



# Management Plan 2024

Directorate-General for Trade

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## Introduction

Trade policy is an exclusive EU competence allowing the EU to act with one voice on the global stage and effectively pursue its interests. The European Commission's Directorate-General for Trade (DG Trade) develops and implements the EU's trade policy with the aim of ensuring prosperity, fairness, security, as well as a resilient and competitive EU economy and promoting the green and digital transitions. It does so in line with the principles and objectives of the Union's external action and consistent with EU internal policies and values, such as social, climate and environmental objectives.

An open, assertive and sustainable EU trade policy is needed more than ever given the current economic challenges and geopolitical situation. The international context in which trade policy is operating continues to be challenging. It is affected by several trends such as the rise of geo-strategic rivalries between the United States and China, the increased instrumentalisation of dependencies of trade, resort to unilateral measures and economic nationalism, and the crisis of the multilateral rules-based order. These trends are further exacerbated by Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine.

Trade policy will continue supporting the objective of building the EU's open strategic autonomy. As outlined in the *Trade Policy Review - An Open, Sustainable and Assertive Trade Policy*<sup>1</sup> the Commission adopted in February 2021, the EU's trade policy will focus on three core objectives: **supporting the recovery** and fundamental transformation of the EU economy in line with its **green and digital objectives**; shaping global rules for a **more sustainable and fairer globalisation**; and increasing the **EU's capacity to pursue its interests and enforce its rights**, including autonomously where needed.

The EU is the number one trading block in the world. It represents more than 16% of total global trade with the rest of the world. The EU is the world's main provider of foreign direct investment (€ 9 382 billion Foreign Direct Investment screening (FDI) stock in 2022). The EU is also the number one trading partner for 54 countries that represent 48% of global GDP. The EU has the largest network of trade agreements in place counting 46 agreements with 78 countries. EU trade policy opens up opportunities and access for EU companies to sell their goods and services around the world and ensures access to raw materials. It is essential for the European economy as it supports growth and employment. Trade is more important for EU employment than ever: 38 million jobs in the EU are supported by EU exports to third countries, an increase of 11 million jobs in one decade<sup>2</sup>. However, trade goes beyond the exchange of goods and services. It is also a strategic asset for Europe. EU trade policy allows the EU to build partnerships, protect the EU market from unfair practices, promote EU values and standards, and contribute to the EU's efforts to pursue its top priorities - the green and digital transitions.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0066>

<sup>2</sup> <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC126043>

President Ursula von der Leyen in her 2023 State of the Union (SOTEU) speech emphasised that “*we will continue to drive open and fair trade*”.

The Green Deal Industrial Plan presented in February 2023 and the Communication on long-term competitiveness of March 2023 recognized the role of open trade for the EU’s competitiveness and net-zero ambitions. Moreover, the European Commission presented in June 2023 its European Economic Security Strategy, putting forward the important role of trade policy to strengthen our economic security by safeguarding the benefits that openness provides while assessing and addressing risks in an increasingly complex geopolitical environment.

This management plan sets out how DG Trade will implement its ambitious agenda in 2024. As stated in its Strategic Plan 2020-2024, DG Trade will pursue its specific objectives mainly under two of the Commission’s general objectives: *An economy that works for people* and *A stronger Europe in the world*. These specific objectives, together with their link to the general objectives, are further explained in the graph below.

## **A stronger Europe in the world**

### **Specific objective 1: Lead the reform of the World Trade Organization to preserve rules-based trade**

Upholding a stable and predictable trading environment, and pursuing the reform and strengthening of the World Trade Organization

## **An economy that works for people**

### **Specific objective 2: Creating opportunities for European businesses through new and existing negotiations and an additional effort to monitor and improve the implementation and compliance of existing trade agreements**

Opening markets and creating opportunities for EU companies by implementing existing agreements, assertively pursuing our values and interests, enforcing our rights, and negotiating new deals when the conditions are right

### **Specific objective 3: Protecting EU companies and citizens from unfair trade and investment by making full use of existing Trade Defence Instruments, developing new tools and focusing on enforcement of existing commitments at an EU or international level**

Ensuring fair and open trade by pursuing mutually beneficial trading conditions and combatting unfair competition internally and in third countries

### **Specific objective 4: Ensuring trade policy is sustainable by effectively contributing to a wider set of EU policy goals, such as the Green Deal, adherence to international commitments on labour and the environment, gender and sustainable supply chains**

Deploying trade measures to contribute to sustainability, including the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, the fight against climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation and other relevant global environmental priorities outlined in the Commission's European Green Deal as well promoting internationally agreed labour standards and human rights

### **Specific objective 5: Improve the acceptance and understanding of EU trade policy, in particular, by ensuring that it is pursued in an open, inclusive and transparent manner**

More engagement and better communication with the European Parliament, the Council and civil society ensuring that trade policy responds to citizens' concerns

## Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Agreement
CBAM	Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
CETA	Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAGs	Domestic Advisory Groups
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive FTAs
EBA	Everything But Arms
EP	European Parliament
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreements
EPCA	Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
ESA	Eastern and Southern African
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment screening
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GRC	Governance, Risk and Compliance
GSP	Generalised Scheme of Preferences
ILO	International Labour Organization
IP	Intellectual Property
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MC12	WTO's 12 <sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference
MC13	WTO's 13 <sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference
MPIA	Multi-party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBC	Responsible Business Conduct
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIA	Sustainability Impact Assessment
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOTEU	Statement of the European Union
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
TSD	Trade and Sustainable Development
TTC	Trade and Technology Council
WTO	World Trade Organization

## PART 1. Delivering on the Commission's priorities: main outputs for 2024

As reflected in the 2024 Commission Work Programme<sup>3</sup>, trade policy will contribute to delivering on the Commission's priorities in 2024:

- Accelerating an **open and fair trade agenda** geared towards competitiveness, resilience and sustainability;
- Continuing our work to enhance **cooperation and trade relations with partners**;
- Driving global efforts to **reform the World Trade Organization**;
- Seeking, through our **Economic Security Strategy**, to reap the benefits of the EU's economic openness, while minimising risks arising from increased geopolitical tensions and accelerated technological shifts;
- Promoting an **open, sustainable and assertive policy**, which supports the green and digital transformations;
- Seeking to finalise agreements with **Mexico** and **Mercosur** and remaining ready to finalise the negotiations with **Australia** once the conditions are right;
- Continuing to push forward negotiations with **India** and **Indonesia**, as well as the **digital trade agreements** with **Singapore** and the **Republic of Korea**.
- Continuing to engage with the **United States** on finding a permanent solution to **US section 232 duties on EU steel and aluminium exports** and on the negotiation of an **EU-US Critical Minerals Agreement**.

DG Trade will also contribute to other Commission priorities in support of the green and digital transitions. Trade policy helps ensure access to energy goods and raw materials needed for the energy transition, spread green goods and services by facilitating market access for our green tech industry, and encourages the adoption of climate-friendly policies by others. Multilateral, bilateral and autonomous trade tools will all be used for this purpose. Similarly, trade policy will support *a Europe fit for the digital age* with a particular focus on helping develop global rules for digital trade through WTO negotiations as well as bilateral engagements.

To achieve this, DG Trade will seek to deliver in a number of key areas in 2024.

### **Specific objective 1: Lead the reform of the World Trade Organization to preserve rules-based trade**

Upholding a stable and predictable trading environment, and pursuing the reform and strengthening of the World Trade Organization

**The World Trade Organization (WTO)** has provided a stable and predictable trading environment since its establishment in 1995. While reform is needed, the WTO remains the lynchpin of the global trading system and an indispensable guardrail against protectionism.

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<sup>3</sup> [Commission work programme 2024 \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-communications/infographic/infographic-commission-work-programme-2024)

In 2024 the Commission will work to drive the reform of the WTO across all its functions with the aim of:

- re-activating by 2024 a fully and well-functioning WTO dispute settlement system with its core characteristics intact, in particular binding, two-tier and independent adjudication;
- improving the capacity of the WTO to negotiate and conclude new agreements to respond to important trade issues relevant to today's economies such as the second phase multilateral agreement on fisheries subsidies as well as through the increased use of open plurilateral agreements when a multilateral solution is not attainable, such as on investment facilitation and e-commerce;
- reinvigorating the WTO's deliberative function by stimulating meaningful policy debates on key challenges for the global trading system, including state intervention in support of industrial sectors, climate/environment, and inclusiveness;
- making the WTO's monitoring of its members' trade policies more effective by improving how the WTO's bodies and committees work.

The discussions on these topics will continue at intensive pace, including in the lead-up to the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13), which will be hosted by the United Arab Emirates in Abu Dhabi in February 2024.

DG Trade will also advance negotiations of WTO accessions. Decisions on the accession of Comoros and Timor Leste are expected to be taken at MC13.

DG Trade will continue to provide impetus to the work on WTO reform also in the context of discussions in other international organisations and fora, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the G20 and the G7.

A well-functioning WTO also plays a critical role for European Economic Security by minimising the risk of arbitrary behaviour and narrowing the scope of possible trade restrictions. In line with the "outcomes document" agreed at MC12, the objective at MC13 is to see multilateral talks on the WTO dispute settlement reform advance in order to have a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system in place by 2024. For as long as such a solution is not in place, DG Trade will work in parallel on fostering the continued success and smooth operation of the multi-party interim appeal arbitration arrangement, known as the "MPIA". The MPIA is open to all WTO Members for as long as the WTO Appellate Body is unable to function fully. It safeguards, in any dispute among MPIA participants, the right to a functioning two-tier and independent dispute settlement mechanism under WTO rules.

Specific objective 1 contributes to the Commission's general objective *A stronger Europe in the world*.



## **Specific objective 2: Creating opportunities for European businesses through new and existing negotiations and an additional effort to monitor and improve the implementation and compliance of existing trade agreements**

Opening markets and creating opportunities for EU companies by implementing existing agreements, assertively pursuing our values and interests, enforcing our rights, and negotiating new deals when the conditions are right

In line with the Commission's general objective *An economy that works for people*, the EU opens markets by making, implementing and enforcing trade deals with partner countries or regions. Securing the EU's supply chains, diversifying its trade relations, including as regards the sources of supply of critical raw materials, and creating new export opportunities have become critical in today's increasingly hostile international environment. Building on the multilateral trading system and the EU's broad network of trade and investment agreements with countries outside the Union, the EU creates opportunities for EU businesses and workers, including for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), and enhances the resilience and robustness of the EU's economy. EU exports supported almost 38 million jobs in the EU in 2019, up from 27 million in 2010.

