

EN

E-003703/2023

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis
on behalf of the European Commission
(4.3.2024)

The President of the Commission announced on 31 July 2023 the launch of a joint stocktaking exercise in view of a possible resumption of free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations, in line with the 2021 EU-Indo Pacific Strategy¹. The Commission is assessing the outcome of this process. In parallel, it is consistently raising the EU's concerns on human and labour rights whenever it is meeting the Filipino authorities. The Commission would aim at negotiating an FTA that includes robust and enforceable disciplines on trade and sustainable development (TSD), in line with the TSD review of June 2022², supporting high levels of protection for workers' rights and the environment, and the achievement of ambitious climate goals.

The 2020-2022 Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) Report³ is accompanied by an assessment of the Philippines' implementation of 27 international conventions relevant for GSP+, covering also human rights⁴. The report shows that on human rights the current administration has demonstrated willingness to engage with the international community, and has announced a revised human rights-based approach to drug-control and counter-terrorism, that it will uphold the stance against the death penalty and that it rejects practices such as 'red tagging'. However, continued actions are needed to ensure accountability for extra-judicial killings and other human rights abuses. The EU will continue to closely monitor and encourage further progress on these issues. A temporary withdrawal of GSP preferences would be a measure of last resort.

¹ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/653660/EXPO_IDA\(2022\)653660_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/653660/EXPO_IDA(2022)653660_EN.pdf)

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_3921

³ JOIN(2023) 34 final, 21.11.2023,

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023JC0034>

⁴ SWD(2023) 359 final, 21.11.2023,

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023SC0359&qid=1705319474725>