

6th Meeting of the
EU DAG under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA)
09 March 2023, 09:30-13:00

Short note after meeting for EU DAG members

Main takeaways of meeting

1. The 6th meeting of the EU DAG set up under the EU-UK TCA was dedicated to the current situation of the UK DAG and joint DAG to DAG steps, to the Members' presentation and discussion of the issues and risks posed by the proposed Minimum Service Levels Bill, and to an extensive presentation by the Commission on LPF provisions, followed by a discussion with Members.
2. The Chair of the UK DAG, Mr. Sean McGuire, provided an overview of the UK DAG situation, activities and issues, from internal organisation to funding. Mr. McGuire noted the profound political changes the UK recently underwent and their implications on TCA and EU-UK relationship in general. On this point, Mr. McGuire welcomed the breakthrough on the Windsor Framework, while recognising that the new reality for now is one of increasing divergence that will require proper management.
3. Both sides agreed on the positive evaluation of the first DAG to DAG meeting in October, and on a more mixed view of the Civil Society Forum, whose format needs improvement. Agreement was also registered on exploring the idea of joint working groups and workshops, as flexible and effective tools to share information and maximise the impact of the DAGs.
4. The following TCA implementation issue was presented and discussed:
 - ***Urgent developments on UK Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill (Group II, Sabine TRIER, European Transport Workers' Federation)***Members discussed the impact that this proposed bill would have on the right to strike. The violations of ILO conventions that this bill might entail could constitute a breach of related TCA provisions. Since this is an ongoing and evolving matter, Members agreed to keep monitoring the situation.
5. Ms Laura Pastor from DG Trade gave a technical presentation on the LPF chapter of the TCA, a wide set of provisions covering state to state disputes, competition, state-owned enterprises, non-regression, TSD and more. Ms Pastor distinguished divergence and regression, for which remedial measures are foreseen in the TCA. She then provided an overview on UK implementation of LPF provisions, namely via the Retained EU Law bill. Given the amount of legislation affected, as well as the ongoing complex legislative process, the picture is still uncertain and the Commission is keeping a close eye on it.
6. Members followed up with questions and concerns over subsidies regime, CBAM, services and data protection, deforestation, labour standards, and the balance between natural divergence and necessary cooperation. Ms Pastor reassured that the Commission's priority is the full and proper implementation of the TCA, and a continued and constructive cooperation with the UK. She thanked the DAG for the contribution and encouraged to keep up with the monitoring and sharing effort.
7. Ms Pastor and the Members briefly exchanged views on the 2023 agenda, with particular focus on the next DAG to DAG meeting, CSF, and Trade Specialised Committees. More contacts will be needed to identify viable solutions to ensure feasibility and concrete impact of the DAGs participation.