

4th meeting of the European Union-Georgia
Sub-Committee (SC) on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD)
Joint statement to the Civil Society Dialogue Forum

- Representatives of the Government of Georgia and the EU met on 26 March 2019 for the fourth meeting of the EU-Georgia Sub-Committee (SC) on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) under the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), part of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement.
- They are pleased to meet with the representatives of civil society from the EU and Georgia in this Joint Civil Society Dialogue Forum and debrief on the discussions during the TSD SC meeting. This Joint statement also serves this objective.
- The Parties reiterated their commitment to economic development that goes hand in hand with social justice, respect for labour rights and environmental standards. They further outlined the importance they attach to the effective implementation of the TSD provisions.
- The Parties noted the adoption of the TSD Work Plan 2018-20 in June 2018. The Work Plan identifies the priority areas for implementation of the TSD Chapter and defines activities for the Parties to meet these objectives, including timelines, the authorities in charge and donors assistance available to support them. The TSD SC exchanged information on subjects of TSD-relevance in line with the TSD Work Plan 2018-20, in particular on labour protection and the environment, including climate action.
- More specifically, the TSD SC reviewed the implementation of **labour provisions** of the TSD Chapter, including the ratification and effective implementation of the ILO conventions and Decent Work. The EU welcomed the adoption of the revised Georgian OSH law and on-going strengthening of the Labour Inspection Department's capacity as further steps towards aligning supervision and control in this area with international and EU standards. The EU pointed to the current capacity challenge for the Labour inspection department, and re-affirmed its readiness to support Georgia through both policy dialogue and assistance through specific actions such as the seminar organised by the European Commission in Tbilisi in September 2018 on Labour Standards and Inspection. The EU

also welcomed progress in aligning Georgian national legislation with the ILO Conventions C100 on Equal Remuneration and C111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) and will closely follow further examination by the ILO supervisory bodies. The EU repeated its call for advancing supervision and enforcement of all core labour standards by establishing a fully-fledged labour inspection system. Georgia expressed its intention to guarantee that the rights of employees at the workplace are protected and that the labour rights under the Labour Code are enforced. In this respect, the Government of Georgia will introduce legislative amendments in 2019 providing that the competent authority, i.e. labour inspectorate, will supervise the enforcement of all labour rights under the Labour Code. These amendments shall apply to high risk, harm, harmful and hazardous work as from 2020 and to all economic sectors by 2022.

- The Parties reviewed the state of play relating to the implementation of the **environmental provisions** of the TSD Chapter, including the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and their joint efforts and cooperation to support multilateral environmental governance. The EU expressed interest in learning how Georgia is implementing the Environmental Assessment Code and the legislation on the Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Parties further discussed the implementation of number of ratified conventions, including the Aarhus Convention, the UNECE Air Convention, the Basel Convention on Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal and the Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants.
- The Parties also discussed cooperation in view of the upcoming CITES COP in May 2019 in Sri Lanka and highlighted good progress made recently in the work on trade in snowdrop bulbs. The EU noted progress made by Georgia in bringing its legislation in line with the CITES Convention, and encouraged further efforts towards reaching the ‘category 1’ according to the CITES national legislation assessment¹.
- The Parties exchanged information on their respective domestic policies relevant to the TSD Chapter objectives of sustainable forest management and trade in forest products. In

¹ Georgia is in Category 2 (out of three) where “legislation is believed generally to meet **one to three of the four requirements** for effective implementation of CITES”.

https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/prog/Legislation/CITES_national_legislative_status_table-september-2018.pdf

this respect, Georgia informed that the Forest Code has already been submitted to the Parliament. Moreover Georgia gave information on the participation of employees of the Environmental Supervision and Customs departments of the respective ministries in trainings to better enforce provisions of the CITES convention. The Parties discussed possibilities for cooperation on sustainable forest management including prevention of illegal timber trade. The EU technical assistance via the forestry component of the EU4Environment programme.

- Regarding **climate change**, the Parties recalled that, collectively, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) submitted by the Parties under the Paris Agreement and current emission trajectories fall far short of what is required to achieve the long term goals of the Paris Agreement. They recalled the need for the Parties to come up, by 2020, with new or updated Nationally Determined contributions and mid-century long-term greenhouse gas emission strategies. The EU informed about the European Commission's vision for Europe to become the world's first major economy to become climate neutral by 2050. Georgia informed the EU on their ongoing update of NDC and their intention to develop a long-term 2050 Low Emission Development Strategies under the project EU4Climate by 2020.
- The EU emphasised the need for close cooperation with Civil Society and highlighted the project it has put in place to support the functioning of civil society consultation mechanisms established under TSD chapters of its trade agreements. It also noted that the first workshop under this contract had been organised in the context of EU Georgia DCFTA.
- The Parties agreed to continue the exchange of the information regarding actions to implement the Work Plan.
- The Parties look forward to hearing the views and the opinions of the Joint Civil Society Dialogue Forum on the implementation of the TSD Chapter.

Brussels, 26 March 2019