



Study

Reviewing DG TRADE

Civil Society Dialogue

April 2020 – March 2021

CSD Meeting - 27 May 2021

Objectives

To assess the current CSD process:

- analysis of the extent that the CSD strategy and purposes remain adequate and are addressed by the design of the current CSD

To assess civil society trade dialogues in the MS:

- analysis of other EC mechanisms for CSO engagement
- mapping of MS platforms to engage CSOs on trade
- how to improve outreach/contribute to dialogues at national/local level



Conclusions

Current CSD process

CSD process

- **CSD meetings work well**
- **Satisfaction with online & face-to-face versions**
- On-line meetings offer scope to **widen participation**
- **Participants want to retain current features**
 - the number of meetings and topics
 - duration and chairing of meetings
 - quality of info/presentations by the Commission

CSD process

- **Quite efficient considering available resources**
 - EU-umbrella organisations extend meeting reach
 - 70% of ppts share meeting info always or sometimes
 - National level CSOs esp. non-business organisations do not have resources, time, interest to follow trade debates
- **Outreach could be enhanced by**
 - increasing awareness of the CSD at Member State level (e.g. among CSOs in the MS)
 - promoting the CSD at national level through Representations and/or Member States.

CSD process

- **Effective for information provision & exchanging views**
- But does not facilitate inputs from as broad a range of CSOs as it could:
- **CSO inputs could be enhanced by:**
 - more **advance notice** of upcoming meetings
 - more **time** for questions, including in advance of meetings
 - a mechanism to facilitate **CSOs' in-depth inputs**
 - **providing feedback** on how inputs are considered within DG TRADE

CSD process

- **CSD objectives in place 20 years:**
 1. To hear civil society's views on trade issues
 2. To address civil society's concerns on trade issues
 3. To improve EU trade policymaking
 4. To improve transparency and accountability
- **Scope to:**
 - Reinforce how concerns are addressed
 - Clarify how the CSD supports policymaking
 - Enhance support for timely and targeted inputs from CSOs



Conclusions

Trade debate in the Member States

Trade debate in Member States

- **Variability in presentation/discussion of trade matters at national level**
- **Scope to reinforce EU Representations' trade role** to support outreach and gather insights at national level by:
 - increasing human resources for trade correspondents
 - strengthening information flow with DG TRADE
 - reinforcing outreach on trade

Trade debate in Member States

- **Scope to reinforce communication with national authorities on trade matters**
- Potential to increase:
 - awareness of NA structures to engage with civil society
 - work through these structures to engage CSOs
 - opportunities for sharing best practice between MS

Trade debate in Member States

- **Scope for additional focus** on not-for-profit sector in the Member States, as this sector finds it harder to engage:
 - a historic tendency for trade discussion to focus on the business sector not in line with new generation of trade agreements
 - levels of awareness and understanding of how to engage
 - weaker levels of resourcing



Recommendations

CSD process

CSD process

1. Update CSD Objectives:

Objective 1: to hear → **to listen and engage**

Objective 2: – **no change** (address civil society's concerns)

Objective 3: improve how we make policy → **improve understanding on policy implementation**

Objective 4: improve → **to be transparent & accountable**

CSD process

2. Support CSOs' increased awareness/access to CSD:

- MS and Representations to share info on the CSD
- on-line and face to face format
- making the website more user-friendly
- flyer/infographic to explain CSD to new participants
- FAQs/mailbox for questions & topic requests

CSD process

3. Facilitate **coordinated and in-depth inputs from CSOs** for specific CSD meetings and topics, by:

- 6-monthly forward plan of meeting topics
- more time between publishing agenda & meeting date
- standard timeframe for publishing agendas
- request CSOs to provide coordinated summary position papers & questions in advance
- CSOs need to play their part and engage in the reinforced process

CSD process

4. Provide process for systematic feedback on if and how DG TRADE is able to address civil society concerns:

- in addition to information provided in meetings,
- take account of approach by Global Affairs Canada
- reinforce monitoring approach by defining 2-3 performance benchmarks



Recommendations

To enhance trade debate in the
Member States

Trade debate in the MS

1. Establish a new national civil society outreach position within **DG TRADE** for coordination of enhanced MS outreach, also:

- monthly meetings with trade correspondents' network
- more information to trade correspondents re. NA opinions
- improve TRADE intranet to support information sharing among trade correspondents

Trade debate in the MS

2. Increase strategic focus of work on trade in EU Representations to support outreach and insights:

- develop network: CSOs, think tanks, academics, media
- meetings with CSOs in the capital and the regions
- strengthened relationship with national authority
- national version of DG TRADE newsletter
- include trade in Reps' daily news reporting
- include trade in Reps' social media monitoring

Trade debate in the MS

- 3. Develop some form of 'light' alert / early warning system** on issues to be addressed through targeted communication at national level.
- 4. Establish a network of expert speakers on trade,** similar to the approach taken by DG COMM with its Team Europe network.
- 5. Encourage MS to be more proactive on trade communication at national level**



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Thank you for listening

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