

Reply to the EP's written questions by Executive Vice-President (EVP) for an economy that works for people, Valdis Dombrovskis

1. The EU trade and investment policy for a sustainable recovery

In the recovery phase after the Covid-19 pandemic and in times of increasing trade tensions at global level and of deep crisis within the multilateral trading system, which priorities and policy steps (including legislative initiatives and new agreements) would the Commissioner-designate and EVP Valdis Dombrovskis identify for:

- *creating and effectively implementing a new EU trade and investment strategy to address unprecedented social and economic challenges, to increase the competitiveness of the EU industry and to generate economic growth;*
- *ensuring that the EU remains a global player able to safeguard and promote EU values, key policy priorities and economic interests;*
- *contributing to a rules and values-based and fairer trade, tackling unfair competition (including social and environmental dumping) and ensuring a global level playing field for European companies, especially SMEs, and the interests of consumers and workers, including in the area of digital trade; and,*

in this context, how does the Commissioner-designate and EVP Valdis Dombrovskis intend to actively involve Parliament from the earliest stage in the process of elaborating these priorities and policy steps?

Trade remains a **cornerstone of the EU's economic performance and a force to effect positive change inside the EU and outside**. From making our businesses more competitive, creating high value jobs, making supply chains more resilient and diverse; to lifting millions of people out of poverty around the world, and facilitating the green transition by making climate-friendly goods and services more accessible and ensuring the most appropriate allocation of limited resources, an active trade policy is essential for the EU. And open and fair trade is needed across the world.

Nevertheless, in today's global environment, we need to ensure that this openness, and all the benefits that it brings, is compatible with the challenges we face. The EU's trade and investment policy is indeed operating in a highly complex and challenging environment. This was already true before the Covid-19 crisis which, to a large extent, has further exacerbated pre-existing trends such as the increased trade tensions at global level or the crisis of the multilateral trading system. Today, the EU's trade policy needs to help us operate in this difficult international context, in effect helping to build a model of **open strategic autonomy for the EU**. I am therefore absolutely convinced that an open, fair and sustainable trade policy that strengthens the EU's position in the world, promotes our values and protects our interests can be a driver of the EU's post-crisis recovery. It can also bring a decisive contribution to the broader challenges that the EU is facing such as the green and digital transitions.

A new trade strategy responding to these challenges will be developed on the basis of the ongoing review of EU's trade and investment policy. This new policy will have to address the key issues facing us: to the swift and sustainable socio-economic recovery from the COVID crisis, reinforcing our competitiveness in a challenging environment, contributing to the twin green and digital transitions and promoting our values and standards. The trade

policy review process will culminate in early 2021 with a new trade policy communication that will set out the EU's trade and investment priorities for the years to come. In the meantime, the principle areas of action for the immediate future are already clear.

A top priority for me will be to strengthen the stability of the global trading environment by leading the **reform of the World Trade Organization**. The WTO needs to support the global recovery and respond to today's challenges, including more forcefully contributing to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I believe that the EU's WTO reform agenda needs to have a strong sustainability focus. It needs to include initiatives to help combat climate change, facilitate trade in health products, improve transparency, as well as addressing the other deep problems of the organisation, including strengthening the dispute settlement mechanism, developing rules that rein in practices causing market distortions, and addressing structural obstacles to negotiations. It is in the EU's fundamental interest to preserve a stable and predictable international trading environment based on global rules that are effective and enforceable. With other WTO Members, I will prepare the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference with the objective of advancing on our reform priorities.

Another top priority will be to ensure that **trade is sustainable** and that it brings a decisive contribution to the **green transition**. After all, the EU will not be able to realise its broader green objectives by itself: trade is necessary to advance on the green transition at home as well as in partner countries. To pursue this objective, I will make full use of the different instruments at our disposal, through unilateral measures, through bilateral trade agreements (which now contain chapters on trade and sustainable development with binding commitments on labour and the environmental) and through actions at multilateral level.

I will also ensure that EU's trade and investment policy strengthens Europe's global leadership and that it keeps creating opportunities for EU companies to enhance our long-term competitiveness. But opening up new market opportunities for EU companies is not sufficient. We also need to make sure that these markets remain open and that the commitments entered into during negotiations are respected. This will be particularly important in terms of supporting the trade activities of our SMEs, the backbone of our economy. Therefore, we will step up efforts to implement and enforce existing agreements more efficiently. This will be one of the key priorities for the recently appointed Chief Trade Enforcement Officer.