The Commission Communication of 16 March 2023 on "A secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials in support of the twin transition" outlines an ambitious set of actions to address this challenge. DG Trade plays a key role in implementing the external aspects of the EU's critical raw materials policy, including through the upcoming Critical Raw Materials Club and with the help of relevant trade policy tools. Amongst the identified actions, DG Trade will notably continue its efforts to put in place the Critical Raw Materials Club which was announced by President Von der Leyen. DG Trade will also contribute to the establishment and implementation of Critical Raw Material Partnerships with third countries but will also engage with trading partners to remove trade barriers hampering the development of cross border supply chains.

### ***The multilateral and plurilateral agenda***

DG Trade will continue to actively participate and shape the plurilateral WTO **e-commerce** negotiations that currently cover 90 WTO Members. The aim is to agree on modern, global rules for digital trade. Such plurilateral agreement would help to harness the full potential of digital trade, tackle trade barriers, facilitate trade in services and goods and enhance consumer and business trust in the online environment, in full respect of the EU's personal data protection framework. In 2024, DG Trade will work towards the conclusion of the negotiations and the future integration of their outcome into the WTO system.

Following the successful conclusion of the plurilateral negotiations on **domestic regulation in services** on 2 December 2021, DG Trade will continue working with the now 70 WTO participants to incorporate the outcome of the negotiations in their respective GATS schedules of specific commitments to gain legal effect.

The WTO Agreement on **Investment Facilitation for Development was concluded in July 2023**. This agreement fosters a business climate more conducive to sustainable

development and gathers 118 WTO participants to date. In 2024 DG Trade will continue its efforts to prepare for the entry into force of this Agreement, including by ensuring its legal incorporation in the body of WTO texts at MC13 or soon after, and by supporting developing countries in the preparation for implementation.

Following the EU's acceptance of the new landmark WTO Agreement on **fisheries subsidies** reached at MC12, the EU will continue to press other WTO members to ratify with the objective that the agreement enters into force as soon as possible. The EU is also engaged in intensive WTO negotiations to conclude by MC13 the second phase agreement on the outstanding issues under UN Sustainable Development Goal 14.6<sup>4</sup>.

DG Trade will continue to support the implementation of the commitments taken in the three plurilateral Ministerial statements relevant to advance the trade and environmental/climate agenda adopted in December 2021. They cover Environmental Sustainability; Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform; and Plastics Pollution and Sustainable Plastics Trade.

Following the successful conclusion of negotiations on the modernisation of the Arrangement on Officially Supported **Export Credits** at the OECD, DG Trade will, in 2024, continue to implement the commitment made in the Trade Policy Review communication. This means to propose and work towards the implementation of a comprehensive EU strategy for export credits, including an EU export credit facility and enhanced coordination of EU financial tools in support of trade, investment and sustainable development, including in the context of Global Gateway.

### ***EU-US relations***

The EU and the **United States**<sup>5</sup> have the largest bilateral trade and investment relationship and enjoy the most integrated economic relationship between major players in the world. Although overtaken by China in 2021 as the largest EU import source for goods, the US remains the EU's largest overall trade and investment partner by far.

We are committed to a positive transatlantic trade agenda and pursue this objective notably via the Trade and Technology Council (TTC). The TTC focuses on a wide range of topics at the juncture of trade, technology and security, such as technology standards, advancing supply chain security, export controls, investment screening, global trade challenges, misuse of technology or promoting SMEs' role in digital and technology trade. The TTC is a transparent and inclusive process and provides for stakeholder engagement, including via the centralised TTC platform on "Futurium"<sup>6</sup>. Work in 2024 will focus on boosting ambition on the trade aspects of the TTC to build strong and resilient transatlantic trade relations, notably as regards cooperation on the green transition and on ensuring resilient supply chains.

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<sup>4</sup> [Oceans - United Nations Sustainable Development](#)

<sup>5</sup> [EU-US trade](#)

<sup>6</sup> <https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/EU-US-TTC>

At the end of 2023, the US and the EU agreed to roll over the current arrangements between them on steel and aluminium trade. As a result the US continued both the suspension of US Section 232 tariffs as well as its tariff rate quotas on EU steel and aluminium exports until 31 December 2025. The EU in return continued the suspension of its counterbalancing measures until 31 March 2025. We will continue to look at available options to address the remaining asymmetry and to work with the US on achieving the permanent lifting of the US Section 232 measures on EU steel and aluminium exports to the US and on advancing our engagement to address non-market excess capacity and decarbonisation in the steel and aluminium sectors and to bring back undistorted transatlantic trade in steel and aluminium, including via the process for a Global Arrangement on Sustainable Steel and Aluminium.

In 2024 the EU will continue to monitor and to mitigate possible negative effects of the US Inflation Reduction Act. To this end the EU will seek to conclude the negotiations launched in 2023 for a targeted EU-US Critical Minerals Agreement, and will continue engaging with the United States under the Clean Energy Incentives Dialogue to achieve transparency, avoid disruptions to trade and investment and coordinate actions, where possible.

### ***Finalising concluded bilateral and regional negotiations***

Trade relations with **Mexico** are currently governed by the trade pillar of the EU-Mexico Economic Partnership, Political coordination and Cooperation Agreement of 1997 (also referred to as the “Global Agreement”). The EU and Mexico reached a political agreement in April 2018 on the update of the Global Agreement, which will bring the trade agreement with Mexico in line with the most ambitious and progressive EU agreements, including comprehensive provisions on labour and environmental protection, climate change, and civil society involvement. DG Trade remains committed to finalising the outstanding technical elements with Mexico. Once ratified, the modernized agreement will replace the existing EU-Mexico Global Agreement.

Following the adoption by the Council on 13 November 2017 of the negotiation directives<sup>7</sup>, the EU launched negotiations with **Chile** to modernise the scope of the existing Association Agreement (2002)<sup>8</sup>. The EU-Chile Advanced Framework Agreement strengthens EU and Chile’s commitments to the transition to renewable energy and the sustainable use of raw materials. The Agreement also includes comprehensive and progressive trade provisions, notably an ambitious chapter on Trade and Sustainable Development and for the first time in an EU trade agreement, a dedicated chapter on trade and gender.

The negotiations on the EU-Chile Advanced Framework Agreement and the EU-Chile Interim Trade Agreement were concluded on 9 December 2022 and the agreements were signed on 13 December 2023. In 2024 they will be transmitted to the European Parliament and the Council for their conclusion.

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<sup>7</sup> [EU-Chile - Negotiation Directives for Modernisation of the Agreement](#)

<sup>8</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/chile/>

In 2019, the European Union and **Mercosur States** – Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay – reached a political agreement on an ambitious, balanced and comprehensive trade agreement<sup>9</sup>. The agreement will create significant opportunities for sustainable growth in both regions, while promoting high labour and environmental standards and preserving the interests of EU consumers and sensitive economic sectors. The agreement also includes a substantive chapter on Trade and sustainable development, encompassing a shared commitment to ensure the green transition, responsible supply chains and the protection of labour rights. Among other elements, it contains explicit commitments on sustainable forest management and on the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. The Commission made good progress with Mercosur in 2023 to further strengthen the sustainability dimension of the Agreement - a critical element on the path towards ratification of the agreement. Following elections in Argentina at the end of 2023 the two sides aim to finalise the agreement swiftly.

The EU concluded the negotiations of an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) with **Kyrgyzstan**, in June 2019, and with the Republic of **Uzbekistan**, in July 2022. DG Trade will work towards the signature and ratification of both agreements in 2024.

In May 2018, the Council authorised opening negotiations for Free Trade Agreement (FTA ) between the EU and **New Zealand**. The negotiations were successfully concluded on 30 June 2022 and the FTA was signed on 9 July 2023. The agreement was approved by the European Parliament and concluded by the Council in November 2023. The EU and New Zealand aim for an entry into force in 2024. The agreement contains unprecedented provisions on sustainable trade reflecting the outcome of the 2022 Trade and Sustainable Development review, with sanctionable commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement as well as the core labour standards.

In June 2023, the EU and **Kenya** concluded negotiations for an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The EPA includes ambitious provisions on trade and sustainable development. The agreement was signed on 18 December 2023 in Nairobi and will be transmitted to the European Parliament and the Council for conclusion in 2024. It will be open for other Eastern African Community Member States willing to join in the future.

In November 2023, the EU signed with **Angola** a Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreement (SIFA). The agreement will be transmitted to the European Parliament and the Council for conclusion in 2024. DG Trade will work on its implementation during 2024, including on the provision of appropriate support to help Angola meet the commitments. This is the first-ever bilateral agreement on investment facilitation that the EU has negotiated, and a possible blueprint for future similar agreements with African and Southern neighbourhood partners as announced in the 2021 Trade Policy Review.

The Commission successfully concluded in October 2023 the negotiations on data flows with Japan under the specific review clause in the EPA between the EU and **Japan**<sup>10</sup> . The new data flows rules include ambitious commitments against unjustified restrictions on

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<sup>9</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/eu-mercosur-association-agreement/>

<sup>10</sup> [EU-Japan trade](#)

cross border data flows by prohibiting different forms of data localisation requirements, prior approval requirements as well as restrictions of transfers of incoming data. At the same time, the rules are accompanied by exceptions to protect personal data and privacy to ensure that the Union's digital and data acquis can be implemented and enforced. In 2024, DG Trade will work towards the signature and conclusion of the agreement with a view to include these provisions in the EPA.

### ***On-going negotiations***

As stated in the 2024 Commission Work Programme, the Union will continue its efforts to strengthen the mutually beneficial partnership with **Africa**. DG Trade will further develop its strategic approach to take it forward with the African Union at the next EU-AU Summit.

DG Trade will also continue working to enhance sustainable trade and investment relations between **the EU and Africa**. DG Trade will work to conclude negotiations by the end of 2024 to deepen the existing EPA with five **Eastern and Southern African** countries (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Zimbabwe). This will contribute to building resilient value chains and boosting sustainable public and private investment in sectors of mutual interest. Furthermore, EPA continue to be the cornerstone of Africa-EU trade relations and contribute to the on-going African integration projects, including the **African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)**.

The EU remains committed to strengthening the economic partnership with **India**<sup>11</sup>. On 8 May 2021, the EU-India Leader's meeting agreed to resume negotiations for a balanced, ambitious, comprehensive and mutually beneficial trade agreement, and to launch separate negotiations for a stand-alone investment protection agreement and an agreement on geographical indications. These negotiations are linked to finding solutions to long-standing market access problems. Negotiations were launched in March 2022 and will continue in 2024 at an intense pace. In February 2023, the EU and India set up an EU-India Trade and Technology Council (TTC) to tackle strategic challenges at the nexus of trade, technology and security issues with Ministerial meetings that will take place at least once a year.

