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Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

Minutes

of the public hearing on “Safeguarding democracy, rights and the environment in international trade” held in Marrakech on 16 March

In the framework of the report currently in preparation on “Safeguarding democracy, rights and the environment in international trade” by **Mr Geraint Davies** (United Kingdom, SOC), the Committee **held** a public hearing with

- ✓ **Mr Abdelouahed Rahal**, General Director of Commerce, Ministry of Industry and Commerce
- ✓ **Mr Mustafa Merizak**, Co-ordinator of the Standing Committee for the Promotion of the Culture of Human Rights and the Consolidation of Democratic Construction

Ms Olena Khomenko (Ukraine, EC/DA), Second Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, opened the hearing, introduced the guest speakers, and gave the floor to the rapporteur for a brief introduction.

Mr Davies presented his draft report highlighting the need to rebalance global trade so that shared values and the pursuit of sustainable development would be better taken into account. The new generation of agreements increasingly comprised chapters concerning sustainable development but many of the old generation agreements needed to be retrofitted with such chapters with the mutual agreement of parties. The report also stressed the need to enhance commitments to protect fundamental rights and defend the public interest through trade agreements. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) and its dispute settlement mechanism should be further strengthened. PACE should also support the replacement of the outdated investor-state dispute settlement system (ISDS) with a new Multilateral Investment Court based on the results of negotiations under the United Nations auspices. Finally, the Assembly should plead for the coordinated revision of the Energy Charter Treaty so as to reduce the length of the sunset clause and its negative impacts on the environment, climate action and fundamental rights.

Mr Rahal started his presentation by recalling that Marrakech was the venue of the major international conference in late 1994 which then led to the birth of the WTO in 1995. The WTO had since made a very significant contribution to global stability and reduction of inequalities. Further work was needed to improve the existing trade agreements so as to help ensure global food security and better regulate the movement of chemical substances harmful to the environment. A green partnership between Morocco and the European Union and the commitment of the Moroccan Parliament towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals were crucial for the decarbonisation of the national economy and the further development of cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Mr Merizak underlined the role of the democratic governance in driving the protection of human rights, the environment and sustainable development. However, there was a lack of resources for adaptation and resilience to climate change worldwide. Trade could help build better societies and should therefore be put at the service of prosperity, resilience, and the environment. As bilateral trade agreements were multiplying, the WTO-driven system became more fragile. Unfortunately, problems such as air pollution and soil degradation caused chain reactions and led to widespread negative consequences in terms of public health and food security.

Mr Essl supported the previous speakers: the international trade needed clear rules to ensure the implementation of environmental and social standards which underpinned ‘eco-social economy’, a term used in his country Austria. Trade should be both free and fair.

Mr Gevorgyan asked about the rationale for setting up the Multilateral Investment Court.

¹ The minutes were approved and declassified by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development at its meeting on 27 April 2023.

Mr Davies explained the need for new mechanisms by pointing out to problems linked to the existing dispute settlement mechanisms: the ISDS system was often misused by enterprises to block progressive sovereign policy changes, while the WTO's mechanism was blocked since 2019.

Mr Morris reminded members that there was no 'planet B' and that 'home' was everywhere. It was high time to move forward to adapt trade rules to new challenges.

Mr Petry stressed the need to strengthen the rule of law through trade and praised the efforts of New Zealand in driving rule-of-law clauses through trade agreements.

Mr Arsenis underlined the need to develop trade in ways that could work for sustainable development and the environment.

Mr Schennach deplored the democratic deficit in trade negotiations: parliaments stepped into the process often too late. Some trade agreements such as Mercosur and country leaders like Bolsonaro had put too much pressure on Amazon Forest that belonged to the entire humanity.

Ms Khomenko welcomed the rapporteur's proposals for action and asked about the relevance of certain WTO agreements such as on safeguards, phytosanitary measures and on trade-related intellectual property services. The latter was particularly criticised for blocking developing countries' access to some medicines and vaccines.

