

3rd 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 the government of Georgia and of the EU met yesterday (20 March 2018) for the third 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.
- The Parties are pleased to have the opportunity today to meet with the representatives of civil society from both Georgia and the EU in this Joint Civil Society Dialogue Forum and debrief them from their discussion during the TSD SC meeting. This Joint statement is also to serve this objective.
- In the framework of the constructive TSD exchanges, the Parties reiterated the importance they attach to the effective implementation of the TSD chapter with the overarching objective of developing bilateral trade in such a way as to contribute to the sustainable development, which encompasses economic development, social development and environmental protection.
- The parties exchanged information on each side's initiatives in the area of labour protection and environment, including climate action of trade-relevance, discussed the progress in the implementation of the TSD chapter provisions to date, and agreed on the next steps to be taken, including joint work and cooperation in relevant international organisations. To this objective a TSD Work Plan 2018-20, defining priorities in TSD work was agreed in principle.
- More specifically, the Sub-Committee reviewed the situation regarding the implementation of labour provisions of the TSD Chapter, including on ratification and effective implementation of the ILO conventions and decent work. In addition, the Parties exchanged views on the on-going efforts by the government of Georgia concerning occupational safety and health, effective monitoring and inspection of labour standards and rights, eradicating child labour, reinvigorating the tripartite social dialogue, and non-discrimination at the workplace. The EU welcomed the steps already undertaken by the

Georgian government and encouraged further actions, including extension of the OSH law to all sectors of economic activity, and ensuring labour rights enforcement (a fully-fledged labour inspection). The Parties agreed on need for continued efforts to strengthen and effectively implement labour protection consistently with international standards, and the importance of discussions and cooperation in the TSD SC framework, as reflected in the action plan.

- The Sub-Committee reviewed the state of play concerning the implementation of the **environmental provisions** of the TSD Chapter, including the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and joint efforts and cooperation to support the multilateral environmental governance. The Parties recalled the importance of the integration of environment into other sectors with the objective of ensuring sustainable economic growth and more broadly, sustainable development. More specifically, the Parties congratulated each other on the excellent cooperation and joint efforts within the framework of CITES, and discussed future close cooperation in this multilateral forum. They took stock of the efforts taken by Georgia to upgrade its legal framework and capacities for effective enforcement of CITES commitments. The EU welcomed Georgia's new Environmental Impact Assessment code, and encouraged the government of Georgia to become a party to Espoo convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Protocol.
- 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 comprehensive work on the new Forest Code and its implementing acts and the EU's Timber Regulation. The Parties discussed possibilities for cooperation on sustainable forest management and prevent illegal timber trade (among the Action Plan priorities), including EU assistance programmes available.
- Regarding **climate change**, having ratified the Paris Agreement, the Parties exchanged on their respective efforts to ensure the implementation of the climate action commitments, including the Georgian authorities' work on an updated NDC. The EU briefed on its strategies and efforts to implement the Paris Agreement and promoted the

new project (EU4Climate) to be set up, with a budget of more than EUR 8 million for 5 years in the framework of the regional programme to support climate action activities in the Eastern neighbourhood partner countries. The EU also enquired regarding progress on the Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS), and the Montreal Protocol regarding F-Gases. Georgia detailed its work regarding its NDC, and its intended reduction of GHGs. The parties also stressed the importance of mainstreaming of climate change policy with a holistic approach and importance of joint efforts.

- As regard future work in the framework of the TSD SC, the Parties agreed on key parameters of an **work plan for the period 2018-2020**, which will be finalised before the end of April 2018. The Plan identifies the priority areas and defines activities to meet these objectives, including timeframes, the authorities in charge and donors assistance available to support them.
- 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.

Tbilisi, 20 March 2018