The Commission will continue trade negotiations with **Indonesia**<sup>12</sup> in 2024. Negotiations with **Thailand** restarted in September 2023 and the Commission is currently assessing the possibility to resume negotiations with **Malaysia** and the **Philippines**<sup>13</sup>.

DG Trade will also continue contributing to building international digital partnerships with the **Indo-Pacific region**, notably with Japan, the Republic of Korea and Singapore, as set out in the Indo Pacific Strategy<sup>14</sup>. In 2024, DG Trade will work towards ratification of the agreement to include rules on cross-border data flows in the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement, for which the negotiations with Japan were concluded in October

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<sup>11</sup> [EU-India trade](#)

<sup>12</sup> [EU-Indonesia trade](#)

<sup>13</sup> [EU-Philippines trade](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, The EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, JOIN\(2021\) 24 final.](#)

2023. The agreement connects two key digital economies and sends a strong message against digital protectionism and arbitrary restrictions to cross-border data flows. In 2024, DG Trade will also work towards the conclusion of the negotiations with the Republic of Korea and Singapore for Digital Trade Agreements, promoting digital connectivity based on EU model and regulatory approach to digital rules.

In May 2018, the Council authorised opening negotiations for an FTA between the EU and **Australia**<sup>15</sup>. The position paper on the Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) in support of the negotiations was published in July 2021. In October 2023, Australia announced it will not be in a position to conclude the agreement in the foreseeable future. The EU remains ready to reengage once that situation changes. DG Trade will also aim to update the EU-Australia Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA), promoting trade in goods by removing technical barriers, improving the competitive position of EU exporters in strategic sectors of Australia's growing economy.

The negotiations for an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the Republic of **Tajikistan** were launched in early 2023 and the trade negotiations are expected to be concluded in 2024.

### ***The proposal of new bilateral negotiations***

As stated in the trade policy review, the EU looks forward to the modernisation of its trade and economic relationship with **Türkiye**, provided the right conditions are in place.

In 2024, DG Trade will continue to work with partners in the **Southern neighbourhood** to build on the existing network of Free Trade Areas of the Association Agreements.

In 2024, DG Trade will explore options to strengthen trade and investment relations with **Gulf Countries**.

DG Trade will also continue exploring the possibility to negotiate Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreements (SIFA) with a number of **African partners**, such as Nigeria (*following informal contacts in 2023*), Ghana and Ivory Coast (*following exploratory talks in 2023 with a view to a scoping exercise*).

An overview of all on-going bilateral negotiations can be found in annex 2.

### ***Effective implementation and enforcement***

The Commission will continue its efforts to **unlock the benefits of the EU's trade agreements**, coupled with **assertive enforcement**, of both their market access and their sustainable development commitments (in line with specific objectives three and four).

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<sup>15</sup> [EU-Australia trade](#)

This will be a critical element of the EU's drive towards its open strategic autonomy, and facilitate access to markets, particularly for SMEs. In 2024, DG Trade will continue focusing on:

- Ensuring the full implementation of trade agreements by trading partners.
- Supporting EU stakeholders and businesses to make the best out of the opportunities EU trade agreements create, e.g. further developing the Access2Markets portal and raising the awareness of the business community, especially SMEs.
- Further expanding the tools of Access2Markets portal, including the Access2Procurement tool and the Access2Conformity tool.
- Monitoring the proper implementation and enforcement of the EU's trade agreements and facilitating and following up complaints related to market access barriers and infringements of trade and sustainable development commitments through the Single Entry Point.

DG Trade will continue monitoring the compliance of its trading partners with their commitments under the WTO and under FTAs to quickly prevent or rectify unjustified, discriminatory or disproportionate barriers to trade. Likewise, through its trade instruments, it monitors compliance with relevant international standards for labour rights, climate/environmental protection, and human rights. The enforcement of the rights stemming from preferential bilateral or plurilateral trade agreements as well as multilateral trading rules may be achieved through technical, diplomatic and political contacts, negotiations, regulatory cooperation or dispute settlement, in the WTO or through bilateral dispute settlement mechanisms.

In 2024, DG Trade will prepare its regular annual **Report on EU Trade Policy implementation and enforcement**.

DG Trade will also continue to monitor the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs) with **Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova** through the respective committees. The implementation of the DCFTAs with Ukraine and Moldova has intensified by means of specific Priority Action Plans to unlock the full potential of the DCFTAs. Work on permanent trade liberalisation with Ukraine and Moldova – whose imports to the EU benefit from temporary full liberalisation on the basis of the EU's autonomous trade measures – will continue in 2024. This will be a further important step in the EU's support measures. Moreover, DG Trade aims to negotiate an Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products (ACAA) with Ukraine, which will facilitate the integration of a sizeable share of Ukraine's economy into the EU internal market, enhancing the competitiveness of Ukraine's economy as a whole and the value of the internal market itself. Work on a possible ACAA with Moldova has also begun and will be pursued during 2024.

In 2024, the Commission will continue to focus on ensuring the smooth and effective implementation of the most recent bilateral trade agreements (**the Republic of Korea, Canada, Japan, Singapore, Vietnam, the United Kingdom, as well as the agreements with New Zealand, Chile and Kenya following their formal conclusion**).

This includes identifying and following-up on implementation issues as well as ensuring that meetings of committees set up under these agreements take place on a regular basis and that their outcomes are promptly followed-up.

The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and **Japan**<sup>16</sup> entered into force in February 2019. After five years of application, DG Trade will launch in 2024 an evaluation of the EPA with Japan and will continue to deepen engagement on economic security.

With **Southern Mediterranean countries**, efforts are ongoing to improve the efficiency of the relevant committees under the Association Agreement to effectively tackle all trade-related issues. DG Trade will continue to engage with these partners to remove trade-related barriers and to help them taking better advantage of the existing preferential market access, in particular through trade-related assistance and capacity building.

Implementation work on the seven Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with **African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACPs)** will continue in 2024, including EPAs with the Eastern and Southern African (ESA) sub-group, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) EPA group, Central Africa (Cameroon), Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Cariforum and Pacific EPA countries.

DG Trade will continue to implement the 2019 EU strategy on **China**<sup>17</sup> including bilateral discussions on trade and investment issues. In 2024, DG Trade will: continue to engage with China at different levels, contribute to the assessment of dependencies ensuring supply chains resilience, continue to deploy efforts to rebalance the trade and investment relationship, including through the removal of market access barriers, notably through the follow up of the outcomes of the 10<sup>th</sup> High-level Economic and Trade Dialogue (HED) and of the high-level discussions at the EU-China Summit from 2023; and support the relevant strands of work with China with regard to enforcement actions.

In reaction to **Russia**'s unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, the EU has imposed a wide range of **sanctions**<sup>18</sup> against Russian individuals, entities and economic sectors. In 2024, DG Trade will continue to work on the design, development and monitoring of the implementation of trade restrictive measures that target goods, technologies and services as well as entities and legal persons in Russia, inter alia through the use of the Export Control Regulation, and its network and tools. Intensified efforts are deployed to prevent and tackle sanctions circumvention and evasion via certain third countries, including in close coordination with our partners. DG Trade will support the Special Envoy for the Implementation of EU Sanctions in his mandate of ensuring that EU sanctions are not circumvented and continue engaging in this context in continuous, high-level discussions with third countries. The design of the measures will also continue to

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<sup>16</sup> [EU-Japan trade](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Council Decision 2014/512/CFSP and Council Regulation \(EU\) No 833/2014](#)



promote a gradual general decoupling of the EU economy from dependencies on Russia while minimising impacts on critical raw materials' supply chains.

DG Trade remains committed and will continue to work on removing trade barriers, strengthened coordination with stakeholders, and wider communication and outreach through our **Market Access Partnership** with Member States and industry, including in the area of sanitary and phytosanitary measures. Thanks to the barriers removed between 2017 and 2021, EU exports to third countries were € 7 billion higher in 2022 than they would have been if the barriers had remained in place.

Well-functioning **intellectual property** systems are a key lever to promote investment in innovation and sustainable growth. Intellectual Property Rights infringements worldwide cost European firms billions of euros in lost revenue and put thousands of jobs at risk. These infringements also endanger consumers, public health and the environment and contribute to organised crime. DG Trade will continue to use a range of bilateral and multilateral trade tools to promote solid intellectual property laws and effective enforcement worldwide. It will engage with key trading partners through Intellectual Property Dialogues and Working Groups, as well as through the WTO Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Council, the OECD and other organisations. DG Trade will also continue its engagement in various technical cooperation programmes such as the Intellectual Property (IP) Key cooperation programmes for China, Southeast Asia and Latin America or the four-year cooperation programme for Africa.

In the area of **public procurement**, DG Trade will continue to promote transparency, good governance and improved market access in third countries. In parallel with and in addition to the EU efforts in bilateral and plurilateral agreements, DG Trade stands ready to deploy the **International Procurement Instrument**<sup>19</sup> (IPI), which entered into force in August 2022. This instrument seeks a level playing field in procurement by giving the EU leverage to negotiate better access for EU companies to procurement markets outside the EU. As a measure of last resort, intended to give partner countries an incentive to open their markets, it allows the EU to restrict access of companies, goods and services to the EU procurement market if they are from a country that is found (through complaints-based or ex officio investigations) to apply restrictive or discriminatory treatment against EU companies.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/1031/oj>

### **Specific objective 3: Protecting EU companies and citizens from unfair trade and investment by making full use of existing Trade Defence Instruments, developing new tools and focusing on enforcement of existing commitments at an EU or international level**

Ensuring fair and open trade by pursuing mutually beneficial trading conditions and combatting unfair competition internally and in third countries.

The **Chief Trade Enforcement Officer** will continue to increase the visibility, effectiveness and efficiency of DG Trade's work on implementation and enforcement.

Through the above mentioned centralised *Single Entry Point* on the Access2Markets portal, EU-based stakeholders and civil society can bring their complaints about barriers to market access in non-EU countries or about lack of compliance with commitments they have made on workers' rights, climate change, or the environment. This specific objective thus contributes to the Commission's general objective *An economy that works for people*.

The Chief Trade Enforcement Officer's role is to lead efforts across the Commission to strengthen implementation and enforcement, drawing on a range of **available tools**:

- The institutional framework under the EU' trade agreements and the WTO;
- High-level contacts with partner countries at political level;
- Dispute settlement procedures, either under a bilateral agreement or in the WTO;
- The updated Enforcement Regulation in cases where dispute settlement is blocked;
- The Trade Barriers Regulation, allowing the Commission to investigate specific problems identified by EU companies. Since the 1990s, 24 examination procedures have been initiated concerning a range of partners;
- Trade defence instruments such as anti-dumping, anti-subsidy and safeguard measures to protect EU stakeholders from unfair and injurious trade practices or sudden surges in trade flows.

