt with by the European Commission.

Financial aspects related to participation of the non-EESC EU DAG members and observers in joint meetings of the EU DAG and the Georgian DAG, and in the Civil Society Dialogue Forum will be decided by the Commission.

# **Interaction with Civil Society from Georgia**

The EU DAG will aim to hold joint meetings with the Georgian DAG, thereby providing framework for a structured discussion on implementation of the Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter of the AA and for cooperation between the DAGs in this context.

The EU DAG may also decide (separately or jointly with the Georgian DAG) about their participation and/or contribution to the Civil Society Dialogue Forum.

# **Adoption and amendment of the rules of procedures of the EU DAG**

The rules of procedure shall be adopted either by consensus or by simple majority of the EU DAG members.

These rules of procedure may be amended following a proposal of one third of the members of the EU DAG. The proposed modification will be adopted by consensus or by simple majority.

1. As an exception, the first term will be a different length to allow for alignment with the EESC mandate. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)