

New Commission Communication “The power of trade partnerships: together for green and just economic growth”



(27 October 2022) In June 2022 the European Commission published a Communication “*The power of trade partnerships: together for green and just economic growth*” that strengthens the Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) provisions of EU trade agreements. These TSD provisions set out the environmental, labour and human rights commitments the EU and its trade partners undertake . They have been criticised in the past by trade unions and others for being weak and non-enforceable.

In the Communication the Commission proposes to strengthen provisions in new trade agreements and accepts to use trade sanctions as the recourse of last resort against instances of serious violations of these commitments. In practical terms, the Communication should lead to more weight being given to international labour and environmental standards. It should be also easier for the Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs) that are set up to monitor agreements to raise complaints. In parallel to the Communication the EU has proposed measures to tackle forced labour and to promote decent work in supply chains.

The publication of the Communication comes at a time when there is much debate about global supply chains, the energy crisis and geopolitical considerations linked to the war in Ukraine. The EU is advocating for a more 'assertive' trade policy to protect strategic interests, secure raw materials as well as to better reflect EU values. This is referred to as 'open strategic autonomy'. EU open strategic autonomy agenda should provide for a strong role for public services and ensure quality public infrastructures. For example, digital transformation requires a strong public/democratic element to ensure that benefits are shared.

See EC Communication "[*The power of trade partnerships: together for green and just economic growth*](#)"

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