

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Directorate-General for Trade

Directorate A - Resources, Information and Policy Coordination
Information, Communication and Civil Society

Brussels, 20 December 2013

Dear Contact Group members,

I would like to inform you that DG Trade is launching the procedure to set up an EU civil society domestic advisory body for the EU-Colombia/Peru Trade Agreement, following the provisions included in the Trade and Sustainable Development chapter of the Agreement. This letter is addressed to you in your capacity as a representative of organisations of participating in DG TRADE's Civil Society Dialogue (CSD) Contact Group.

The EU-Colombia/Peru Trade Agreement foresees the setting-up of domestic advisory groups (DAGs) (Article 281 of the Agreement), which would consist of civil society in a balanced representation of environmental, labour and economic interests, as well as other relevant stakeholders. In addition, these DAGs are expected to participate in the open sessions of the government-to-government Trade and Sustainable Development Committee (Article 282 of the Agreement).

The Trade and Sustainable Development chapter has a very broad scope, with a format that allows for comprehensive discussions on economic, social and environmental issues. The role of the EU DAG will be to submit views and make recommendations on the implementation of the Trade and Sustainable Development chapter, including on its own initiative.

As for the open sessions of the Trade and Sustainable Development Committee, the Commission intends to implement them in a way that will ensure a constructive and meaningful dialogue. In this regard, an active and visible role of the DAGs is expected, by bringing into the open meetings their regular monitoring work. In this respect a dedicated platform from which the DAGs would present their activities and views is foreseen. Also, an active involvement of the DAGs in managing the joint open meetings with civil society, for example selecting topics for the agenda, is envisaged. This will allow the DAGs to steer the overall discussions throughout the meetings, and ensure a constructive and focused debate. In addition, the DAGs are encouraged to meet before and/or after the open session, so as to be able to continue their deliberations.

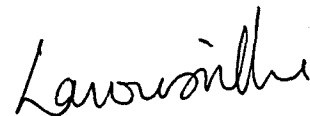
The Commission's expectation is that the EU DAG will be established in a similar way to the EU DAG under the EU-Korea Agreement with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) providing a number of seats and wider civil society providing the majority of participants. The latter will be selected in consultation with the CSD Contact Group, and include a balanced representation of business organisations, employers organisations, trade unions and environmental NGOs.

Members of the CSD Contact Group are welcome to express an interest in joining the EU DAG. The Commission also expects you to request the groups and/or organisations you represent to propose candidates. If applications exceed the number of available places, a rotation system within sub-groups may be put in place. The Commission will decide on the final membership based on the expressions of interest received through the CSD Contact Group. Financial resources will be made available to a core group of DAG participants to attend meetings.

Together with our Colombian and Peruvian partners, the Commission looks forward to holding the first meeting of the Trade and Sustainable Development Committee at the start of next year, likely to be hosted by one of our Andean partners in February 2014. Therefore, we must finalise the setting up of the EU DAG swiftly, as it will be expected to contribute to the work of the Committee and participate in the upcoming meetings.

I would therefore appreciate if you could let us know whether you and/or others in the CSD Contact Group that you represent would be interested in participating in the EU DAG by Monday 10 January 2014 cob, by replying to Didier Bloch by email: Didier.BLOCH@ec.europa.eu, or by phone: +32 (0) 22 987 625.

Yours sincerely,



O.de Laroussilhe
Head of Unit