

Aligning the EU international trade agenda with the goals of the EU Green Deal and F2F Strategy

The European Commission states that they seek to ensure an ambitious sustainability chapter in all EU bilateral trade agreements, but there appears to be a disconnect between the EU commitment to ambitious environmental targets and EU trade policy.

Free Trade Agreements should never expose the EU agriculture, food and hospitality sectors to unfair competition with negative consequences for workers on wages, working conditions and employment.

EFFAT is committed to promoting and defending a broad range of fundamental rights: the right to adequate, nutritious and safe food, the right to food security and food sovereignty, the right to a safe working and living environment, the right to livelihood protection, and multiple democratic rights including the rights of workers and their trade unions.

EFFAT rejects all trade and investments agreements which conflict with those rights.

EFFAT urges the Commission to adopt a new approach towards Free Trade Agreements that considers, inter alia, the following elements:

- The ambitious environmental goals of the EU Green Deal should not be affected by the signing of trade agreements that are a threat to the environment.
- Agriculture and food need specific attention as the economic, social and environmental sustainability of these sectors is fragile and easily disrupted by internal and external factors/shocks. Derogations for food and agricultural products should always be considered, and Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) products and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) products should receive enhanced protection.
- Workers' rights must not be brought into question. On the contrary, the respect of labour rights should constitute an "essential element" of all trade and investment agreements, including possible suspension of the agreement in case of sustained breaches.
- The ratification and implementation of the eight ILO Core Labour Standards, as well as compliance with up-to-date ILO conventions, should be a precondition for entering into trade negotiations. If a partner country has not ratified or properly implemented these conventions, it must demonstrate through a binding roadmap how this will be achieved in a timely manner.
- Trade agreements must be transparent and democratically controlled by stakeholders