



European Economic
and Social Committee

Recent
EESC achievements

Ensuring that trade agreements benefit all sections of society



The EU's 12 Domestic Advisory Groups are civil society bodies that monitor the implementation of trade agreements. They fulfill a long-standing demand from civil society to oversee the economic, social and environmental impacts of EU free trade agreements.

This series of fact sheets aims to show our impact on EU legislation, where we brought essential civil society issues to the EU or where we established ourselves as key players.

FOR MORE
INFORMATION



The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) was appointed by the European Commission as the secretariat for all of the EU Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs), under the leadership of chief coordinator **Tanja Buzek**. With 31 EESC members actively participating in the various EU DAGs, we act as a bridge between a broad range of civil society organisations and ensure continuity and effectiveness in the DAGs' work.

Through a series of opinions directed at the key EU institutions, the EESC has consistently advocated a strong role for the DAGs in **implementing the trade and sustainable development chapters (TSD) in trade agreements**. This policy tool balances trade openness with essential social and environmental objectives.

The **European Commission's 2022 communication on the DAGs** embraced several proposals put forward by the EESC and the DAGs, including:

- trade sanctions as a last resort for TSD chapter violations;
- detailed roadmaps for implementation, tied to civil society monitoring; and
- strengthening the role of civil society and the DAGs.

Building further on this, in 2023 we issued an [opinion](#) supporting the Commission's comprehensive review on TSD, a crucial step in the Commission's strategy to improve engagement with civil society on trade policy. In that opinion, we also encouraged **closer cooperation between the World Trade Organization and the International Labour Organization** to promote decent work and labour standards via trade instruments.

Looking ahead

The EESC continues to showcase the work of the DAGs through annual joint meetings known as '[All DAGs meetings](#)'. We advocate for a more prominent role for DAGs at every stage of the development of trade agreements, as they greatly benefit from the insights gathered by civil society monitoring mechanisms.

Civil society organisations bring valuable expertise, local insights, and a genuine commitment to their communities. By involving them early in the process, decision-makers can better identify, evaluate, and address potential issues, preventing problems before trade agreements are finalised.



I am proud of the DAGs coming together to turn existing frustrations into actions. The EESC is providing the platform for the new format, bringing together all its members once a year, strengthening the institutional channels and breaking down the silos.

Tanja Buzek, EESC chief DAGs coordinator