Finally, as I am convinced that trade can only be free if it is fair, I will aim at establishing a **level-playing field for all by strengthening the EU's trade toolbox**. In order to do this, I will seek fairness and reciprocity in our trade relations, pursue and defend our interests. This will involve working to ensure agreement on the Commission's proposal to upgrade the EU's Enforcement Regulation so that we can assertively respond with sanctions in situations where third countries block recourse to dispute settlement. This will also involve limiting rampant subsidisation and unfair competition by developing new rules in the WTO on industrial subsidies and forced technology transfers. In addition, I will continue defending the internal market from distortions caused by dumping and subsidies through trade defence instruments and, where needed, by developing new internal tools. I will notably seek agreement on the International Procurement Instrument and work with the Executive Vice-President for a Europe fit for the Digital Age to address the distortive effects of foreign subsidies in the internal market.

I will continue to seek the views of the European Parliament in the process of developing and implementing the EU's trade policy. For instance, I am looking forward to engaging with you on the *Resolution on the Implementation of the Common Commercial Policy* the

Parliament is currently considering. Another critical step will be the European Parliament's views on the ongoing review of the EU's trade policy. Your *Resolution on the Review of the EU Trade Policy* later this year will be key input for the preparation of the new Commission Communication setting the direction of future EU trade policy.

2. Coherence of trade policy with other external and internal EU policies

Which concrete measures will the Commissioner-designate and EVP Valdis Dombrovskis take and how will he leverage his role of Vice-President of the Commission to substantially benefit the trade portfolio, in order to ensure the coherence of the Common Commercial Policy (CCP) with the new key framework policy of the Commission, the Green Deal as well as other external and internal EU policies to effectively promote, amongst others:

- *Europe's industrial, economic and geopolitical standing in the world,*
 - *environmental policies, and*
 - *economic resilience of the EU and its supply chains to achieve a strategic autonomy in core sectors while keeping our economy open ("open strategic autonomy"),*
- knowing that our actions should be aimed at promoting, at the global level, European standards/values, the Sustainable Development Goals, human and social rights and gender equality?*

Coherence between the EU's internal and external policies is critical for our success in achieving our objectives including supporting the post-Covid recovery and pursuing the green and digital transitions.

Over the last year, in my role as Executive Vice-President, I have been leading different work strands aimed at building an economy that works for people and delivers stability, jobs, growth and investment. I therefore have a good understanding of the challenges associated with ensuring policy consistency. The size and depth of the EU's internal market is one of our most important assets and, together with our integration in global markets, drives innovation, competitiveness and ensures economies of scale and the most efficient allocation of scarce resources. As the external arm of our internal market, trade policy is a key component of that equation. The EU is one of the world's trading superpowers and a coherent trade policy is essential to be able to leverage that in a manner that creates maximum clout and benefits European citizens most.

This is ever more important, as we have to mitigate the socio-economic damage following an unprecedented health crisis. My overarching priority will be to ensure that the EU's trade policy fully contributes to the recovery of the European economy in a manner that is sustainable, inclusive and fair. Beyond this acute crisis, trade policy will face other major challenges in a complex internal and external environment over the next years. Geopolitical tensions, digitalisation, climate change and biodiversity loss – just to name a few – are among the key tests of our time and will all require holistic, multidisciplinary and often global solutions.

Trade policy cannot solve these issues on its own but it can make a contribution to address them, while working in close tandem with other policy areas – such as labour and social policies including gender equality, as well as development cooperation, industrial, digitalisation, climate and environmental policies. It must make a full and active contribution to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

To pursue our **sustainability objectives**, I will make full use of the different instruments at our disposal. In terms of **autonomous measures**, I will support the setting up of a due diligence scheme and I will also guide the Chief Trade Enforcement Officer in his mission to closely monitor the implementation of climate, environmental and labour protections enshrined in our trade agreements, with a zero-tolerance approach to child labour. In addition, I will work together with Commissioner Gentiloni to prepare a carbon border adjustment mechanism that is fully compatible with WTO rules.

In terms of **bilateral trade agreements**, I will continue to pursue ambitious trade and sustainable development chapters with binding commitments on labour and the environment. I will make the fullest use possible of the various mechanisms and opportunities afforded by our bilateral agreements to enhance cooperation to ensure the respect of sustainability standards both in the EU and in partner countries. I will ensure that the adherence to the Paris Climate Agreement is an essential element of our trade agreements and of our autonomous trade tools. And I will make sure the Commission better assesses the impact of trade agreements on biodiversity, with follow-up action to strengthen the biodiversity provisions of existing and new agreements if relevant.

