

Mr Didier Reynders
Commissioner for Justice
European Commission

The Consumer Voice in Europe

B- 1049 Brussels

Ref.: BEUC-X-2021-104/MGO/LAU/rs

15 November 2021

Re: The need for consistency across the dialogues of the new EU-US agenda.

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing on behalf of BEUC, The European Consumer Organisation, regarding the new EU-US agenda for global change.

We welcome the EU's initiative to launch a positive agenda with the new US administration with a focus on cooperation rather than a relaunch of a comprehensive trade agreement. **BEUC is in favour of voluntary cooperation between EU and US regulators, provided that it is designed to benefit and protect consumers and conducted transparently.** This is also the position of TACD, the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue, which gathers more than 80 consumer groups in the EU and the US, and of which BEUC is a member (see enclosed link below).

Following the EU-US summit in June, a series of dialogues have been launched. There is a dialogue on competition, the trade and technology council, and a cooperation platform on agriculture. We understand from the summit statement that dialogues on health and sustainability could also be created. Moreover, Commission Reynders mentioned the idea to create a consumer dialogue, which we highly welcome.

While we see the value of these different channels of cooperation, we would like to stress that a certain **degree of consistency will be needed.** The discussions happening in the different dialogues could overlap, for instance between the Joint Technology Competition Policy Dialogue and some working groups of the Trade and Technology Council (TTC). **It is important that the different dialogues do not lead to divergent outcomes on common issues,** such as technology.

Moreover, it is key to not repeat the mistakes from the TTIP era. Cooperation dialogues, just like trade negotiations, must be transparent. Agendas of meetings and progress reports should be published along with the list of participants. This information should be easily accessible to the public. EU and US public interest groups should be regularly consulted as well as briefed about the progress of the cooperation.

The EU has created the 'Futurium', which provides an interactive platform for civil society engagement. This is positive, but it only relates to the TTC, not the rest of the cooperation agenda, such as the dialogue on competition or the cooperation platform on agriculture. It does not yet provide access to the necessary information civil society will need to scrutinise the progress of the cooperation agenda. We encourage the EU and the US to explore the possibility to **create a joint platform addressing both the need for transparency and meaningful engagement.**

.../...

This platform should cover all the cooperation dialogues and channels established, including on health, sustainability, competition, agriculture, digital and potentially consumer issues.

In addition to this joint transparency and engagement platform, we recommend the EU to improve how it involves civil society in this new cooperation agenda. Now that the mandate of Free Trade Agreement expert group created during the TTIP negotiations has ended, **the European Commission should create a new expert group that would look at cooperation discussions such as the EU-US agenda, and trade negotiations.** This would enable a range of civil society organisations to provide input to the different dialogues created under the cooperation agenda, also in a more substantive manner than is currently possible through oral input provided during the civil society dialogues.

We thank you for considering our recommendations and request for information. We remain at your disposal if you or your team require any further information.

This letter has also been sent to:

- Mrs Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission.
- Mr Valdis Dombrovskis, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission.
- Mr Janusz Wojciechowski, Commissioner for Agriculture.
- Mrs Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety.
- Mrs Ilze Juhansone, Secretary General of the European Commission.

Yours sincerely,

Monique Goyens
Director General

Enclosed links:

- [BEUC recommendations on negotiations and regulatory dialogues with the US](#)
- [TACD checklist for a new EU-US cooperation agenda](#)