



COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT (CETA)

MEETING OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM 8-9 DECEMBER 2020, BY DVC

JOINT REPORT

Introduction

The **European Union (EU)** and **Canada** are committed to promoting dialogue between the governments and civil society from both sides, including by facilitating an annual **Civil Society Forum (CSF)** on the trade and sustainable development aspects of **CETA**.

The third **CSF** took place via videoconference on the **8th and 9th of December 2020**, with more than 150 participants registered and 120 joining the sessions from across **the EU** and **Canada** from business, social partners, environmental organisations and other civil society representatives, including Indigenous leaders from Canada.

The **CSF** provides an opportunity for civil society to better understand what the governments of **Canada** and **the EU** are doing to implement the labour, environment and sustainable development provisions of **CETA**, and to provide their views and advice on these issues.

Report

With the COVID-19 travel restrictions, this year's CSF meeting took place via videoconference and the programme was divided over two days (the full programme is available here:

https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2020/november/tradoc_159110.pdf)

On day 1, after welcome messages from the representatives of the **Government of Canada** and the **European Commission**, the Chairs of the **Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs)** from both sides shared their remarks. The DAGs Chairs recalled the **Joint Statement of CETA DAGs** issued in September 2020 and highlighted their priority areas for their future joint work, notably on supporting sustainable COVID-19 recovery and the urgency of combining economic, environmental, labour and human rights priorities

in the Parties recovery efforts; on the enforceability of the TSD chapters; learning from the Parties on their efforts in setting-up carbon border adjustments measures; and increasing sustainable trade of environmental goods and clean technology for SMEs (including by access to available data). The **CETA TSD Committee** co-chairs thanked the DAGs for their input over the past year, and recalled that **the EU** and **Canada** both remain committed to holding regular meetings with the DAGs to ensure open information flows and updates.

Summary of session I: Update on the CETA Trade and Gender Recommendation, SME Recommendation and Recommendation on Trade, Climate Action and the Paris Agreement

The Parties' representatives outlined the progress made in implementing the three Recommendations since the last **CSF** meeting in November 2019. On **trade and gender**, aiming at making their trade policies and trade agreements more gender-responsive, an intensive set of bilateral exchanges and activities on each side were implemented in line with the joint multiannual work-plan. The detailed overview of the activities by the Parties is available [here](#) and [here](#)

The participants highlighted the issue of the inclusion of women in international trade, including in supply chains. With the COVID-19 crisis and its particularly pronounced impacts on women (**WTO Report available [here](#)**) the Parties should pay close attention to this dimension. **The EU** and **Canada** confirmed that indeed there has been substantial work on going on women and supply chains on both sides and in tandem together with **OECD** and **ITC**. The Canadian stakeholders were interested in taking a closer look into the intersections of **women and specific identities** (e.g. women with disabilities, indigenous women, etc.), and if there is a disaggregated data to be analysed in this context.

Benefitting from the opportunity to engage with of the **Civil Society Forum**, **the EU** and **Canada** outlined their efforts aimed at facilitating participation in trade by **SMEs** (small and medium-sized enterprises) from both sides. In this area, the Parties highlighted that good progress has been made and a subsequent work plan was developed focusing on bilateral policy coordination and stakeholder engagement. The detailed joint activity report is available [here](#).

In reply to calls from civil society to facilitate the participation of trade and Indigenous people and Indigenous-owned businesses under CETA, Canada highlighted its inclusive approach to trade and to ensuring that Indigenous people can share in the benefits of trade agreements. This includes pursuing specific provisions mainstreamed across FTAs as well as a dedicated Trade and Indigenous Peoples chapter, which Canada is pursuing in its ongoing trade negotiations. Canada noted that Indigenous peoples face unique barriers to participation in trade and thus a unique and customized engagement with GAC's Indigenous Working Group on Trade Policy.