To strengthen the EU's ability to defend itself against coercive measures of others, DG Trade brought forward a proposal in 2021 for a new legal instrument **to enable the EU to deter and counteract coercive actions**<sup>20</sup> by trade partners that entered into force on 27 December 2023.

In 2024, DG Trade will continue to address steel excess capacity internationally, in multilateral fora, notably the OECD Steel Committee and the G20 mandated Global Forum for Steel Excess Capacity (GFSEC), and its bilateral relations, in particular the US. An EU-US technical working group was established to address, among other things, methodologies for calculating steel and aluminium carbon-intensity and share relevant data.

The Commission stands firm against unfair trade practices. In line with WTO rules, the EU has its own system of **Trade Defence Instruments** to combat unfair trade practices in international trade. The EU is an efficient user of these instruments and applies a number

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<sup>20</sup> [2023 Commission Work Programme, Annex III](#)

of conditions in addition to WTO rules to ensure their use is measured. DG Trade also actively participates in trade defence investigations by non-EU countries against EU Member States with the aim of minimising the cost for EU exporters.

President Ursula von der Leyen in her 2023 State of the Union speech emphasised that *“Too often, our companies are excluded from foreign markets or are victims of predatory practices. They are often undercut by competitors benefitting from huge state subsidies. Europe is open for competition. Not for a race to the bottom.”*

The EU will continue to act to ensure global competition remains fair. Testimony to that commitment was the Commission’s decision to launch ex-officio an anti-subsidy investigation into electric vehicles coming from China. In 2024, the Commission intends to adopt an update to its Report on significant distortions in the economy of the People’s Republic of China for the purposes of trade defence investigations, pursuant to Article 2.6a(c) of the basic EU Anti-Dumping Regulation.

### **European Economic Security**

The Joint Communication on the **“European Economic Security Strategy”** focuses on ensuring that the EU continues to reap the benefits of economic openness, while minimising risks arising from increased geopolitical tensions and accelerated technological shifts. The strategy provides for actions across three key pillars: *promoting* the EU’s competitiveness; *protecting* against risks; and *partnering* with the broadest possible range of countries to address shared concerns and interests. It includes multiple trade-related actions comprising building partnerships, exploring the need for new tools, assessing risks related to the resilience of supply chains and of weaponization of economic dependencies and economic coercion. DG Trade will continue implementing the strategy throughout 2024.

Under the Protect pillar, significant work is expected in 2024 with Member States on the three trade and security tools.

On **Foreign Direct Investment**, the Commission in January 2024 presented a legislative proposal for the revision of the EU’s FDI Screening Regulation and now will work with the Council and Parliament on the proposal. The proposal builds on the evaluation of the practical experience gained since 2020 from reviewing more than 1,200 FDI transactions and on the results of extensive public consultations, as well as audit by the Court of Auditors. The aim is to improve the regulation’s functioning and strengthen its effectiveness so it captures all relevant investments and focuses on those that carry the most significant risks.

In the area of **export controls**, in January 2024, the Commission published a White Paper setting out options for the effective implementation of the 2021 Dual-Use Export Control Regulation on sensitive dual-use goods and technologies. It presented options notably as regards coordination between member states of national export controls, proposed to advance the evaluation of the Dual use regulation and to launch a study to that effect. In 2024, the Commission will also support enhanced information exchange with Member

States and greater transparency for stakeholders, including on licensing data, with the publication of the first Annual Report under the terms of the 2021 Regulation. In addition, the Commission will adopt the regular updates of the EU Dual-Use control list and will continue to steer the activity of the Dual-Use Coordination Group and related new technical expert groups, especially on emerging technologies and cybersurveillance technologies. The Commission will, in particular adopt due diligence guidelines for exporters and Member States' export control authorities to enhance controls on cybersurveillance technologies and ensure they are not misused for human rights violations.

In the area of **outbound investment**, in January 2024 the Commission published a White Paper setting out the next steps for DG Trade to address potential security risks of certain sensitive technologies and investments leaving the EU. In 2024, after a public consultation stage (January-April), the Commission will adopt a Recommendation to Member States (Summer 2024) to recommend monitoring and reviewing certain outbound investments, with the aim to perform an assessment of security risks. Throughout this process, DG Trade will continue to work closely with Member States in the dedicated Expert Group, especially to provide guidance for performing the monitoring / review and risk assessment.

**Specific objective 4: Ensuring trade policy is sustainable by effectively contributing to a wider set of EU policy goals, such as the Green Deal, adherence to international commitments on labour and the environment, gender and sustainable supply chains**

Deploying trade measures to contribute to sustainability, including the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, the fight against climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation and other relevant global environmental priorities outlined in the Commission's European Green Deal as well promoting internationally agreed labour standards and human rights.

In 2024, EU trade policy will continue to contribute to the Treaty objective of **sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions** both in Europe and in our partner countries, to boost inclusive and sustainable growth, and reduce poverty in developing countries. The EU and its Member States are fully committed to implementing Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals through EU policies. This specific objective is thus contributing to the Commission's general objectives *A stronger Europe in the world* and *An economy that works for people*.

In 2024, the Commission will continue to propose and negotiate trade and sustainable development chapters for EU trade and investment agreements in a number of ongoing or upcoming negotiations, reflecting the outcome of the Communication on the power of trade partnerships<sup>21</sup>. The Commission will also propose and continue negotiating trade and sustainable development commitments in enhanced partnership and cooperation agreements, for example with Tajikistan, and in sustainable investment facilitation agreements, i.e. Angola.

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<sup>21</sup> [Communication on the power of trade partnerships](#)

Efforts to implement the trade and sustainable development chapters of EU trade and investment agreements will continue to be guided by the 2022 Communication, and the priorities established for each partner and will rely on an enhanced partnership with Member States, the European Parliament, international organisations and civil society. Since November 2018, a €3 million Partnership Instrument-funded project supports civil society involvement in the implementation and monitoring of EU trade agreements. DG Trade will also continue to work with FTA partners to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of relevant **trade and sustainable development** and **Energy and Raw Materials chapters**, thereby supporting decent work, sustainable management of the environment and the promotion of renewable energy and through avoiding subsidising fossil fuels by prohibiting dual pricing. The Commission will also pay close attention to core labour standards and in particular to the elimination of child labour in its third partner countries<sup>22</sup> in line with the zero-tolerance approach outlined in the political guidelines of President Ursula von der Leyen and as part of an overall effort pulling together the different policy areas.

In 2024, DG Trade will continue to work on the *ex-post* evaluation on key environmental provisions of EU's trade agreements.

In July 2023, the Commission put forward a proposal to extend the existing **Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP)** for the period 2024-2027, as the scheme was set to expire at the end of 2023. The proposal aimed to incentivise sustainable economic growth in developing countries and deeper engagement on environmental and good governance issues. The modernised framework also expanded on the grounds for the withdrawal of EU GSP preferences in case of serious and systematic violations.

Negotiations on the new Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) have proven challenging, given differences in the political mandates in the Council and in the European Parliament. The prolongation of the GSP preferences until 31 December 2027 is very important, to ensure legal certainty towards European and foreign business, and as a political signal the EU pays attention to its political commitments towards developing countries. The extension of existing GSP rules was adopted by the co-legislators before end 2023.

The current scheme includes the Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance (**GSP+**), which offers additional preferences to vulnerable developing countries that commit themselves to the ratification and effective implementation of core international conventions on human rights, labour rights, environmental protection and good governance, and the **Everything But Arms (EBA)** arrangement, which provides duty and quota free access for all goods from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) except arms and ammunition. In 2024, DG Trade will continue monitoring the implementation of the current scheme, in particular the effective

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<sup>22</sup> Africa component on the Trade for Decent Work project will focus on activities towards the elimination of child labour in Ivory Coast, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique and Cabo Verde in 2021.

implementation of the GSP+ and EBA arrangements. It will also keep updating the list of beneficiary countries and graduated partners and products as foreseen in the GSP Regulation.

The Commission will continue to promote sustainable and responsible value chains. In 2022, the Commission put forward proposals for a Directive on corporate sustainability **due diligence**, and a Regulation on **forced labour**. The proposed regulation will effectively prohibit the placing on the EU market of products made by forced labour, whether imported or domestically produced. The proposed Regulation is expected to be adopted by the Council and the EP in 2024. In addition, the EU's trade and investment agreements include dedicated Corporate Social Responsibility/Responsible Business Conduct (CSR/RBC) provisions as well as provisions on fundamental labour rights as recognised by the International Labour Organization (ILO). DG Trade will focus in 2024 on the implementation of FTA provisions on CSR/RBC and on providing input into the legislative processes for the adoption of the forced labour regulation and the corporate sustainability due diligence directive.

DG Trade will also ensure that trade and sustainable development continues to be a focus of multilateral work in key international bodies and fora.

With respect to **European Green Deal initiatives**, DG Trade will contribute to facilitating undistorted trade and investment in all sustainable energy goods and raw materials as well as in associated, green energy technologies, including renewable energy and clean hydrogen. At the same time, the Commission will ensure that all European Green Deal initiatives are compatible with the EU's international obligations, including WTO rules, and that they achieve their objectives in the most effective and least burdensome and trade restrictive way. Under the EU's Farm to Fork Initiative and in support of the global transition to sustainable agri-food systems, the Commission will propose a chapter on sustainable food systems in ongoing and future trade negotiations, as it has been the case in the signed modernised FTA with Chile. The Commission will work on addressing animal welfare, the use of pesticides and the fight against antimicrobial resistance in its trade relations with third countries.

DG Trade will also promote the ratification and implementation of the relevant international conventions through its FTAs and GSP instrument. The Commission will seek commitments from partners on climate neutrality and propose to make the respect of the Paris agreement an essential element in future trade and investment agreements.

As to autonomous EU measures, DG Trade will also continue to contribute to the work related to the implementation of the **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)**. In addition, the EU Regulation on **deforestation**-free products entered into force in June 2023. Bilaterally, we will continue to prioritise the implementation of Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) sustainable forest management measures with key FTA partners.

In 2024, DG Trade will, together with other relevant DGs, continue to explore means to achieve synergies between FTAs and the above autonomous tools. Particular attention

should be paid to developing countries that may experience difficulties in complying with autonomous tools and/or do not have the capacity for compliance. Cooperation on autonomous tools could be channelled through FTA structures or other existing structures.

These actions for 2024 are in line with the proposals made during the **Conference on the Future of Europe**<sup>23</sup>, and, in particular, the request to define standards within and outside the EU in trade and investment relations and in environmental policies by strengthening the ethical and environmental dimension of trade and investment relations.

