

Press release – Hearing of Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis on trade portfolio



Mr Dombrovskis announced “a launch of a WTO trade and climate initiative, focusing on green goods”, acknowledging that “today, trade is about much more than just trade”. He intends to reshape the EU’s future trade policy to make it more sustainable, including in the [Mercosur trade agreement](#) where the EU must “find lasting solutions for the Amazon region” before its ratification.

“Europe needs to become more assertive”, he said, adding that EU’s trade partners using unfair practises will be met with new tools, including a new anti-coercion mechanism- if needed, even against the United States. With China, Mr Dombrovskis seeks to conclude the [investment agreement](#) now under negotiation while ensuring that the trade relationship is “restructured to be reciprocal, balanced and fair”.

Enforce sustainable trade deals in practice

MEPs welcomed the planned new trade defence measure but also emphasised that the EU’s tools must be sharp enough to ensure that “existing trade agreements don’t only work on paper but in practice, too.” On Transatlantic trade relations, some MEPs asked for the EU to prepare for the WTO judgment to impose USD4 billion worth of tariffs on US goods in the Boeing case.

Several MEPs called for a trade policy linked closely to the [Green Deal](#) and the Sustainable Development Goals, and a long-awaited proposal on enforcing sustainable development chapters in trade agreements through sanctions. Several MEPs expect a new trade commissioner to ensure the Mercosur deal is environmentally sustainable and to protect the respect for human rights in the investment deal with China.

MEPs asked the candidate about obligatory due diligence for companies to ensure sustainable supply chains, which Mr Dombrovskis pledged to propose. Other MEPs wanted to know about future steel safeguards against dumping on the EU market and prospects for an EU-UK trade deal.

You can watch the video recording of the [full hearing here](#).

Next steps

Based on the committees' recommendations, the Conference of Committee Chairs will assess the outcome of the hearing and forward its conclusions to the Conference of Presidents. The latter will carry out the final evaluation on 6 October and decide if the hearing can be concluded. If so, the plenary will vote on whether or not to approve the portfolio change on 7 October, in Brussels.