

EN

E-003785/2019

Answer given by Mr Hogan
on behalf of the European Commission
(20.2.2020)

Under the Green Deal, presented on 11 December 2019, the Commission announced a new Circular Economy Action Plan. This new plan will, among other things, outline general principles for international engagement with regard to Circular Economy and will help European industry to modernise and to exploit new opportunities.

The Trade in Goods chapter, which the EU proposes in its new Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, already includes provisions to exempt from duties goods that are temporarily exported from the EU to the FTA partner (and vice-versa) for the purpose of being repaired. The EU also proposes provisions to ensure that FTA partners treat remanufactured goods as new goods, rather than as used ones on which it may be applying import restrictions (see for instance the recent agreements with Japan and Vietnam, or the modernised agreement with Mexico). The trade and sustainable development chapters in EU free trade agreements also contain provisions with relevance to the circular economy.

Because some of the requirements related to the circular economy may fall under the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) as technical regulations or conformity assessment procedures, they would need to be notified at a draft stage to the WTO's Technical Barriers to Trade Committee. This notification would provide other WTO Members with an opportunity to comment in writing or to discuss in the TBT Committee. The Commission's task in the WTO would be to defend these measures and their objectives.

By playing an active role in driving the global transition to a climate-neutral and resource-efficient world economy, Europe will be more successful in fulfilling its sustainability commitments.