**Specific objective 5: Improve the acceptance and understanding of EU trade policy, in particular, by ensuring that it is pursued in an open, inclusive and transparent manner**

More engagement and better communication with the European Parliament, the Council and civil society ensuring that trade policy responds to citizen's concerns.

Transparency, clear communication and inclusive policy-making will remain corner stones of DG Trade's activities with the European Parliament, the Council, stakeholders and the public at large to maintain and further enhance legitimacy and public trust in how the EU conducts its trade policy. This specific objective is thus contributing to the Commission's general objectives *A stronger Europe in the world* and *An economy that works for people*.

In addition to the dedicated institutional channels established with the European Parliament and the Council, DG Trade will continue publishing clear, up-to-date and accessible information about trade policy on its website in easy-to-understand language, publish press releases, news items and factsheets, to inform about and explain the EU's trade policy initiatives to different target groups and the wider public. To this end, DG Trade will continue to engage actively on social media, including through increased engagement of DG Trade staff. The growing use of audio-visual material on its social media accounts (in particular LinkedIn) also makes it easier to explain sometimes complex technical issues in a way that is accessible to a broader audience. An example of this is the new TRADE podcast series which will continue to be produced throughout 2024.

DG Trade will continue holding regular meetings of its Civil Society Dialogue on a range of trade policy issues. Meetings are also organised online to ensure wide participation by civil society representatives, notably from outside Brussels. DG Trade also reaches out to civil society organisations in Member States directly, in particular through dedicated events, whenever possible jointly organised with the hosting Member State.

In 2024, DG Trade's communication work will continue to show the benefits of an open trade agenda, including from a geopolitical, economic and sustainability perspective, as well as emphasise the implementation, enforcement and legislative aspects of EU trade policy. Particular emphasis will also be placed on informing stakeholders of the EU trade policy's

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<sup>23</sup> The Conference on the Future of Europe was a citizen-led series of debates and discussions that ran from April 2021 to May 2022 and enabled people from across Europe to share their ideas and help shape our common future delivering a final report containing the 49 proposals to the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council and Commission: [Conference on the Future of Europe](#)

role in Green and Digital Transformations and in the context of the Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine.

DG Trade will continue to provide relevant written information throughout the negotiating life-cycle of EU trade and investment agreements. A variety of documents and easy-to-understand information are available on DG Trade's website.

Throughout 2024, more engagement and better communication will remain an important asset in better explaining what we are trying to achieve and ensuring that our trade policy responds to citizens' concerns. Furthermore, DG Trade will be launching in 2024 a Eurobarometer survey on citizen's views on EU trade policy.

These measures will further strengthen the EU's global leadership position in relation to a transparent and inclusive trade and investment policy in line with the Conference on the Future of Europe that proposed that *"the EU, in particular in its actions at the international level, including trade negotiations, improve its accessibility for citizens through better information, education, citizen participation, and transparency of its actions."*

DG Trade has assessed the reporting requirements in the relevant part of the EU acquis with a view to simplifying and rationalising the reporting requirements and reduce related burden on businesses and/or national administrations, without undermining the policy objectives. The majority of reporting requirements identified relate to complaints-based and case-handling areas such as trade defence or foreign direct screening or to areas in which cooperation and information exchanges with Member States are crucial such as export controls.

DG Trade will continue to assess reporting requirements and will also work with the co-legislators to ensure that reporting requirements and the related burden on businesses and/or national administrations remain as limited as possible in the future, while allowing for the proper implementation of DG Trade's policy objectives.



## PART 2. Modernising the administration: main outputs for 2024

The internal control framework<sup>24</sup> supports sound management and decision-making. It notably ensures that risks to the achievement of objectives are taken into account and reduced to acceptable levels through cost-effective controls.

DG Trade has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances. The effective functioning of DG Trade's internal control system will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the year and be subject to a specific annual assessment covering all internal control principles.

In 2024, while ensuring an agile and efficient human resource allocation in line with its workload assessment framework, DG Trade will continue to ensure an overall efficient and effective use of its financial and human resources allowing the DG to fulfil its objectives and priorities with the necessary flexibility.

### A. Human resource management

*As set out in the Strategic Plan 2020-2024, DG Trade strives to employ a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to deliver effectively on the Commission's priorities and core business.*

In a context of important geopolitical changes impacting trade policy, it is crucial for DG Trade to ensure that sufficient staffing levels are available to be deployed at the right place at the right time and ready to perform in the most efficient, flexible and effective way. In 2024, in addition to identifying possible internal redeployments to priority areas and ad hoc priority tasks, DG Trade will intensify work in flexible project teams and taskforces, heading more and more towards an **agile and adaptable internal organisation**. To ensure an efficient and effective planning of human resources, DG Trade will make full use of its workload assessment warning system, put in place in 2023. This analysis will be part of the assessment performed in DG Trade's spring- and autumn review process.

DG Trade's staff remains highly committed and motivated but operates in an environment of tight resources and rapid changes requiring adaptability. DG Trade will therefore pay special attention to its staff well-being with the aim of **nurturing a positive and attractive workplace**. This will include in 2024 various BE WELL activities in line with the corporate HR strategy. DG Trade will also encourage professional growth through training initiatives and learning programmes adapted to new policy, skills, and career development. It will maintain networks among peers (Senior Experts, Deputy Heads of Unit, ASTs), contributing to the ongoing reflection on tasks and roles of senior AD officials and AST/

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<sup>24</sup> [Communication C\(2017\)2373 - Revision of the Internal Control Framework](#)

AST-SC staff. In that vein, DG Trade will also come up in 2024 with a list of actions to follow up on the results of the Staff opinion survey launched in November 2023.

Furthermore, DG Trade will reiterate its **commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion**. In 2024, while closely monitoring geographical representation, DG Trade will continue to promote gender balance at DG level and strive to ensure a balanced pool of AD staff. It will work towards reaching targets for first appointments of female managers, as set out in Decision SEC/2023/200. To this end, DG Trade will continue to offer coaching to female managers. At the same time DG Trade will continue ensuring a balance in the first appointments at middle management level should the DG specific target be reached before the end of 2024. In line with the internal dimension of its Equality Work plan, DG Trade will continue to promote the diversity and inclusion strategy through the planning of dedicated events, of which one is planned for the first part of the year.

In addition, DG Trade's staff will be updated on policy developments, as well as human resources initiatives, through publication of information on our local intranet or e-mail distribution. On a regular basis, discussions and presentations will also be organised in the form of all-staff townhall meetings with Senior Management. In developing a strong sense of belonging and purpose, **DG Trade's internal communication actions** greatly contribute to build and preserve staff engagement.

## **B. Sound financial management**

DG Trade's specific objective in financial management is to plan, perform, monitor and report on the spending of financial resources with a view to ensure a sound, legal and regular financial management for the DG's activities.

DG Trade manages a relatively small budget, which it uses partly to acquire services for economic and impact assessment studies, for organising conferences and negotiation rounds, for IT support, and for legal and other services in support of its negotiations, implementation and enforcement, and outreach work. These services are generally provided by specialised consultants or by service providers, through public procurement. In addition, DG Trade also executes part of its operational budget by concluding Pillar Assessed Contribution with international organisations.

The budget is mainly implemented through direct management, while the contributions to international organisations are implemented through contribution agreements, i.e. indirect management. DG Trade will continue to operate a decentralised financial circuit with counter-weight. All transactions are therefore subject to an independent, ex-ante financial verification. No ex-post function is set up. In addition, a combination of preventive, detective and corrective controls are embedded into the programming and planning, verification, execution and monitoring, management and reporting and communication processes so as to ensure effective mitigation of the financial and management risks.

These include:

- An annual programming exercise and two mid-term reviews of budget; implementation and human resource management;
- An up-to-date Finance Manual, complemented by hands-on guidance, local training and references to corporate guidance;
- An annual assessment of the functioning of DG Trade’s Internal Control Framework;
- Financial circuits designed to ensure compliance with the Financial Regulation;
- Regular accounting controls;
- Formal reporting requirements and hand-over procedures for Authorising Officers by Sub Delegation;
- Detailed management reporting on key human and financial resource related indicators (Resources report and spring and autumn reviews);
- Weekly bulletins on payment delays sent to Administrative Coordination Assistants and Heads of Unit;
- An Administrative Coordination Assistants’ network.

## C. Fraud risk management

DG Trade has ensured a combination of preventive, detective and corrective controls are embedded into the programming and planning, verification, execution and monitoring, management and reporting and communication processes to ensure effective mitigation of the financial and management risks. These comprise a DG Trade-specific ethics framework including an anti-fraud strategy, in line with the new Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy, and on which DG Trade intends to increase the level of staff awareness.

DG Trade will continue to raise awareness about fraud, ethics and integrity and internal procedures through information events, internal communication, and trainings. Furthermore, following the update of DG Trade’s Anti-Fraud Strategy, DG Trade will monitor the implementation of the actions planned for 2024 in the Commission and local Anti-Fraud Strategies. DG Trade will continue to participate in the Fraud Prevention and Detection Network (FPDNet) and in the specific subgroup of external relations services.

## D. Digital transformation and information management

### Digital transformation

DG Trade will continue implementing the three key priorities of DG Trade’s IT strategy 2021-2025 in line with its work plan for 2024: (1) the digital workplace, (2) knowledge management and (3) support for the Chief Trade Enforcement Officer (CTEO). The actions undertaken within these objectives also fit with the Commission’s New Digital Strategy and Digital Solutions Modernisation Plan, as illustrated below.

Under objective (1) **the digital workplace**, DG Trade will continue to contribute to improving the digital culture of its staff by regularly relaying guidelines on better

collaboration, co-writing and co-editing (together with cybersecurity), in line with the corporate work on the Paperless and Collaboration clusters.

On (2) **knowledge management**, DG Trade intends to enhance knowledge mapping and sharing but also to effectively exploit the data and information issued from its different Information Systems. The actions derived from this objective are linked to the Data Analytics cluster.

Lastly, on objective (3), a variety of information systems in place will continue to **support the CTEO** in his endeavours to ensure effective implementation of our trade and investment agreements as well as enforcement of trade and investment rules, including in the area of trade defence:

- Access2Markets for effective implementation, linked to the cluster Publication and promotion;
- Sherlock/Sherpa/Tron tools for trade defence, linked to the Case Management cluster;
- eLicensing, notably related to the export of dual use goods, and linked to the Paperless, Transboundary movement of goods, Cross-border & interoperability clusters;
- SUE (SECRET UE) infrastructure to enable the secure electronic transmission and management of classified information in the area of FDI screening. This falls under the Secure Exchange cluster.

