

Report: EU trade agreements deliver on growth and jobs, support sustainable development

According to the second annual report about the implementation of trade agreements issued today, these agreements – covering nearly 70 markets all over the world – are proving effective in removing barriers to trade and promoting high standards of labour and environment protection. However, European exporters could make even more out of the opportunities offered by the agreements in place.

Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** said: *“Over the years, the EU has invested greatly in developing the world’s largest network of trade agreements. The latest facts and figures show us that this approach is delivering. These agreements help to boost the European economy by making it easier to do business all over the world, while supporting jobs back home. Our growing list of strategic agreements opens doors and gives a competitive edge to European companies in key markets. It also helps advance the respect of human and labour rights, and environmental standards. We must continue to focus on follow-up work to make sure that the rules in place are followed, and that businesses can make the very most out of these deals.”*

Today’s report covers developments in 2017 and shows that trade under existing EU trade agreements keeps growing. To give a few examples, exports to South Korea increased by over 12% last year, exports to Colombia by more than 10%, and EU exports to Canada rose by 7% in the nine months following the entry into force of the EU-Canada agreement. EU agri-food producers are among the main beneficiaries of scrapped customs duties, with strong export increases last year especially to Ecuador (+34%), Chile (+29%), Serbia (+23%), Turkey and Costa Rica (both +14%).

As regards regulatory obstacles to trade, EU trade agreements last year made it possible to open the Mexican market to European health products, while also opening the Chilean and Peruvian markets to some EU agri-food exports, and paved the way for EU companies to bid in public tenders in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

When it comes to the promotion of EU standards and sustainable development, thanks to specific provisions in EU trade agreements, partners such as Canada and Mexico ratified International Labour Organisation Conventions last year, offering greater protection to workers.

Despite these positive developments, more could still be achieved if EU companies made full use of the opportunities available under the agreements in place. For that reason, together with Member States and business networks, the Commission is boosting its efforts to inform and help EU companies, especially smaller ones, to benefit from trade deals. Initiatives include improving online tools such as the [Market Access Database](#) and the [Trade](#)

[Helpdesk](#), and providing step-by-step guidance to businesses that want to make the most out of the recent EU trade agreements with Canada and Japan.

Background and next steps

Today's report about the implementation of EU trade agreements is the second annual report of this type, covering the year 2017. The report details developments as regards 35 EU trade agreements (out of 39 in total). These include:

- "First generation" agreements, before 2006, that focus on tariff elimination;
- "Second generation" agreements, like those with South Korea, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador, Central America and most recently, Canada, that extend to new areas, including intellectual property rights, services and sustainable development
- Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) that create stronger economic links between the EU and its neighbouring countries
- Economic Partnership Agreements focusing on development needs of African, Caribbean and Pacific regions.

EU Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmström will discuss the contents of the report with EU Trade Ministers at the upcoming Council meeting on 9 November. Discussions with the European Parliament will also follow.

For more information

[EU trade agreements implementation report](#)

[Annex to the report: Commission staff working document](#)

[Factsheet](#)

[EU trade agreements](#)