



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 17.03.2016
C(2016) 1571 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Commission Communication "Trade for All - Towards a more responsible trade and investment policy" {COM(2015) 497 final}.

The Communication, which was announced in the 2015 Work Programme, aims to make trade policy more responsible and responsive to the wider political debate. This means making trade policy more transparent, for example by publishing negotiating mandates and texts to the fullest extent possible. Trade policy is about defending European interests but it is also about promoting our values. In this context, the Communication seeks to secure Europe's place in global supply chains but also to factor in citizens' expectations of a more responsible management of these supply chains. Trade agreements will also contribute to the fight against corruption. The Commission will further seek to get the most out of the deals we conclude, including for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which are the backbone of the European economy. This means working differently and more intensively with Member States, including their Parliaments, the European Parliament and wider stakeholders.

Enhancing transparency in the decision-making process is a strategic priority for the Commission and is a major theme of this Communication. Indeed, the Commission is convinced that unless it is able to properly explain its trade policy to European citizens, then it cannot expect to receive their support for its objectives. This Communication is an attempt to address that communication challenge.

The Commission is pleased that the Camera Deputaților welcomes the attention given to SMEs to facilitate their access to new markets. In this regard, the Commission intends to give greater attention to SME issues in its impact assessments on future trade negotiations.

The Commission welcomes the Camera Deputaților's broad support for sustainability monitoring aiming at preserving natural resources. The trade and sustainable development chapters envisaged in EU trade agreements are extremely ambitious on substance and have a horizontal dimension.

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The Commission thanks the Camera Deputaților for the invitation to analyse the impact which the ambitious plurilateral Trade in Services (TiSA) agreement could have on fiscal policy in the Member States. This point will be transmitted to the appropriate services of the Commission for further consideration. The Commission further welcomes the Camera Deputaților's comments on the importance of e-commerce and data exchange in a manner that fits with the norms on data protection and confidentiality in the EU.

The Commission is pleased to note the Camera Deputaților's support for the conclusion of the Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA). The Communication seeks to ensure that plurilateral negotiations of this kind can be taken forward under the aegis of the World Trade Organisation to the fullest extent possible.

The Commission shares the Camera Deputaților's view that access to energy and raw materials is essential for EU competitiveness. EU free trade agreements include, and should continue to include, energy and raw materials chapters that address these issues.

The Commission takes note of the Camera Deputaților's view that a cross-sectoral approach should be followed with a focus on innovation, knowledge society, diversification of raw materials and energy supply, circular economy and space policy. Whilst some of these issues are clearly outside the scope of the Trade for All strategy, the Commission seeks to achieve cross-sectoral coherence in all of its policy-making.

The Commission takes note of the Camera Deputaților's view that where innovation, creativity and design are important to the economy, the system of patents should address the risks of copying technical progress. That is why intellectual property is such an important part of our trade negotiating agenda.

The Commission takes note of the Camera Deputaților's view that it should conduct a broader evaluation of the trade and investment policy in light of the importance of SMEs to the EU economy. Indeed, on 12 November 2015, the Commission formally presented to the United States its proposal for a reformed approach on investment protection and a new and more transparent system for resolving disputes between investors and states: the Investment Court System, in the context of the ongoing TTIP negotiations. More information on this particular issue can be found on the Commission's website.¹

The Commission welcomes that the Camera Deputaților shares its objective to empower consumers to make informed choices and stresses the need to foster consumers' trust. The points regarding misleading advertising and enhancing consumer protection with respect to food and other products and services sold to final consumers (including banking services) are indeed important issues.

¹ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6059_en.htm

The new Trade for All strategy envisages a redefined relationship between Europe and Africa and the Commission is grateful for the Camera Deputaţilor's support for the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Fulfilling the promise of these agreements will be a major deliverable for the next few years and the EU stands ready to support its partners in this regard. Whilst the EPAs primarily cover trade in goods, the interests of the EU and its African partners extend to many other areas. At the 4th EU-Africa Summit in 2014, Heads of State and Government reiterated their common efforts to increase cooperation in fighting international terrorism and related threats, as well as transnational organised crime including all kinds of illegal trafficking. The EU is committed to enhancing in particular the cooperation with African countries in fighting the financing of terrorism, and money laundering fully complying with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force.

The Commission takes note of and welcomes the Camera Deputaţilor's supportive comments regarding the implementation of the association agreements or the agreements on deep and comprehensive free trade area with Georgia, Ukraine and in particular Moldova. As the recent review of the European Neighbourhood Policy has shown, granting access to the EU market has been a key instrument in promoting prosperity in the region and the EU remains committed to supporting its Eastern partners' domestic reforms that are conducive to the implementation of these agreements.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaţilor and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Cecilia Malmström
Member of the Commission*