Finally, at **multilateral level**, I strongly believe in the importance of strengthening the sustainability dimension of the WTO and I intend to mainstream this aspect in the WTO reform agenda that is under preparation. I will further explore options, for example on environmental goods and I will invest in helping finalise negotiations on a new global agreement to ban harmful fisheries subsidies.

Policy coherence has, however, to **extend across all relevant policy areas** and I remain committed to making full use of the EU's trade tools to help increase the EU's global position, our security and implement our digital and industrial policies. For instance, for our industrial strategy to be a success, it is essential that foreign markets are open and that the world does not slide into protectionism. It is equally important that we pursue an agenda of levelling the playing field to ensure a fair trading environment, both internally and externally. In this regard, I will for example work with Executive Vice-President Vestager to develop a new instrument to deal with the distortive effects of foreign subsidies on the internal market and will pursue the objective of reforming WTO rules to reign in practices causing market distortions.

I intend to bring forward a new roadmap for our trade policy. Notably, I will support the contribution of trade policy to building a model of **open strategic autonomy for Europe** – reaping the benefits of international opportunities by pursuing a responsible and fair trade policy that will allow us to build partnerships, while protecting our market from unfair practices and ensuring our values and our standards are respected. The resilience of supply chains will figure prominently in the discussion of open strategic autonomy, in particular in relation to critical products. These are just some of the issues that are also at the heart of the ongoing review of the EU's trade policy, on which President von der Leyen has asked me to take the lead in my mission letter. It was launched in June 2020 and will culminate in early 2021 with the adoption of a new trade policy Communication.

I will continue to **deepen our strategic relationships** and **diversify our trade ties**, which is critical to our post-Covid recovery and resilience and to our geopolitical standing in the world. This includes managing our key relationships, especially with the U.S. and China. With the U.S., I will focus on working together on advancing our shared interests, including linked to levelling the playing field. With China, I will continue emphasising the need to make a greater contribution to and take greater responsibility for the reform of the

multilateral trading system, while continuing to develop a fair and balanced trading relationship.

More broadly, I will lead the work on concluding ongoing negotiations, notably with Australia and New Zealand as well as the modernisation of the trade relations with Chile, including a strong chapter on trade and gender. I will also pay very particular attention to the need to deepen our relationships with Africa and the Neighbourhood with a focus not only on trade and investment relations, but also on formulating win-win partnerships aligned with sustainable development, socioeconomic and political objectives. With Africa, our aim is to build resilient value chains and boost sustainable investment in relevant sectors for tomorrow's economy,

3. Parliamentary scrutiny

How will the Commissioner-designate and EVP Valdis Dombrovskis ensure that, in line with the current well established practice, INTA is immediately and fully informed at all stages of trade and investment negotiations (from the earliest preparatory steps to implementation) and that Parliament's views are duly taken into consideration before negotiations start and throughout the process, and, in particular, that no provisional application of trade and/or investment agreements (including trade chapters of association agreements) is requested before Parliament has given its consent on those agreements and how will Commissioner designate strengthen the Parliamentary scrutiny in all aspects of multilateral trade?

I intend to build a strong working relationship with this Committee, drawing on the well-established practices of previous Commissioners that ensure that INTA is immediately and fully informed at all stages of trade and investment negotiations in order to allow the Parliament to play its full role foreseen in the Treaty as regards trade policy. I will do this for two reasons, firstly, in order to be in line with the Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission, which gives form to this role, and secondly, because Parliamentary scrutiny strengthens the legitimacy and effectiveness of the EU's trade policy.

Let me give three practical ways in which I will put this commitment into practice.

- Firstly, with regard to **the flow of information between us**, I will respect the commitment to share with the INTA Committee all documents shared with the Council's Trade Policy Committee. In addition, my services will be available to provide either in INTA or through dedicated meetings further details as necessary. This reflects the well-established practice in trade policy to share information on an equal footing between Parliament and Council. The agreement on Better Law-making specifies that shared documentation should include, amongst others, draft negotiating texts, agreed articles, the agreed date for initialling the agreement and the text of the agreement to be initialled.. Both at the stage of launching and through a negotiation, I will make sure Parliament is duly informed. I also give my full support to the continued publication by the Commission of its proposals for draft Negotiating Directives.
- Secondly, with regard **to the work and views of this committee**, I will be happy to join INTA discussions on the trade and investment agenda, when invited to do so. I will take good note of your remarks and your views, whether expressed orally or in

writing, will help me frame the development of trade policy and the positions taken during the negotiations.