DG Trade has presented the following four contributions to the Digital Transformation initiative, which is part of the European Commission Digital Strategy (ECDS):

1	Access2Markets FTA implementation (contributes to output 1, sharing information and knowledge with third parties)	Communication and knowledge management
2	Case Management Sherlock/Sherpa/Tron	The objective is to provide electronic workflows and communication between the Commission and businesses.
3	eLicensing platform	Paperless and cross-border cooperation
4	FDI screening	Electronic transmission and management of classified information

The contributions and the associated projects will abide by the EC Digital Strategy principles that include Digital by Default, ensuring security and privacy, guaranteeing openness, transparency and interoperability, while being user centric and data driven.

### Information and IT security rules

DG Trade continues to ensure systematically that all the IT tools and IT systems developed in house incorporate the currently applicable data protection rules and principles, such as privacy by design and privacy by default and security obligations. The majority of IT systems are currently covered by security plans and it is foreseen that all of DG Trade’s IT systems will be covered in the future. The security plans are reviewed and updated based

on a defined planning communicated to DIGIT (Directorate S). The security plans include the set of security controls that cover the IT security risk and compliance management. DG Trade will continue to work in 2024 to improve its Cybersecurity by collaborating closely with DIGIT on, for instance, awareness campaigns and trainings for its developers to keep up with developments in the digital strategy and in particular on cybersecurity and data protection.

The security of new IT systems will be reinforced by leveraging on the corporate work on the architecture. DG Trade will be adhering to the new canvas and ensure compliance with the dual pillar approach and the corporate architecture principles, including security by design.

DG Trade has put in place the processes needed to achieve progress in this areas and report in the corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC), on the basis of the following indicators:

- All security controls at departmental level and IT system's priority controls are subject to a compliance attestation in GRC and in particular to the compliance with MFA/EU.
- All IT systems are covered by a security plan not older than 2 years.

## Data, information and knowledge management

DG Trade intends to extend the use of current and future corporate tools for information and knowledge management, taking into account its specific security needs. DG Trade is therefore developing a more strategic approach to encourage knowledge sharing and collaborative working, in line with the corporate framework, such as developing a share-by-default approach combined with a need-to-know confidentiality scheme. One of the objectives will be to identify information assets of corporate interest that could be shared with other services, notably in line with transparency obligations.

A relevant action consists in the integration of the data received by DG TAXUD from national customs into one of the systems developed by DG Trade, replacing the data previously collected by DG Trade from Member States.

The systematic filing of documents in Ares is a prerequisite for the effective and efficient sharing and reuse of the information managed in the Commission's records management system Hermes-Ares-Nomcom (HAN). It is also important for ensuring a transparent approach to policy making. DG Trade will pursue its strategy of awareness raising and promoting the active use of Ares by all staff and management, together with a systematic monitoring of the use made by all DG Trade departments.

The integration of DG Trade's IT systems with HAN is another essential area to achieve efficient sharing and reuse of information. After BASIS -the corporate briefing tool-, EMT -the recording and reporting meetings with external stakeholders-, other applications such Public Procurement and Management Tool (PPMT) and the more recent EASE -tool for requests for access to documents- have followed the same scheme. These initiatives

continue to generate efficiency gains, make processes faster and facilitate a more comprehensive use of the HAN tools.

## Data protection

DG Trade will maintain the objective to implement all **data protection principles** laid down in the Commission's Action Plan. The registry of data protection operations will be closely monitored by the Data Protection Coordinator (DPC). DG Trade staff will be held responsible for the review of the records under which their data processing operations resort. High risk processing operations shall receive special attention from the DPC, who will guide the delegated data controllers through a Data Protection Impact Assessment.

In addition, DG Trade places a strong emphasis on awareness raising among its staff. To that end, the DPC will continue to actively promote the basic data protection principles amongst all staff through hands-on specific trainings as well as tailored data protection training sessions upon request, individually, or as a part of unit meetings. Data protection is also a part of DG Trade's induction course for newcomers, which will be organised at least twice in 2024. Awareness raising activities aim to embed data protection principles in the daily routine of DG Trade staff. DG Trade will continue in 2024 its efforts in increasing awareness to reach the target of 100% of staff by disseminating the training offer on data protection and by organising targeted information sessions for newcomers and controllers.

## E. Sound environmental management

The European Commission continuously reduces the environmental impact of its own activities through the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). DG Trade will continue to promote EMAS corporate campaigns at local level and set local environmental actions to support the Commission to reach its environmental targets in line with the EMAS Global Action Plan. In 2024, DG Trade will continue its focus on raising staff awareness on the most efficient use of resources, in particular energy, water and paper consumption, as well as smart mobility. In this respect, DG Trade continues its reflection regarding missions and, in cooperation with SCIC, has updated its video conference facilities so to cater for the smooth handling of the increased number of virtual meetings which have and will continue to replace certain missions. With the new working time decision entering into effect in April 2022, the way of working has naturally shifted to a hybrid working environment. In this respect, DG Trade will continue in 2024 to raise staff awareness on the environmental impact of digital work and will promote available trainings on reducing digital waste. DG Trade will, wherever relevant, continue to include 'green' provisions into public procurement tenders and follow the guidance and contractual templates from EC central services. For the first time DG Trade was able to offer customized, re-usable plastic cups to its staff during the TRADE Summer Party. Colleagues will be asked to re-use these for any upcoming events in 2024. DG Trade also offered metal water bottles to the participants of the Annual Trade Seminar, which they could fill at the available water fountains, thus avoiding the use of any plastic water bottles. Similar efforts in this regard will continue with the aim to reduce waste.

## **F. Initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities**

DG Trade is continuously fine-tuning its internal arrangements in order to improve the efficiency and economy of its operations. The following initiatives show how these principles are implemented in DG Trade:

### **Initiative to improve resource efficiency through streamlining of working methods and the improvement of DG Trade's workload management framework**

DG Trade, in its efforts to respond to the external economic and geopolitical challenges, and to further absorb the effects of the highly sensitive political environment in which it is operating, will continue to review and further develop its workload assessment warning system, which was used for the first time in the resources analysis in the 2023 spring and autumn reviews, and which complements the qualitative assessment in its workforce management framework.

In the same vein, DG Trade will continue in 2024 its efforts to improve its working methods and its efficiency in delivering on its priorities, notably by ensuring flexible and agile ways of working through the further use of ad hoc project teams as well as by introducing new solutions to improve the quality and accelerate the preparation and validation of briefings.

# ANNEX 1: Performance tables - main outputs for 2024

## Part 1 - Delivering on the Commission's priorities

<b>General objective: A stronger Europe in the world</b>		
<b>Specific Objective: 1. Lead the reform of the World Trade Organization to preserve rules-based trade</b>		
<b>Main outputs in 2024:</b>		
<b>Other important outputs</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the position to be taken by the European Union at the 13th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO)	Adoption by the Commission	Proposal was made Q4 2023, decision to be finalised at MC13 in February 2024
WTO Agreement on Investment facilitation for development (IFD)	Endorsement of negotiated outcome by IFD participants at MC13 followed by legal incorporation in WTO rulebook and later ratification procedure	Q1 2024, then throughout 2024
Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the EU position within the WTO general Council on the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the WTO	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2024
Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the EU position within the WTO general Council on the accession of Serbia to the WTO	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2024
Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the EU position for the WTO General Council/Ministerial Conference on the accession of the Comoros to the WTO	Adoption by the Commission	Proposal was made Q4 2023, decision finalised at MC13 in February 2024
Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the EU position for the WTO General Council/Ministerial Conference on the accession of Timor-Leste to the WTO	Adoption by the Commission	Proposal was made Q4 2023, decision finalised at MC13 in February 2024

<b>General objective: An economy that works for people</b>		
<b>Specific Objective: 2. Creating opportunities for European businesses through new and existing negotiations and an additional effort to monitor and improve the implementation and compliance of existing trade agreements</b>		
<b>Main outputs in 2024:</b>		
<b>New policy initiatives</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Progress in the trade negotiations with Australia	Possible Conclusion of Negotiation once the conditions are right	2024-2025



<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Progress in the trade negotiations with India	Negotiating rounds	2024
Progress in the trade negotiations with Indonesia	Negotiating rounds	2024
Progress in the negotiations of a Critical Minerals Agreement with United States including Commission proposal for Council decisions on signature, and conclusion	Possible Conclusion of Negotiation and adoption by the Commission	2024
Commission proposal for Council decisions on signature, and conclusion of the modernised EU-Mexico Agreement	Adoption by the Commission	2024
Commission proposal for Council Decisions on signature and conclusion of the EU-MERCOSUR Agreement	Adoption by the Commission	2024
Commission proposal for Council decisions on signature and conclusion of the Republic of Korea digital trade agreement	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2024
Commission proposal for Council decisions on signature and conclusion of the Singapore digital trade agreement	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2024
<b>Evaluations and fitness checks</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Evaluation of the CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement	Staff Working Document	Q1 2024
Ex-post evaluation of the implementation of the EU-Georgia and the EU-Moldova Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreements as part of the Association Agreements, respectively	Staff Working Document	Q1 2024
Ex-post evaluation of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the European Union and its Member States and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) EPA States	Final report Staff Working Document	Q3 2024 Q3 2024
Ex post evaluation of the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), after five years of provisional application of the agreement.	Public consultation Final report Staff Working Document	Q2 2024 Q1 2025 Q2 2025
Evaluation of the Agreement between the European Union and Japan for an Economic Partnership	Public consultation Staff Working Document	Q3 2024 Q4 2025
<b>Enforcement actions</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
2024 Annual Commission Report on EU trade policy implementation and enforcement	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2024
<b>Other important outputs</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Commission report on the review of the functioning and effectiveness of Regulation (EU) 2017/821 (Conflict Minerals Regulation) pursuant to Article 17 (2) of Regulation (EU) 2017/821.	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2024
Implementing legislation of the EU-NZ FTA covering TRQs, origin quotas and bilateral safeguards.	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2024

<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Trade part of Association Agreement with Azerbaijan	Potential conclusion of negotiations	2024
Annual Report from the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on negotiations undertaken by the Commission in the field of export credits for the year 2017, within the meaning of Regulation (EU) 1233/2011, Annex I	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2024
Annual Review by the European Commission of Member States' Annual Activity Reports on Export Credits for year 2023 in the sense of Regulation (EU) 1233/2011, Annex I.	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2024
EU Annual Report on dual-use export control	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2024
Commission Decision on Joint Declaration between the European Union and the Pacific States on trade and sustainable development	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2024
Proposal for a Council Decision on the accession of Angola to the Economic Partnership Agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Southern African Development Community, of the other part	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2024
COMMISSION DECISION on determining the Union position for an update of Sectoral Annexes to the Agreement on Mutual Recognition between the European Community and Australia	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2024
Commission Recommendation on guidelines on the export of cyber-surveillance items under Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2021/821	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2024

