

[EU-Chile association agreement: negotiating directives made public](#)

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On 22 January, the Council decided to publish the mandate given to the Commission on 13 November 2017 to modernise the existing association agreement with Chile.

This is the first time that the Council has decided to make public the entire mandate for an association agreement covering political and trade aspects. It responds to calls for greater transparency and the need to better communicate the contents and the objectives of the negotiations.

Political and economic relations between the EU and Chile have so far been governed by an association agreement which was signed in 2002 and fully implemented in 2005. The aim of a modernised agreement is to deepen EU-Chile relations by enhancing existing cooperation on political, security and trade matters. Negotiations were launched on 16 November 2017 on the basis of the agreed mandate.

On trade issues, the current agreement has led to a substantial increase in trade in goods and services between the EU and Chile: Chilean exports of agricultural/food products and services to the EU have nearly tripled, while EU exports to Chile have doubled across most sectors. However, the existing agreement does not address some important trade and investment issues, such as specific provisions on investment, non-tariff barriers, intellectual property rights and some geographical indications and contributions to sustainable development.

By filling these gaps, a modernised EU-Chile association agreement will provide for the possibility of strengthening existing cooperation, lowering consumer prices, improving market access and creating job and growth opportunities. Throughout the negotiations, the EU will aim to ensure the highest levels of social, labour and environmental protections and to promote social justice and sustainable development.

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Iraq: EU adopts new strategy

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North Korea: EU sanctions 17 DPRK nationals involved in activities aimed at evading sanctions

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Venezuela: EU sanctions 7 individuals holding official positions

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In view of the continuing deterioration of the situation in Venezuela, the Council decided to put 7 individuals holding official positions under restrictive measures, with immediate effect. These individuals are involved in the **non-respect of democratic principles or the rule of law as well as in the violation of human rights**. The measures include a travel ban and an asset freeze.

Today's decision was adopted as the **political, social and economic situation in Venezuela continues to deteriorate**, and as negotiations between the government and the opposition have not yet delivered concrete results. It is an expression of the Council's concern with this current state of affairs.

The restrictive measures aim to help **foster democratic shared solutions** that can bring political stability to the country and allow it to address the **pressing needs of the population**.

As indicated in Council conclusions of 13 November 2017, constructive dialogue and negotiation are the only sustainable way to address the current crisis and to respond to the pressing needs of the people of Venezuela. The Council indicated that the EU fully supports credible negotiations between all relevant actors that can lead to shared solutions to the multiple challenges in the country.

The conclusions also underlined that the restrictive measures can be reversed depending on the evolution of the situation in the country, in particular the holding of credible and meaningful negotiations, the respect for democratic institutions, the adoption of a full electoral calendar and the liberation of all political prisoners. The Council also recalled that these are targeted measures designed not to harm the Venezuelan population whose plight the EU wishes to alleviate.

On 13 November 2017, the Council adopted a ban on arms and equipment for internal repression and a framework decision on targeted restrictive measures without listing any individual or entity.

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Zimbabwe: Council adopts conclusions in light of ongoing political transition

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