

3rd meeting of the Republic of Moldova – European Union
Association Sub-Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development
Joint statement to the Civil Society Dialogue Forum

The representatives of the Republic of Moldova and of the European Union (EU) met yesterday in Chisinau for the third meeting of the Sub-Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) under the DCFTA part of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement.

The Parties are pleased to meet today with the civil society at the Joint Civil Society Forum for an update on the implementation of the TSD chapter and to exchange views on relevant TSD topics.

The Sub-committee on TSD stressed the importance it attaches to the TSD chapter. The Parties agreed on the need to intensify efforts and progress in implementing this chapter and to engage better with their respective domestic advisory groups (DAGs). The EU noted the added value of the TSD chapter to the Association Agreement and recalled the need to focus on relevant aspects for TSD which goes beyond the Association agenda. Moldova communicated to the EU the nomination of the main advisor of the division of International and Economic Cooperation as contact point for the TSD chapter.

Labour provisions

The Sub-Committee reviewed the state of play in the implementation of labour provisions of the TSD Chapter, in particular, with regards to the implementation of ILO conventions.

Moldova updated the Sub-Committee on policy developments since the last meeting:

- on the Law amending and supplementing the Labour Code, which adjusts the national legislation and increases the level of legal protection of employees;
- on the establishment of a working group for improving the business environment and the investment climate;
- on the National Strategy on Employment for the period 2017-2021, aiming at increasing the level of formal employment;
- on the Draft Law on the promotion of employment, which provides a new package of active measures, focusing on the individual needs of the unemployed;
- on the Laws no. 180 and no. 200 to improve the legal framework in the field of labour migration;
- on the new priorities, which are (1) adaptation of the new employment support law and implementing new active labour measures; (2) on the modernization of the National Employment Agency, and (3) improving the labour market matching.

The EU highlighted its recent work and priorities regarding ILO conventions on forced labour (C29) and its protocol, on child labour (C182), on labour inspection (C81), on occupational safety and health (C155), the maritime labour convention (MLC, 2016) and the fishing convention (C188).

The EU reiterated its concerns regarding the situation of the State Labour Inspectorate (SLI) in Moldova. In this regard, the EU enquired about on the implications of the recently adopted Law 185/2017 to reform the competences of the SLI, which splits the actual competences into different agencies. Moldova provided information and clarifications on the compliance of this reform with ILO Conventions and standards. The EU encouraged Moldova to progress in the fight against child and forced labour (in particular, with evidence collection), to strengthen labour inspection in line with ILO conventions and recommendations.

Last, with regards to the event on labour inspection best practices (together with Georgia and Ukraine) agreed at the last meeting of the Sub-Committee, the EU reconfirmed its intention to organize it during the 1st half of 2018.

Environmental provisions

The Sub-Committee also reviewed the state of play in the implementation of environmental provisions of the TSD Chapter, including the ratification and implementation of several multilateral environmental agreements.

Moldova informed the EU about on the ratification in 2017 of the Paris Agreement and the Minamata Convention. Moldova updated on its priorities and participation on the COP/MOPs of the following conventions: Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (April-May, 2017), ESPOO (June, 2017), Minamata (September, 2017).

Moldova informed on its Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) and the Action Plan 2016-2030 approved by the Government, which represent efforts to implement Moldovan NDCs. Republic of Moldova informed on development of draft of the Road Map on Green Economy promotion and national green growth indicators.

With regards CITES, Moldova informed the EU about the 5 trainings organized for customs officers on implementation of the convention and the issuance of 100 permits for import/export of CITES species.

The EU congratulated Moldova for the ratification of the Paris Agreement and Minamata Convention. The ratification of the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur protocol to CBD by Moldova is currently being promoted.

The EU updated the Sub-Committee on the priorities and progress with multilateral environmental agreements (CITES and Minamata) and with regards to combatting illegal logging and illegal trade. The Parties agreed to cooperate in the implementation of CITES. To this end, Moldova will engage with the EU working group on wildlife trafficking dealing with Eastern border countries, as a preventive measure. The Parties agreed on the importance of the Minamata convention and reconfirm intentions to go beyond the commitments set by the convention. I.e. with regards to trade measures such as export/import prohibitions applicable to certain mercury compounds and to mercury waste. Finally, the EU agreed to share information and experience with the EU Ecolabel scheme with Moldova.

On climate change, the EU updated on the implementation of the Paris Agreement and informed Moldova about its priorities for the upcoming COP23 in Bonn. The EU informed Moldova about the programme EU4Climate to support the implementation of commitments under the Paris Agreement that should be launched during 1st half 2018. Finally, the Parties agreed to engage constructively during the upcoming COP23 in Bonn and to ensure fulfilment of their commitments under the Paris Agreement.

The Parties agreed to continue discussing measures to promote and facilitate the removal of obstacles to trade or investment concerning goods and services of particular relevance to climate change mitigation.

TSD priorities areas

The Parties agreed to focus their dialogue and cooperation in labour and environment priority areas, replacing the work plan proposed at the last meeting of the Sub-Committee on TSD.

The Parties agreed to focus on the following priorities: labour inspection including operational health and safety, child labour; eco-label, CITES, and implementation of Paris Agreement (environment). As next steps, the Parties agreed to organize a videoconference before the end of 2017 to define concrete measures under each priority. The Parties agreed to consult their respective DAGs on the priority areas and measures.

Work with DAGs

Both parties agreed the need to intensify the work with their respective DAGs and to consider their views and their suggestions on TSD-relevant issues, in particular, for cooperation activities.

In that respect, the Sub-Committee agreed to discuss the agreed priority areas with their respective DAGs.

The EU updated Moldova on the state of play of the project to support civil society mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the TSD chapters, funded by the Partnership Instrument (€3M for 3 years). It is expected to be running during the 1st half of 2018.

The Sub-Committee now looks forward to hearing the views and suggestions of the civil society on the implementation of the TSD chapter. The Sub-Committee hopes that the Forum puts forward useful recommendations, including cooperation activities.

Finally, both Parties agreed that the next Sub-Committee meeting and back-to-back Joint Civil Society Dialogue Forum should be held in the second half of 2018 in Brussels.

Chisinau, 17 October 2017

The Sub-Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development under EU-Moldova DCFTA