Among the plethora of joint activities carried out to implement the CETA Recommendation on **Trade, Climate Action and the Paris Agreement** (the joint report

can be found [here](#)), **the EU** and **Canada** drew the attention of the CSF participants to two specific aspects: their efforts in encouraging the uptake of clean technologies (workshops bringing together the **EU and Canadian clean tech companies**, in particular **SMEs**. and to their collaboration promoting the trade and climate dimension in **WTO**, including in the framework of the **Friends of Advancing Sustainability in Trade (FAST)** group. The representatives of **the EU** and **Canadian DAGs** concurred with the governments on the importance of a green recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, and highlighted their interest in learning more about **carbon border measures as the EU is developing such measures and Canada is exploring their potential**. The DAGs also highlighted the need for relevant data to help analyse sustainability of trade, and expressed their hopes that **CETA** continues to help both **the EU** and **Canada** to reach their respective **2030 and 2050 climate targets**.

Summary of session II: Update on Early Review of the CETA TSD Chapters

The EU and **Canada** stressed that they remain committed to the **CETA TSD** early review process and in this context informed the participants about the status of their discussions, including an update on the Second Dedicated Session on **TSD Early Review, which was** held on October 23, 2020. Each side recalled briefly their respective proposals in the review, offered their perspectives and recognized the different approaches to TSD enforcement. The EU highlighted its recent domestic developments and discussions taking place or planned of relevance for TSD, notably the **EU Trade Policy Review, the newly established EU Chief Trade Enforcement Officer (CTEO), the Single Entry Point for complaints, as well as the EU TSD implementation and enforcement review in 2021**.

The **CETA DAGs** representatives highlighted their **EU-Canada DAGs Joint Statement**, sent to the TSD co-chairs in September 2020, which emphasized the TSD early review as their priority (in particular, the enforceability of the TSD chapters), and that the Parties work towards concluding the review and seek closer involvement of the **DAGs** in the process. Participants called for setting a gold standard for sustainability provisions in trade agreements on both sides, and stressed that in post COVID-19 recovery priority should be given to ensuring high-levels of protection for workers and the environment. The **CETA TSD** chairs added that both sides will continue to inform the DAGs and **civil society representatives** on this process and are open to continue discussing how best to strengthen the implementation and enforcement of the **TSD Chapters**.

Summary of session III: EU-Canada Cooperation on Labour

The labour cooperation under **CETA** takes place against the background of the ongoing **EU-Canada Employment and Labour Dialogue** and close collaboration in the **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** and the relevant **UN** forums. The Parties noted that the focus under CETA has been on supporting the implementation of the

TSD trade and labour chapters or unilateral schemes that **the EU** and **Canada** concluded with **Third Countries**, in particular in thematic and geographical areas where their respective priorities and objectives align (e.g. with Ukraine, Vietnam). Several participants highlighted sustainable supply chains, broader due diligence, and forced and child labour as the areas for focus. **The EU** and **Canada** concurred and referred to their respective work, including on mandatory **due diligence (EU)**, **the Council Conclusions on "Human Rights and Decent Work in Global Supply Chains" (EU)** and Canada's **prohibition on the importation of goods produced by forced labour**, and potential for further exchanges in these areas under CETA.

Summary of session IV: EU-Canada Cooperation towards a Sustainable COVID-19 Recovery

The EU and **Canada** outlined their domestic on-going and planned efforts aimed at sustainable COVID-19 recovery. This unprecedented health and economic crisis comes on top of the existing fundamental challenges, such as **climate change**. Both Parties are committed to **green recovery** (on the EU side, the EU Green Deal provides a roadmap out of the crisis) and both Parties will continue to be allies in supporting global green recovery. In addressing the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus has been on **vulnerable groups, reinforcing social protection, and fighting inequality**. **The EU-Canada High-level Dialogues on Climate and Environment, and on Employment and Labour under the Strategic Partnership Agreement** provide for early sharing of best practices and promoting effective and inclusive cooperation.

The participants concurred that **CETA**, and more broadly trade, can support green recovery efforts, and can provide platforms to exchange between the partners and with civil society on potential lessons learned and synergies. In this context, the participants raised a number of subjects in the exchanges: **mainstreaming climate objectives across free trade agreement implementation**; a need to focus on **sustainable and resilient supply chains** and the most **vulnerable** when addressing socio-economic recovery; **avoiding perpetuating carbon dependencies**, including by **promoting clean technologies** in goods and services, and **introducing new innovative measures** (for example considering carbon border measures).