



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Trade

Directorate R - Resources, Inter-Institutional Relations, Communications and Civil Society

**The Director**

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### **Call for Expression of Interest to participate in the EU Domestic Advisory Group of the EU-UK Trade Cooperation Agreement**

DG Trade is setting up the membership of the EU Domestic Advisory Group (DAG), under the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

#### **Role of the Domestic Advisory Groups**

The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) provides for the involvement of civil society through the creation of a DAG in advising on the implementation of the whole TCA agreement.

An EU DAG generally meets on its own initiative two to three times a year in Brussels. Considering the unprecedented large number of issues the DAG can address in this agreement, additional meetings can be organised on an ad-hoc basis including by creating DAG sub-groups dealing with specific areas. These sub-groups may use virtual means to discuss internally and exchange with Commission officials on any part of the agreement.

During the EU DAG meetings, and independently of the Parties, the members discuss progress made in implementing the agreement and submit their views or recommendation to their Party. They may also discuss implementation issues with the UK DAG.

The DAGs also advise the Parties in the preparations of the Civil Society Forum. They collect information from their network and eventually present the outcome of their work. The annual joint open meeting brings together civil society representatives of both Parties, alternately in Brussels and in the UK. This meeting will generally take place in a back-to-back session with the Parties. At the Forum, the DAGs will submit their views or recommendations on Part 2 of the agreement, which includes 'trade, transport, energy, fisheries, social security coordination and other arrangements'. Funding is available to allow for a limited number of members of the EU DAG to travel to meetings in Brussels and in the UK.

EU DAG members include various types of organisations: stakeholders' representatives at European level as well as smaller organisations dedicated to a specific topic. EU DAG members can have expertise in all issues or in one of the fields related to the agreement.

EU DAG meetings have adapted to Covid-19. Currently, most meetings take place in a 'hybrid mode', with some participants physically present and others connecting on-line. We expect to have more virtual or hybrid meetings in the future.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) supports the EU DAG through its External Relations' secretariat. It coordinates the EU DAG meetings, supports EU DAG members and maintains contacts with civil society partners worldwide.

In addition to members selected by the Commission via this call, the EESC will also appoint EESC members for the EU DAG, ensuring a balanced participation across its three groups (employers, workers, NGOs/others). This mirrors the role of the EESC and its members under the EU treaties as the voice of organised civil society in the EU.

### **How are members selected?**

The European Commission is hereby launching a call for expression of interest to invite civil society organisations to become members of the EU DAG. The review and validation of eligibility of candidates is carried out by DG Trade.

Eligible candidates for the DAG comprise representations of independent civil society organisations including non-governmental organisations, business and employers' organisations, at EU or national level, as well as trade unions, active in economic, sustainable development, social, human rights, environmental and other matters.

The organisation (and the candidate(s) proposed by the organisation) are selected against the criteria set out below. The maximum size of EU DAGs, including EESC members, will be of 30 members, among them six EESC members<sup>1</sup>.

Should there be more than 30 eligible candidates, DAG eligible candidates from each sub-group (business, trade unions, NGO) will decide among themselves which organisation will receive member status and which ones will have observer status. The difference between both statuses consists in the right to vote and the possibility to be funded for travel. Candidates selected by the EESC hold a members seat in the DAG.

Candidates need to fulfil the following criteria:

- The organisation must:
  - o Be a civil society organisation
  - o Be not for profit
  - o Represent or defend EU interests
  - o Be registered in the EU Transparency Register and in DG Trade's civil society database
- The candidate(s) designated by the organisation:
  - o Must have specific professional expertise or competence with regard to the areas covered by this agreement.
  - o In view of the specificity of the TCA as an agreement with a former EU Member State, nationals of the EU's counterpart (UK nationals) will not be eligible to become members of the EU DAG.

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<sup>1</sup> In case there are 18 or less candidates to the EU-UK DAG, the number of EESC members will be of three.

In selecting EU-DAG members, the Commission will seek to achieve a balanced and diverse membership, representing different civil society segments and working on the different sectors covered by the trade and cooperation agreement. To this end, in considering the financing of travel expenses, should the Commission have to choose between organisations proposing candidates who are also EESC members and candidates who are non-EESC members; priority will be given to the latter.

If your organisation is interested in being part of the EU domestic advisory group, please send your statement of interest (including: the name of your organisation; contact details; CVs of proposed participants; the organisation's interest and relevant experience of the candidate organisation and member) by email to Mr Didier Bloch: [Didier.BLOCH@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Didier.BLOCH@ec.europa.eu) at the latest on **Monday 5 July 2021** end of day. The EESC secretariat will eventually contact future members for a first meeting.

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#### Useful links

EU transparency register: <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do>

Civil society database: <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/civilsoc/register.cfm>

DG Trade's website: <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/eu-uk-agreement/>

Definition civil society: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/civil\\_society\\_organisation.html](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/civil_society_organisation.html)

TCA agreement: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L\\_.2020.444.01.0014.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2020.444.01.0014.01.ENG)