

## Briefing for Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis

### Scene setter

The meeting takes place at the request of BusinessEurope. They aim to have an introductory discussion with you given your new responsibilities and they aim to address the topics indicated below. Please note that BusinessEurope has also submitted various position papers, as summarized below (copies in attachment), including very recently on the Trade Policy review.

**“Open strategic autonomy”:** BusinessEurope will bring a strong message on the importance of open markets and trade, and enquire how the European Commission intends to implement “open strategic autonomy”. They have been quite vocal in underlining that resilience can also be achieved through diversification.

**Relations with the United States;** BusinessEurope is eager to resolve the current disputes and refocus on a positive agenda on WTO reform, trade and technology, and cooperation on climate and labour issues. More specifically, they will likely raise the Airbus-Boeing dispute and the imposition of EU's countermeasures and enquire into your views on the next US administration.

**Relationship with China;** In line with the EU's view, Business Europe advocates a strategic reorientation, namely a more assertive and firm approach aimed at levelling the playing field and restoring EU competitiveness.

**Mercosur Agreement;** BusinessEurope sees the agreement as critically important and would like to learn more about on-going activities to achieve ratification. They have already spoken out in favour of the agreement and should be encouraged to continue to do so.

**EU's digital trade agenda;** Business Europe is generally supportive of the EU's digital trade agenda, both in bilateral and the WTO e-commerce negotiations. However, they strongly criticised the EU's approach to cross-border data flows for lacking ambition in a letter to Commissioner Hogan sent earlier this year. Moreover, Business Europe is concerned with the **Schrems II judgment** (July 2020, Court ruled the EU-US Privacy Shield invalid with immediate effect). As representative of companies rely extensively on personal data transfers, they have already called for legal certainty and urgent guidance from the European Data Protection Board at a September industry roundtable attended by Commissioner Reynders.

**Trade and Climate initiative in the WTO;** BusinessEurope is favourable to the initiative, notably about enlarging the initiative beyond goods to include also trade in services, non-tariff barriers, standards and rules in key areas like Intellectual Property. They will be interested in learning further details on our initial considerations and how we see this links to other initiatives such as the Environmental Goods Agreement or the New Zealand-led Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability (ACCTS).

**Commission's new focus on implementation and enforcement;** BusinessEurope has been very supportive of the Commission's new focus. Its recent position paper calls for a comprehensive enforcement strategy that makes opportunities more tangible (more granular and timely information for suppliers of goods but also services) and builds a positive agenda with trade partners, (2) ensures better coordination between different initiatives within the Commission (e.g. customs action needs to go hand in

hand with trade policy), and (3) safeguards European interests by ensuring EU partners comply with their commitment.

BusinessEurope is about to finalise its contribution to the Trade Policy Review. In the recent past they have issued position papers (please see attached) on:

- Their latest position paper is one **the implementation of FTAs**. The paper makes concrete proposals on how to maximise the benefits of our agreements, for instance by simplifying the processes for companies to benefit from preferential tariffs, providing information to small and medium-sized enterprises, making EU and national outreach activities more impactful, in cooperation with stakeholders; and making sure that the EU's Chief Trade Enforcement Officer pursues a proactive agenda.
- **What Trade can do for Climate** (in short: via reviving the EGA, disciplines on industrial subsidies at WTO level, harmonising standards on green goods, tariff reductions for environmental goods in FTAs, strengthening the enforceability of TD chapters, but not via sanctions, green procurements, very prudent support to CBAM.)
- **Smart Technological Sovereignty** (in short: *"technological sovereignty has been interpreted in a restrictive and protectionist manner by some of Europe's major trading partners. If the EU follows suit with a reactive approach to trade policy and misuses the concept of technological sovereignty, it runs the risk of serving protectionist interests and will ultimately undermine the benefits of global trade and investment"*.)
- **EU-US**: How to build a positive agenda (in short: establish a formalised platform for high-level strategic dialogue; take a sequential approach to trade negotiations, starting with tariffs on all industrial goods and progressively expanding in case of success to including areas like agriculture, public procurement, services, and investment; enhance their regulatory cooperation; jointly take the lead in setting new rules on a variety of topics such as industrial subsidies, state-owned enterprises, forced technology transfers, developing country status, dispute settlement; achieve an ambitious e-commerce agreement...)
- **The EU and China**: Addressing the systemic challenges: BusinessEurope advocates a strategic reorientation of the EU relationship with China, namely a more assertive and firm approach aimed at levelling the playing field and restoring the competitiveness of the EU industry. After years of failed structural reforms and a further consolidation of the Chinese state-led economy, Europe should wake up to the China challenge and upgrade its own toolbox. Rebalancing is key.
- **Foreign Economic diplomacy and sanctions** (in short: oppose the weaponisation of the sanctions policy and the use of such measures to pursue economic interests; support a more assertive approach by the EU to protect its sovereignty in economic diplomacy).



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