**General objective: An economy that works for people**

**Specific Objective: 3. Protecting EU companies and citizens from unfair trade and investment by making full use of existing Trade Defence Instruments, developing new tools and focusing on enforcement of existing commitments at an EU or international level**

**Main outputs in 2024:**

**New policy initiatives**

<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
White Paper on Dual-Use Export Controls	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2024
Proposal for a revision of the Foreign Direct Investment Regulation	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2024
Commission Staff Working Document on significant distortions in the economy of the People's Republic of China for the purposes of trade defence investigations	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2024

<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Annual Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the EU's Anti-Dumping, Anti-Subsidy and Safeguard activities and the Use of Trade Defence Instruments by Third Countries targeting the EU in 2023	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2024
Commission Delegated Regulation amending the Annex to Regulation (EU) 2019/287 of the European Parliament and of the Council implementing bilateral safeguard clauses and other mechanisms allowing for the temporary withdrawal of preferences in certain trade agreements concluded between the European Union and third countries	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2024
Commission Delegated Regulation amending the Annex to Regulation (EU) 2019/287 of the European Parliament and of the Council implementing bilateral safeguard clauses and other mechanisms allowing for the temporary withdrawal of preferences in certain trade agreements concluded between the European Union and third countries	Adoption by the Commission	Q3 2024
Commission proposal for a Council Decision on the position to be adopted, on behalf of the European Union, in the CETA Joint Committee established by the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada, of the one part, and the EU and its Member States, of the other part, concerning the appointment of the Members of the Investment Court System's Tribunal	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2024
Commission proposal for a Council Decision on the position to be adopted, on behalf of the European Union, in the CETA Joint Committee established by the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada, of the one part, and the EU and its Member States, of the other part, concerning additional rules to facilitate SMEs' access to the Investment Court System under CETA	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2024

**General objective: A stronger Europe in the world**

**An economy that works for people**

**Specific Objective: 4. Ensuring trade policy is sustainable by effectively contributing to a wider set of EU policy goals, such as the Green Deal, adherence to international commitments on labour and the environment, gender and sustainable supply chains**

**Main outputs in 2024:**

**New evaluations and fitness checks**

Output	Indicator	Target
Ex-post evaluation on key environmental provisions in trade agreements	Final report	Q3 2024
	Staff Working Document	Q4 2024

**Other important outputs**

Output	Indicator	Target
First report from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council on the review of the functioning and effectiveness of Regulation (EU) 2017/821	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2024
Commission Delegated Regulation amending Annex III to Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences Accompanied by Commission Staff Working Document Report on assessment of the application for GSP+ by the Republic of Tajikistan	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2024

**General objective: A stronger Europe in the world**

**An economy that works for people**

**Specific Objective: 5. Improve the acceptance and understanding of EU trade policy, in particular, by ensuring that it is pursued in an open, inclusive and transparent manner**

**Main outputs in 2024:**

**External communication actions**

Output	Indicator	Target
Civil Society Dialogue (CSD) meetings taking place in Brussels (or online) with civil society organisations registered in DG Trade Civil Society Database	Number of attendees [physical and online]	Around 800 in total [for at least 20 meetings, with an average of 40 participants per meeting representing specific civil society organisations]
Meetings of Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs) as well as Civil Society Forums in framework of existing Trade Agreements	Number of attendees [physical and online]	At least 1000 in total [assuming 27 meetings (16 DAGs and 11 Civil Society Forum meetings), with an average of 40 participants per meeting]
Engagement with civil society in Member States	Number of events in Member States	2 meetings on trade policy per year, average of 80 participants per meeting

Output	Indicator	Target
Activity on social media	<b>For X:</b>	
	Engagement rate	1,5% per year
	Total impressions	4 million per year
	Followers growth rate	A growth from 70K to 75K Followers
	<b>For LinkedIn:</b>	
	Engagement rate	2%
	Click Through Rate	2%
Followers growth rate	A growth from 9K to 15K Followers	

## Part 2 – Modernising the administration

### A. Human resource management

**Objective:** DG Trade employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to effectively deliver on the Commission’s priorities and core business.

#### Main outputs in 2024:

Output	Indicator	Target
Trade policy training courses	Number of courses/lunch time sessions	10
	Average number of participants in the WTO Law courses	On average 15 participants
Organisation of a DG Trade Away Day in 2024	Participation of staff	Participation of 250 staff or above
Training sessions and awareness raising actions to encourage AD women to become managers	Number of events	2
Training sessions and awareness raising actions on diversity and inclusion	Number of events organised in 2024	2
Action plan following-up on the staff opinion survey 2023	Approval by the Director General	Q2 2024
Health or well-being events	Number of BE WELL [health and/or well-being] events	2
	Average number of participants in the workshops organised during these events	An average of 10 participants in each workshop
Internal communication: regular debriefings for staff on major policy initiatives to ensure staff are well informed of the latest developments in trade policy and major Commission initiatives	Number of debriefings	2
Daily accessible Trade Press Review to inform staff of how trade issues are reported in the media and what DG trade staff in HQ and delegations are working on	Number of working days on which the Daily Trade Press Review is issued	All working days except during the summer break and first days of January

## B. Sound financial management

**Objective:** The authorising officer by delegation has reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that cost-effective controls are in place which give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions.

### Main outputs in 2024:

Output	Indicator	Target
Effective controls: Legal and regular transactions	Estimated risk at payment	remains < 2 % of relevant expenditure
	Estimated risk at closure	remains < 2 % of relevant expenditure
Effective controls:	Number of exceptions and non-compliance events	Below 4
	Number of decisions overriding of controls <i>Source: DG Trade internal Registry</i>	Zero
	No of legal cases following complaints in procurement procedures <i>Source: DG Trade</i>	Zero
Efficient controls	Budget execution	remains 100% of payment appropriations
	Timely payments	remains, at least, 95% of payments (in value) made on time
	Time to pay	remains, at least, 95% of payments (in number) made on time
Economy of controls	Overall estimated cost of controls	remains below 10% of funds managed
Quality of the internal training sessions on financial procedures	Overall evaluation in the surveys of the internal training sessions on financial procedures	Above 8 (scale from 1 to 10)

## C. Fraud risk management

**Objective:** The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS) <sup>(25)</sup> aimed at the prevention, detection and correction <sup>(26)</sup> of fraud.

### Main outputs in 2024:

Output	Indicator	Target
Awareness raising events informing about the financial rules and potential areas of fraud	Delivery	At least once per year
In TDI context: Organise regular training courses, in particular for newcomers, exchange of experience and best practices	Delivery	At least once per year
Internal communication and training on ethics, with and special emphasis on conflict of interest, relations with lobbyist, duty of discretion and whistleblowing	Delivery	At least once per year
Implementation of the anti-fraud strategy as planned for 2024	% of implementation of actions planned for 2024 in the Commission and local anti-fraud Strategies	100%

## D. Digital transformation and information management

**Objective:** DG Trade is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policy-shaping, information management and administrative processes to forge a truly digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission

### Main outputs in 2024:

Output	Indicator	Target
<b>Digital Culture</b> Increase use of corporate collaborative tools. Increase level of cybersecurity awareness.	Average number of active users using Teams  Average participation rate in Cyber Awareness training (per department)	95%  25%
<b>Digital-Ready EU policymaking</b> Increase digital readiness.	% of statutory personnel that has followed the digital-ready policymaking course on EU Learn	15%

<sup>(25)</sup> [Communication from the Commission 'Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy Action plan - revision 2023 COM\(2023\) 405 of 11 July 2023](#) –‘the Communication on the 2023 revision’ – and the accompanying document, [SWD\(2023\) 245](#) – ‘the revised Action Plan’.

<sup>(26)</sup> Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.



<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>Business-driven Digital Transformation</b> Concentrate data assets in data warehouse.	Cumulative total of data assets in the data warehouse	15
<b>Green, Resilient and Secure Digital Infrastructure</b> Increase security of information systems.	Introduce double authentication in information systems	Target by 2024: 100%
List of key actions on information management and data protection	Deactivation of inactive users	Target by 2024: 100%
List of actions to implement the corporate principles for data governance for DG Trade's key data assets	Percentage of implementation of the corporate principles for data governance for [the service's] key data assets	Target by 2024: 80%
Implementation of the corporate principles for data governance for DG Trade's key data assets	Percentage of implementation of the corporate principles for data governance for DG Trade's key data assets	Interim milestone by 2024: 80%
Sharing information and knowledge with third parties (continuous)	Publish an information system aggregating information supporting imports and exports to the EU with special attention to SMEs	Q4 2024
Managing information and knowledge within DG Trade (continuous)	Operate a Data Warehouse integrating the statistical data supporting negotiations and trade defence cases taking into account the Data Strategy and data catalogue initiatives. Continue to operate a Service Desk supporting DG Trade's information systems which complements, in the field of information systems, the corporate service desk. Operate a One-stop Shop for collaboration spaces	Q4 2024  Q4 2024  Q4 2024
Using innovative, trusted digital solutions	Degree of implementation of the digital strategy principles by the most important IT solutions	60%
Initiative supporting business transformation	Create at least one new wiki at Directorate or Unit level	Q4 2024
Handling email registration in Ares	Number of emails registered with AresLook	Maintaining the proportion of one-third of the total documents registered in Ares
Monitoring of the use made by all DG Trade departments	Reporting of open tasks in ARES sent to all departments	10 times/year
Better use of electronic workflows, with the reduction of errors caused by the double circulation and the reduction of paper storage	Number of Ares registered documents with a fully approved e-signatory (no paper circulation in parallel).	=/> 90% of registered documents approved in full electronic mode (without paper signatories circulation)

<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Awareness raising activities on data protection	Percentage of staff targeted by awareness raising activities on data protection	Targeting 100% of staff
Ensuring accurate and complete record keeping of all data processing operations carried out in DG Trade with special attention for high-risk operations	Number of Data Protection Management System records compared to the number of actual data processing operations	100% coverage
Monitoring evolutions in data processing operations at DG Trade and updating records so they reflect reality	Date of the last version of the record	No records older than one year
All security controls at departmental level and IT system's priority controls will be subject to a compliance attest in GRC.	Number of attested GRC controls	100% for MFA and IT systems priority controls

## E. Sound environmental management

**Objective:** DG Trade takes account of the environmental impact of its day-to-day actions, taking measures to reduce the impact of the administration work, supported by their respective EMAS Correspondents or EMAS Site Coordinators.