- Thirdly, with regard to **discussions between the three institutions** you can count on me to be a good partner of the Parliament. When Parliament sets out its position, I will carefully take this into account throughout discussions in Council, for example, on the decision to open trade negotiations or in trilogues. I will encourage Council to wait until it has heard from Parliament before it finalises its position. I will also reiterate to Council the importance of publishing the authorisation and final version of negotiating directives it adopts.

I hope these steps provide a firm basis for strong and productive relationship based on trust, transparency and two-way communication, ensuring that the Parliament's voice is heard and listened to.

With regard to the issue of **provisional application of international agreements**, Trade Commissioners have led from the front in encouraging Council not to apply a trade agreement provisionally before Parliament has given consent. President von der Leyen has herself taken a strong position in this regard. In her political guidelines she has made the unambiguous statement that the Commission will always propose that provisional application of trade agreements takes place only once the European Parliament has given its consent. She has also instructed me in my Mission Letter that "trade agreements should only provisionally be applied once the Parliament has given its consent."

Finally, with regard to **the EU's multilateral agenda**, I am grateful to the European Parliament for its support and close involvement in the preparation of WTO ministerial conferences. This will continue to be important, not least because of our shared concern for the EU to lead on WTO reform. Members of the European Parliament were part of the EU delegation to recent WTO Ministerial Conferences and were briefed on the progress in negotiations on a daily basis by the Commission services, including by the EU Trade Commissioner. I intend to maintain this practice for MC12 next year. In addition, the Commission has been supporting the increase in the parliamentary dimension of the WTO, for example, by actively insisting with the host authorities that MEPs must have access to WTO Ministerial Conferences premises, as was the case at MC11 in Buenos Aires. I can assure you that such efforts will continue in future WTO Ministerial Conferences.

4. Defending multilateralism and WTO as the core of the international rules-based trade system

What is the Commissioner-designate and EVP Valdis Dombrovskis's proposed strategy, in particular, with respect to the following points:

- a) to revive rules-based trade and further promote multilateralism and international law in international trade in all relevant fora, with a view to achieving a global level-playing field and tackling unfair trade practices as well as linking trade with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement;*
- b) to overcome the challenges to the WTO's rule-making function and dispute settlement system;*
- c) to advance negotiations for multilateral and plurilateral agreements such on e-commerce and fisheries;*
- d) to further strengthen the parliamentary dimension and democratic scrutiny of the WTO;*
- e) to establish a Multilateral Investment Court;*
- f) to counter effectively the breach of international law, among other, through extraterritorial laws ?*

The firm defence and promotion of multilateralism will be my first priority. And it is probably in the area of trade that the EU has the biggest role to play as one of the world's trading superpowers. By speaking with one voice, the EU can play a central role in shaping the international trading environment.

Internally, I will work to ensure that our multilateral trade policy contributes to the EU's political objectives: open strategic autonomy, the Green Deal, the European Digital Strategy, the economic recovery and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In so doing, I will work with other Commissioners to ensure that our multilateral interests are fully integrated into all relevant external and internal EU policies. Externally, I will spare no effort in building alliances to succeed in our plan to reform and strengthen the multilateral trading system.

I will continue to work for the EU to lead the reform of the WTO and make it fit for today's world. The WTO is facing its deepest crisis since its inception and there is today a genuine risk of demise of the multilateral trading system. The COVID-19 pandemic has added another dimension to the crisis the WTO is facing. It is with a strong World Trade Organisation that we can ensure fair and open competition for all.

The EU has already put forward a number of proposals to modernise the three main functions of the WTO: the negotiating function, the dispute settlement function and the monitoring and deliberative function. At the heart of this reform effort is the need to update the WTO's rules to adapt them to today's realities. In doing so, the WTO must also contribute to ensuring a sustainable and green global recovery from the pandemic.

In this context, I will push forward initiatives on trade and health to ensure that trade in medicinal products can flow freely and enhance the resilience of global value chains for health products and medicines, and to strengthen the sustainability dimension of the WTO, starting with the finalisation of the fisheries subsidies negotiations.

