

Commission applauds Council transparency in EU-Chile trade negotiations

CHILE | Brussels, 22 January 2018

The Commission welcomes today's publication of the negotiating directives for the new modernised EU-Chile association agreement by the Council.

Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** said: *"This is a very welcome decision by the Council and unprecedented so early in the negotiations. Transparency is essential to inform citizens about our trade policy and build trust in what we do. Publishing the negotiating mandates should be part of this exercise. Trade negotiations must be conducted in a transparent and inclusive way, as it ultimately helps to deliver better trade agreements. This should be the standard approach for all future deals."*

Based on a proposal submitted by the Commission, the negotiating directives are discussed and adopted by Member States. They provide Commission negotiators with political guidance and a framework for what the future agreement should contain.

Member States have agreed to publish mandates before, notably for the EU-Canada and EU-Japan agreements, and during the trade negotiations with the United States. However, this is the first time that the Council is publishing the full mandates so close to the beginning of negotiations. The first detailed round of trade negotiations with Chile on a new modernised agreement were held in Santiago last week.

The Commission is committed to take this effort even further and is now publishing all its recommendations for negotiating directives for trade agreements. This new policy was announced by President Juncker during the State of the Union speech, in September 2017, and took immediate effect: the draft mandates for bilateral trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand, and for a multilateral agreement on investment dispute settlement were made public at the same that they were sent to the European Parliament and the Council. In parallel, they were also sent to all national Parliaments.

This should allow for a wide and inclusive debate on the planned agreements from the start. The Commission asks Member States to ensure the involvement of the relevant national and regional stakeholders in trade talks at the earliest possible stage.

As for the ongoing talks with Chile, EU negotiators were in Santiago, Chile, from 15 to 19 January for the first detailed round of negotiations for the trade part of a new and modernised EU-Chile Association Agreement, following preliminary talks in Brussels late last year.

Over the course of the round the negotiating teams covered a broad range of issues such as trade facilitation, services and investment, competition, trade and sustainable development and trade and gender. This will be the very first time that the EU will include specific provisions in one of its trade deals to promote the key role of women in trade. These will include acquiring a better understanding of the constraints and opportunities faced by women in the trade arena, and sharing best practices on how to improve the participation of women-led businesses in international trade.

During negotiations last week, although talks are still in the early stages, the teams were able to make good progress on most of the chapters put on the table and the EU is pleased with the overall level of preparation, engagement and ambition.

As usual, a report on the results of the talks will be published on the Commission website shortly after the round, together the initial textual proposals tabled by the EU in this round.