

Ten Demands for a progressive Trade Policy

- a follow-up from the Civil Society Trade Lab, which took place 26th June 2017, jointly organised by 10 organisations: Transport&Environment, the European Trade Union Confederation, Friends of the Earth Europe, European Digital Rights, ClientEarth, the Eurogroup for Animals, the European Public Health Alliance, Greenpeace, the Center for International Environmental Law and the Fair Economy Alliance.

Introduction

- ❖ The international exchange of goods, services and people can help make the world a more open and connected place. However, trade must no longer be an end in itself, but a **means to achieve social and environmental objectives** which keep us within our planetary boundaries.
- ❖ Given current global challenges, international or multilateral environmental treaties, labour standards, animal welfare, health commitments and human rights agreements – with principles of equality and intergenerational responsibility at their heart – must take **precedence over trade concerns**.

Therefore,

- ❖ we call for a **rebalancing of trade and investment rules**. Any agreement must support decent work and wages, be compatible with the development of new and fair economic models, human rights, biodiversity protection, public health objectives, high animal welfare standards, binding obligations for corporations, regulation against tax fraud and with global commitments such as the Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- ❖ We call for trade and investment agreements to safeguard the **precautionary principle**, to **guarantee the upkeep of high standards** – and to ensure the unhindered development of future standards and public policy measures.
- ❖ We call for trade and investment agreements to take the **specific needs of the Global South** into account. They must ensure the protection of indigenous peoples and community rights; guarantee policy flexibility for measures needed to develop domestic economies; and for the regulatory and policy space required to protect food sovereignty, biodiversity and cultural differences.
- ❖ We call for **full transparency at all stages** of the negotiation process: negotiation mandates, proposals and final texts should all be made publicly accessible.

The Organisers' ten Demands for a progressive Trade Policy



– The EU must promote the inclusion of strong social provisions on workers' rights, decent work and wages, sustainable development and environmental protection in international trade and investment agreements. The possibility of **economic consequences** must be available as a last resort in cases where violations are demonstrated.



– Trade policy must be coherent with EU internal policy, notably climate and decarbonisation efforts. As such, a progressive trade policy aids the **shift away from fossil fuel** to 100 per cent renewable energy sources, supporting the EU's 2030 climate and energy targets, which must be increased to reflect Europe's commitments under the Paris Agreement.



– Trade agreements should no longer be geared to maximise trade volume in global food supply chains. EU trade policy needs to **support a re-localisation of food production** that benefits consumers and small food producers, not a handful of corporations. Equally, rules for public procurement should encourage local food supply.



– The EU must ensure that strong environmental, social, and human rights obligations can be properly enforced by giving citizens and public interest groups **effective access to justice**. That entails access to remedies for victims of wrongful conduct by foreign investors and strong procedural rights for citizens and public interest groups to ensure Parties' compliance with social and environmental obligations in trade and sustainable development chapters.



– Trade and investment agreements must not hinder the possibility to distinguish between goods based on how they are produced or harvested and caught. They must provide mechanisms **to prevent the adverse impact of production systems** on human and social rights and the environment. They should not discourage the labelling and traceability of products.



– Trade policy must not put at risk – or prevent the improvement of – European standards in animal welfare. To protect public morals and to ensure a level playing field, the EU should not hesitate to condition the liberalisation of trade in certain products on respect for **minimum animal welfare standards** and, by doing so, contribute to the improvement of animal welfare in third states.



– Trade policy must not threaten – or impede – European and global efforts to **reverse the epidemic of noncommunicable diseases and obesity** through preventative measures, or the development and promotion of standards to reduce antimicrobial resistance, a cross-border challenge especially relevant to trade.



– Trade policy can have a positive impact on human rights online including, for example, through provisions on intermediary liability and net neutrality. However, data protection, data flows and localisation provisions should not be part of trade deals. Any problem identified should be addressed in other legal fora to ensure full **respect of the fundamental rights to privacy and data protection**.¹



– Trade and investment policies should **reward entrepreneurs practicing sustainability**. To create a level playing field, arbitration clauses in trade agreements must stop protecting vested interests of polluting industries and – at least – become reciprocal and allow for citizens and states to claim damages from companies that harm the public interest.



– Trade policy must support the transition to a **circular economy** by promoting global economic development that is decoupled from finite resource consumption. Trade liberalization should be granted only if such trade will not drive the Earth towards its planetary boundaries.²

A co-operation by:



¹ See https://edri.org/files/tradelab_eu_trade_and_digitalrights.pdf

² See, e.g., Steffen et al. 2015. Planetary Boundaries: Guiding human development on a changing planet. Science Vol. 347 no. 6223