In addition, I will continue and intensify the work on new rules to reinstate a level playing field: to rein in distortive subsidies, ensure that state-owned enterprises operate under free market conditions and prohibit forced technology transfers. The EU will continue engaging in the development of rules on e-commerce, domestic regulation and investment facilitation,

which are crucial in addressing the digital trade revolution and behind the border barriers that European operators face.

Finally, the EU's WTO reform efforts will address the need to update the organisation's institutional framework. Firstly, by defining mechanisms to incorporate plurilateral agreements within the WTO, which is critical in an organization of 164 Members at vastly different levels of development. Secondly, by seeking a new consensus on special and differential treatment so that flexibilities and support are available and adapted to those countries that actually need them.

In order to achieve this, I will make a proposal for the reform of the WTO as part of the trade policy review communication. I firmly believe that in order to find a solution to the current crisis, we need to establish a new balance in the organisation - one which will allow it to regain its central place in global trade, which reflects the realities of today and which allows its Members to regain trust in the system. Building support among the EU's trade partners for such a reform proposal will be a central part of my work.

In parallel, finding a solution to the current Appellate Body situation remains a clear priority. The EU is open to meaningful reform of the WTO dispute settlement system, while preserving its essential character: binding, two-tier review by independent adjudicators. In the meantime, together with several other WTO Members, we have put in place the multi-party interim appeal arbitration arrangement. This arrangement is a temporary solution; it will remain in place only for as long as the Appellate Body is unable to function fully. The multi-party interim appeal arbitration arrangement is based on existing, multilaterally agreed WTO rules that allow appeals to be dealt with through arbitration under Article 25 of the Dispute Settlement Understanding. It preserves, among its participants, a right to appeal in the WTO, as well as the right to a binding adjudication of trade disputes. A significant and growing number of WTO Members participate in the multi-party interim appeal arbitration arrangement (including major economies like Australia, Brazil, Canada, China and Mexico). Additional WTO Members are welcome to join at any time. The MPIA sends a strong signal of commitment to a rules based system, with binding, two-tier and independent dispute settlement at its core.

Pursuing reform of the WTO will require close cooperation with various stakeholders. More broadly, I firmly believe in the importance of the parliamentary dimension and democratic scrutiny of the WTO, without which an important element of legitimacy would be missing in the work of the organisation. As Commissioner for Trade, I will continue to support this parliamentary dimension and in particular the involvement of the European Parliament in Ministerial Conferences of the WTO. I also commit to keeping the European Parliament fully and regularly informed of developments in the WTO, and particularly on progress in relation to the EU's WTO reform initiative.

In addition to reviving multilateralism within the WTO, I intend actively to push for the creation of a Multilateral Investment Court (MIC), which is being discussed within the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) with the participation of over 100 States and numerous non-governmental stakeholders. I believe that the EU should spare no efforts to push for the creation of this truly multilateral body that could fundamentally reform the dispute settlement provisions of over 3000 existing bilateral investment treaties worldwide. This will imply multiplying alliances with third countries to move this process forward within the United Nations despite the difficult negotiation context caused by the pandemic.

I will fight to ensure that international law is upheld and preserved. One path to do that is to expeditiously complete the update of the Enforcement Regulation so that the Union is

equipped to ensure international law is upheld where others undermine international adjudicatory mechanisms (in particular but not exclusively due to the blockage of the WTO dispute settlement mechanism). I am conscious that the European Parliament has raised, in the context of that legislative process, the issue of coercive actions by third countries, leading to trade restrictive measures being threatened with regard to the Union or Member States. I recognise the importance of being equipped to react to such threats. The Commission is also examining how to improve the EU's ability to respond to extra-territorial sanctions and I will announce the Commission's ideas in the Communication on Financial and Economic Sovereignty.

5. Implementation and enforcement

In order to maximize the benefits and minimize the negative impact of trade liberalization, how will the Commissioner-designate and EVP Valdis Dombrovskis ensure that all aspects of the CCP (including but not limited to all chapters of trade and investment agreements) are effectively implemented (also in terms of raising awareness of new export opportunities) and enforced and, in this context, what are the priorities, the tools and the competencies of the newly appointed Chief Trade Enforcement Officer in case of breach of commitments (including relating to sustainable development and the Paris Agreement) by partner countries or by negotiating partners undermining previous commitments? In particular, please identify the gaps in the EU trade and investment toolbox and provide your view on and the timeline for the Commission's already announced new instruments that will lead to more reciprocity and level-playing field (in particular with regard to foreign subsidies) and the concrete steps the Commission will take to facilitate trade with the United Kingdom after the 31 December 2020.

