

2nd meeting of the Georgia – European Union
Sub-Committee (SC) on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD)
Joint statement to the Civil Society Dialogue Forum

- Representatives of Georgia and the EU met today (30 November 2016) for the second 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 Association Agreement.
- The Parties are pleased to have the opportunity today to meet the Joint Civil Society Dialogue Forum and provide an update on their activities since the first TSD Sub-Committee meeting on 26 January 2016.
- In the TSD SC meeting this morning, the Parties reiterated the importance they attach to the effective implementation of the TSD chapter with the overarching objective of developing trade in such a way as to contribute to the sustainable development with its economic, social and environmental dimensions.
- The second meeting of the Trade and Sustainable Development Sub-Committee served to exchange information on each side's initiatives in the area of trade and sustainable development, discuss the implementation of the TSD chapter provisions to date, and agree on the next steps to be taken.
- The Sub-Committee discussed a number of institutional issues: the Parties updated each other on their interactions with their respective Domestic Advisory Groups and discussed and clarified the on-going transition of Georgia's trade relationship with the EU from the GSP+ to the DCFTA framework until the end of 2016.
- The Sub-Committee reviewed the situation regarding the implementation of labour provisions of the TSD Chapter. As regards the ratification and effective implementation of the ILO conventions, the EU highlighted the progress made by the EU Member States in ratification of ILO conventions on governance and technical conventions. Georgia provided an update on the efforts taken by the government and leading to the effective implementation of the ratified ILO conventions, focusing on labour rights enforcement, eradicating child labour and reinvigorating the tripartite social dialogue. The EU

welcomed the efforts and progress by the Georgian government and encouraged further actions including the ratification of the ILO conventions such as Convention C144 (Tripartite consultations) and strengthening the legal framework for child labour and labour rights enforcement (regulating the scope of supervision responsibility and labour inspectors' powers in line with ILO principles). The EU also highlighted support it is providing to ILO to help Georgia build-up technical expertise and reinforce social dialogue. The Parties agreed on the importance of discussion on labour issues and the need for gradual strengthening and implementation of labour legislation.

- The Sub-Committee reviewed the state of play concerning the **environmental provisions** of the TSD Chapter, including the effective implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and joint efforts and cooperation to support the multilateral environmental governance. The Parties congratulated each other on the excellent cooperation and joint efforts within the framework of CITES, and Georgia's increased role in the European region. They discussed further efforts taken by Georgia for more effective enforcement of CITES. The EU welcomed Georgia's draft Environmental Assessment Code and encouraged its swift adoption, as well as Georgia becoming a party to Espoo convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Protocol. The Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), and the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and Minamata Conventions were also discussed. The Parties agreed to cooperate closely in the framework of these MEAs.
- The Parties exchanged information on their respective domestic policies relevant to the TSD chapter objectives of sustainable forest management and trade in forest products, namely Georgia's new Forest Code and the EU's Timber Regulation. The Parties discussed the ENPI FLEG programme, promoting bilateral cooperation in legally-sourced forestry products, ending in 2016.
- Regarding **climate change**, both Parties have signed the Paris Agreement. The EU encouraged Georgia to ratify it as soon as possible and shared some of the challenges in implementation and steps that the EU is taking to achieve its implementation targets. The EU congratulated Georgia on its membership of the Energy Community. The EU offered to share experience in the area of energy savings and energy security which can be gained from greater energy efficiency. The EU also enquired regarding progress on the Low

Emission Development Strategy (LEDS), the Montreal Protocol regarding F-Gases, and the ODS regulation. Georgia detailed its progress regarding its INDC, and its intended reduction of GHGs.. The parties also stressed the importance of horizontal cooperation between ministries as well as mainstreaming of climate change policy with a holistic approach.

- The Parties discussed **a number of priorities for the draft work plan for the period 2017-2020** on the basis of the proposals submitted by each side. The Parties agreed on a number of areas to be developed further in the work plan, including Sustainable Forest Management, and effective implementation of labour legislation.
- As **next steps**, the Sub-Committee agreed that additional priority areas for the work plan shall be identified by the end of January 2017 in order to finalise the work plan before the next sub-committee meeting to take place in the third quarter of 2017.
- 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 in general and the potential content of the work plan in particular.

Brussels, 30 November 2016