

Foreword to the Commission's 2021 Annual Report on Implementation & Enforcement,

By EVP Valdis Dombrovskis

In February 2021, the European Commission launched a new strategy for EU trade, entitled “An Open, Sustainable & Assertive Trade Policy”.

Our trade agenda will be shaped by these three concepts for the coming years.

The “Open” and “Sustainable” parts of our agenda speak for themselves, and have already been explained on numerous occasions.

But what about the “Assertive” part? This goal is perhaps a little less easy to define, but it is just as important and meaningful as the other two.

Simply put, it refers to the growing European recognition that EU trade policy needs to be tougher, more assertive, and more results-oriented – as well as a growing European willingness to make that happen.

Over recent years, it has become clear that we need stronger tools to defend ourselves when our global partners do not play by the rules.

Likewise, we have recognised that we need to extract more value from the implementation of our best-in-class network of free trade agreements – the biggest in the globe. This is not just economic value, but value across a spectrum of areas, ranging from social and sustainable development commitments to stronger support for SMEs.

Of course, this approach did not begin with this year's new trade strategy. In fact, many strong policy achievements have already been recorded in recent years under this aegis.

Three achievements stand out in 2020:

1. The appointment of the first ever **EU Chief Trade Enforcement Officer** (CTEO) sent a strong signal to the world that we mean business. After just over one year in office, the CTEO has chalked up a string of notable successes, and we expect his scope for action to increase as our trade stakeholders become more aware of his role.
2. The launch of the online portal “**Access2Markets**” (A2M)¹ created a one-stop shop to help our traders, in particular SMEs, navigate the world of global trade. This easy-to-use interactive platform provides accessible and multilingual information about how EU trade agreements work in practice, including a tool on rules of origin self-assessment, ROSA, used 500 times a day. Since its launch in October 2020, the Access2Markets portal has already had over 1.5 million visitors, and won a European Ombudsman Award for Good Administration 2021.
3. The setting up of the **Single Entry Point** (SEP)², a streamlined complaint mechanism for stakeholders to flag problems that arise when our global trade partners fail to live up to the obligations and commitments they signed up to in our trade deals. In particular, the SEP deals with complaints related to market access, to commitments in the area of trade and sustainable development and to the Generalised Scheme of Preferences.

¹<https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/home>

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2134



Building on these noteworthy achievements, the Commission is today releasing its first **overarching report on Implementation and Enforcement**. It is a most remarkable compendium.

It shows how the Commission, under the leadership of our CTEO, is driving efforts both within the Commission and other EU institutions to implement and enforce international trade rules under the WTO and 37 of the EU's main trade agreements. This document outlines the full range of actions deployed in 2020 and the first half of 2021.

The CTEO has also set out to reinforce the Commission's partnership with Member States, business and civil society, which is essential for benefits to materialize in practice. The CTEO has an explicit mandate to report to the European Parliament, as well as to the Council of the European Union and the public, and this report is the main instrument for doing so.

All this demonstrates this Commission's focus on a Europe that delivers; a **Europe that makes a difference**. If we can get this right, we will be helping businesses and jobs, supporting Europe's response to broader challenges and promoting our values, while showing ourselves to be a reliable and secure global partner.



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