Under my political guidance, the Chief Trade Enforcement Officer will work to strengthen the **implementation of EU trade agreements** to deliver benefits to businesses and stakeholders and make systematic use of our enforcement tools to ensure the EU avails itself of its rights under international trade law. Through more effective implementation and enforcement, trade policy will support the competitiveness of the EU's industrial base by preserving market access and creating opportunities on foreign markets. The Chief Trade Enforcement Officer will have an essential role in defending European companies, workers and consumers, whenever our trade partners do not play by the rules.

We need to do more to **raise awareness** amongst our business community of what our preferential trade agreements offer and support small and medium-sized companies in their efforts to internationalise their business. At present, the EU has in place over 40 trade agreements covering more than 70 non-EU markets. Trade agreements have changed in terms of types and now offer much more than just tariff elimination. Their benefits have extended to areas such as intellectual property rights, services and public procurement and hence have become more difficult to grasp. In addition, the rules of origin that a product needs to fulfil differ from agreement to agreement.

Accessibility and usability of information on trade agreements for our companies are key here. Stakeholders (business organisations, trade promotion organisations, Member states and the European Parliament) would need to have accessible information on trade agreements, to help companies with the analysis and application of rules of origin of each of the agreements.

I will push for a more **effective and systematic use of our enforcement tools** to ensure the EU avails itself of its rights under international trade law. We need to leverage our resources

better to eliminate trade barriers for EU companies abroad. This means more effective, faster and streamlined enforcement process also through use of dispute settlement mechanisms in our bilateral trade agreements or multilateral agreements at WTO level.

We can and must do more to identify and take action when there are violations of commitments on trade and sustainable development commitments on labour and the environment, including the Paris Agreement.

That is why we are under the Chief Trade Enforcement Officer establishing a **new complaints process** – the Single Entry Point - to ensure more effective and systematic enforcement in DG Trade and in the Commission. It will provide a gateway for complaints from companies on trade restrictive practices in third countries, but also an equivalent gateway as regards complaints from stakeholders on violations of trade and sustainable development commitments under trade agreements and preferential trade under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP).

In terms of **bolstering our enforcement capabilities**, I see at least **three areas for action under my term**.

First, on the multilateral front, we must **ensure that enforcement through litigation at the WTO is not thwarted** by the current situation of the WTO Appellate Body, which has been paralysed due to the ongoing blockage of new appointments. Pending a lasting solution to that situation, the EU has championed the multi-party interim appeal arbitration arrangement. This is a political commitment to conclude, in disputes between its participants, appeal arbitration agreements under the WTO rules. The arrangement is open to all WTO Members and currently has over 20 other WTO members on board. It will only be in place for as long as a **lasting solution to the Appellate Body situation** has not been found. Finding such a solution, as part of broader WTO reforms, is **one of my key priorities**. In the meantime, the multi-party interim appeal arbitration arrangement sends a strong signal of commitment to a functioning, two-tier and independent system of WTO dispute settlement.

Secondly, we need to **expand our enforcement capabilities**. I will push actively for rapid legislative agreement on the strengthening of the EU's Enforcement Regulation. Thirdly, we are looking at a new tool, intended to deter and then if necessary counterbalance coercive actions by third countries.

I will also **strengthen key areas of importance** to the EU's strategic autonomy such as foreign direct investment (FDI) screening, security, export controls and trade remedies. This includes the full and effective implementation of the FDI Screening Regulation, the development of our policy and legislation on export control as well as trade defence cases (anti-dumping and anti-subsidies investigations and measures).

Finally, as regards **future trade with the United Kingdom**, in accordance with the Council's negotiating directives, the ongoing negotiations between the EU and the UK aim at concluding a free trade agreement as part of a wider economic partnership. This should be underpinned by robust commitments ensuring a level playing field for open and fair competition, as well as by effective management and supervision, dispute settlement and enforcement arrangements, including appropriate remedies. The Commission is putting good faith efforts in order to conclude the negotiations so that an agreement with the UK is in place at the end of the transition period.

Moreover, the Commission's Readiness Communication (adopted on 9 July 2020) provides an overview of the main areas of change that will take place in any event as of the end of the transition period. The Commission has also published more than 80 detailed readiness notices across a wide range of topics, explaining what public authorities and stakeholders must do in any case before the end of transition.