### Main outputs in 2024:

#### I Reducing emissions from staff and expert' business travel and reducing CO2 and other atmospheric emissions

<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target (2019 as baseline)</b>
Awareness raising actions on the need to reduce DG Trade's emissions in professional travel	Signed the EC DG/service Travel Pledge	yes
	Number of events	2
All Senior Managers' offices in DG Trade gradually equipped with VC facilities and used for virtual meetings (in collaboration with DG SCIC)	Number of Senior and Middle Managers' offices equipped with VC device	To remain 100%

#### II. Reducing resource use in buildings and workspace (energy)

##### More efficient use of resources (energy):

<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target (2019 as baseline, as appropriate)</b>
Participation in corporate energy saving actions through building closure .	Number of department's buildings participating in: - end of year energy saving action - summer energy saving action	100% of department's buildings participating in - end of year energy saving action - summer energy saving action [two weeks if possible for the building]

<b>III. Organise sustainable events</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target (2019 as baseline, as appropriate)</b>
Green events	Number of green events	2
<b>IV. Circular economy (public procurement (GPP), waste, biodiversity and sustainable food</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target (2019 as baseline, as appropriate)</b>
Gradual introduction of GPP criteria in contracts and starting to monitor the process .	% of contracts with "green" provisions	Increase, in comparison to previous year, in the % of contracts with "green" provisions
<b>V. Staff awareness</b>		
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target (2019 as baseline, as appropriate)</b>
Awareness actions in the framework of EMAS corporate campaigns on (for instance) : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Energy and water use</li> <li>- Paper consumption</li> <li>- Digital mindfulness</li> <li>- GPP – biodiversity</li> <li>- Waste reduction/sorting</li> <li>- Mobility</li> </ul>	Number of awareness/participatory actions Number of staff informed	100% 100%

## ANNEX 2: Overview of on-going bilateral negotiations

Timeline Negotiations	Impact assessment completed	Scoping	Recommendations to negotiate adopted by Commission	Recommendations to negotiate adopted by Council	Negotiations launched	Technical conclusion/ Political agreement	Legal scrubbing completed	Translation done	Proposal to sign and conclude adopted by COM	Proposals adopted by Council	Consent by EP
Finalisation											
West Africa	-		April 2002	June 2002	October 2003	February 2014	June 2014	September 2014	September 2014	December 2014	<i>Pending completion of signature process</i>
East African Community (EAC)	-		April 2002	June 2002	February 2004	October 2014	September 2015	February 2016	February 2016	June 2016	<i>Pending completion of signature process</i>
Kenya			April 2002	June 2002 (Dec 2019 updated)	February 2004 (Feb 2022)	June 2023	July 2023	October 2023	September 2023	December 2023	<i>Possibly Q1 2024</i>
Kyrgyzstan	-		2 June 2017	9 October 2017	March 2018	June 2019	September 2021	June 2022	June 2022	<i>Potential conclusions in 2024</i>	
Enhanced PCA with Uzbekistan	-	-	May 2018	16 July 2018	February 2019	June 2022	June 2023	<i>Proposal adopted by COM – December 2023; Potential signature and ratification in 2024.</i>			
Enhanced PCA with Tajikistan		COM-October 2022	Council - December 2022		February 2023						
Modernisation of the trade part of the EU-Mexico	September 2014	√	December 2015	May 2016	June 2016	April 2020	Ongoing	<i>Legal revision of the agreement is ongoing. Technical discussions ongoing. Once finalised, translations into all official EU languages can be finalised and submitted to EU Member States and the European Parliament for approval.</i>			

Timeline Negotiations	Impact assessment completed	Scoping	Recommendations to negotiate adopted by Commission	Recommendations to negotiate adopted by Council	Negotiations launched	Technical conclusion/ Political agreement	Legal scrubbing completed	Translation done	Proposal to sign and conclude adopted by COM	Proposals adopted by Council	Consent by EP
Global Agreement											
Angola SIFA		√	March 2021	May 2021	June 2021	November 2022	March 2023	June 2023	June 2023	October 2023	<i>Possibly Q1 2024</i>
New Zealand FTA	September 2017		13 September 2017	June 2018	June 2018	June 2022	November 2022	February 2023	February 2023	Council Decision on signature (27 June 2023) and conclusion (27 Nov 2023)	Consent by EP 22 November 2023
Modernisation of the trade part of the EU-Chile Association Agreement	February 2017	√	24 May 2017	November 2017	November 2017	December 2022	April 2023	July 2023 for AFA/August 2023 for ITA	<i>Commission proposal adopted and transmitted. Council adoption on 5.12.2023 and signature on 13.12.2023. Possible EP consent in Q1 2024.</i>		
Mercosur	-	√	1999	-	Re-launch May 2010	June 2019	Ongoing	<i>Legal revision of the agreement is ongoing. Once finalised, it can be translated into all official EU languages and submitted to EU Member States and the European Parliament for approval.</i>			
China investment agreement	May 2013	√	May 2013	October 2013	November 2013	December 2020	<i>The ratification of the agreement is on hold due to the political context.</i>				
Ongoing								<i>Expected outputs in 2024</i>			
Indonesia FTA	-	√	April 2007	October 2010	July 2016	<i>Negotiations with Indonesia are being pursued.</i>					

Timeline Negotiations	Impact assessment completed	Scoping	Recommendations to negotiate adopted by Commission	Recommendations to negotiate adopted by Council	Negotiations launched	Technical conclusion/ Political agreement	Legal scrubbing completed	Translation done	Proposal to sign and conclude adopted by COM	Proposals adopted by Council	Consent by EP
Thailand FTA	-	√	April 2007	February 2013	March 2013	<i>Negotiations have resumed in September 2023.</i>					
Malaysia FTA	-	√	April 2007	October 2010	November 2010	<i>Contacts continue to examine the basis for a possible resumption of negotiations.</i>					
Philippines FTA	-	√	April 2007	October 2010	December 2015	<i>Contacts continue to examine the basis for a possible resumption of negotiations.</i>					
India FTA	-	√	April 2007	April 2007	June 2007	<i>The 8 May 2021 EU-India Leaders Meeting decided on the resumption of negotiations for a FTA, and the launch of negotiations for an Investment Protection Agreement and an agreement on geographical indications. Resumption and launch were done in 2022 and negotiations are being actively pursued.</i>					
Modernisation of interim EU-Eastern and Southern Africa (ESAS) EPA	-	√		December 2019 (update of 2002 EPA negotiating directives)	October 2019	<i>The aim of the negotiations is to deepen the iEPA towards a modern and comprehensive agreement covering all trade related issues (13 topics in total), including a TSD chapter and stronger institutional provisions with consultative bodies for civil society. In the ten rounds held so far progress was achieved on most of the topics discussed.</i>					
Morocco DCFTA	-	√	October 2011	December 2011	March 2013	<i>DCFTA negotiations with Morocco were put on hold in 2014 at the request of Morocco. In line with the EU Trade Policy Review, the EU is ready to discuss options with Morocco to modernise trade and investment relations, to better adapt them to today's challenges.</i>					
Tunisia DCFTA	-	√	October 2011	December 2011	October 2015	<i>DCFTA negotiations have been effectively brought to a standstill since 2019 at the request of Tunisia. In line with the EU Trade Policy Review, the EU is ready to discuss options with Tunisia to modernise trade and investment relations, to better adapt them to today's challenges.</i>					
GCC	-	-	-	December 1989	October 1990	<i>Negotiations were suspended in 2008.</i>					
Libya	-	-	February 2008	July 2008	November 2008	<i>Negotiations were suspended in February 2011. Resumption will depend on the security situation in the country.</i>					
Russia New Agreement	-	-	-	2008	-	<i>The negotiations for a New Agreement have been suspended by the European Council on 6 March 2014.</i>					

Timeline Negotiations	Impact assessment completed	Scoping	Recommendations to negotiate adopted by Commission	Recommendations to negotiate adopted by Council	Negotiations launched	Technical conclusion/ Political agreement	Legal scrubbing completed	Translation done	Proposal to sign and conclude adopted by COM	Proposals adopted by Council	Consent by EP
Azerbaijan PCA	-	March 2016	July 2016	November 2016	February 2017	<i>Advance of the negotiations with potential conclusion in 2024.</i>					
Micro States (Andorra, Monaco, San Marino)	-	2013	April 2014	December 2014	March 2016	<i>Finalisation of negotiations in December 2023 for Andorra and San Marino. Negotiation with Monaco on hold.</i>					
The UK in respect of Gibraltar	-	-	October 2021	November 2021		<i>Potential conclusion of negotiations in 2024</i>					
EU-Korea Digital Trade Agreement	-	√	February 2023	June 2023	20 July 2023	<i>Potential conclusion of negotiations in 2024</i>					
EU-Singapore Digital Trade Agreement	-	√	February 2023	June 2023	31 October 2023	<i>Potential conclusion of negotiations in 2024</i>					
Japan BIA	July 2012	√	July 2012	November 2012	March 2013	<i>While the substantive provisions have been agreed, the procedural ones (ICS) are still not accepted by Japan. The last discussions on the IPA took place on 20-22 March 2019 in Tokyo. For the time being, no further discussions are foreseen.</i>					
Myanmar investment agreement	November 2013	√	February 2014	March 2014	March 2014	<i>The EU made good progress in negotiations, but no conclusion expected soon given the Rohingya refugee crisis in Myanmar.</i>					
Australia FTA	September 2017		13 September 2017	June 2018	June 2018	<i>Negotiations will continue in 2024 with the aim for conclusion.</i>					
<b>In the pipeline</b>						<i>Expected outputs in 2024</i>					
Angola's accession to EU-SADC EPA	√	-	June 2020	-	-	<i>The negotiations are expected to be launched in 2024 following the adoption by the EU-SADC EPA Joint Council in July 2022 of a decision enabling Angola to launch negotiations for accession to the EU-SADC EPA.</i>					

Timeline Negotiations	Impact assessment completed	Scoping	Recommendations to negotiate adopted by Commission	Recommendations to negotiate adopted by Council	Negotiations launched	Technical conclusion/ Political agreement	Legal scrubbing completed	Translation done	Proposal to sign and conclude adopted by COM	Proposals adopted by Council	Consent by EP
Niue, Timor-Leste, Tonga Tuvalu and Vanuatu's accessions to interim EU-Pacific EPA	-	-	April 2002	June 2002	Tonga: July 2018, Timor-Leste: October 2020, Tuvalu: June 2022, Niue: November 2022, Vanuatu: December 2022	<i>The processes leading to the accessions of Niue, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu will continue in 2024.</i>					