Mr Davies replied to members' comments by explaining that the rule of law did apply to trade matters, in particular through dispute settlement mechanisms and arbitration. The European Union was bringing a very helpful broad perspective and was driving global efforts for greater environmental and social justice. Environmental issues needed stronger protection, commensurate with investment protection. Parliaments should reflect public concerns and therefore be more involved in trade negotiations. A series of operational proposals in the preliminary draft resolution and recommendation showed the way forward for using trade agreements and their new interpretation towards mainstreaming new societal priorities.

The Chairperson then thanked all the participants for their contributions and closed the hearing so that the Committee could proceed with the examination and adoption of the preliminary draft resolution and recommendation.

List of presence

Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development
Commission des questions sociales, de la santé et du développement durable

Members / Membres	Country / Pays	Alternates / Remplaçant(e)s
Ms Jorida Tabaku	Albania / Albanie	Zz...
M. Pere López	Andorra / Andorre	Mme Mònica Bonell
Mr Armen Gevorgyan	Armenia / Arménie	Ms Hripsime Grigoryan
Mr Franz Leonhard Essl	Austria / Autriche	Mr Michel Reimon
Mr Stefan Schennach	Austria / Autriche	Ms Doris Bures
Ms Nigar Arpadarai	Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan	Ms Parvin Karimzada
Ms Sevinj Fataliyeva	Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan	Ms Konul Nurullayeva
Mr Bob De Brabandere	Belgium / Belgique	Ms Els Van Hoof
M. Simon Moutquin	Belgium / Belgique	Mme Latifa Gahouchi
Zz...	Bosnia and Herzegovina / Bosnie-Herzégovine	Zz...
Ms Ekaterina Zaharieva	Bulgaria / Bulgarie	Zz...
Ms Denitsa Sacheva	Bulgaria / Bulgarie	Mr Vasil Pandov
Ms Zdravka Bušić	Croatia / Croatie	Ms Ivana Kekin
Ms Christiana Erotokritou	Cyprus / Chypre	Mr Constantinos Efstathiou
Mr Aleš Juchelka	Czech Republic / République tchèque	Mr Ondřej Šimetka
Ms Michaela Šebelová	Czech Republic / République tchèque	Mr Jiří Strýček
Ms Camilla Fabricius	Denmark / Danemark	Ms Karin Liltorp
Mr Urmas Reitelmann	Estonia / Estonie	Ms Maria Jufereva-Skuratovski
Ms Minna Reijonen	Finland / Finlande	Ms Tarja Filatov
M. Alain Milon	France	M. Christian Klinger
Mme Isabelle Santiago	France	Mme Liliana Tanguy
Mme Anne Stambach-Terrenoir	France	Mme Mireille Clapot
M. Philippe Vigier	France	Mme Nathalie Serre
Ms Eka Sepashvili	Georgia / Géorgie	Mr Levan Ioseliani
Ms Heike Engelhardt	Germany / Allemagne	Ms Franziska Kersten
Mr Andrej Hunko	Germany / Allemagne	Ms Catarina Dos Santos-Wintz
Mr Christian Petry	Germany / Allemagne	Ms Martina Stamm-Fibich
Mr Harald Weyel	Germany / Allemagne	Ms Katrin Staffler
Ms Nina Kasimati	Greece / Grèce	Ms Foteini Pipili
Ms Theodora Tzakri	Greece / Grèce	Mr Kriton-Ilias Arsenis
Ms Mónika Bartos	Hungary / Hongrie	Mme Katalin Csöbör
Ms Boglárka Illés	Hungary / Hongrie	Ms Zita Gurmai
Mr Bjarni Jónsson	Iceland / Islande	Ms Jódís Skúladóttir
Mr Joseph O'Reilly	Ireland / Irlande	Ms Reada Cronin
Zz...	Italy / Italie	Zz...

Zz...	Italy / <i>Italie</i>	Zz...
Zz...	Italy / <i>Italie</i>	Zz...
Zz...	Italy / <i>Italie</i>	Zz...
M. Andris Bērziņš	Latvia / <i>Lettonie</i>	Mr Edmunds Cepurītis
Ms Franziska Hoop	Liechtenstein	Mr Peter Frick
Mr Kęstutis Masiulis	Lithuania / <i>Lituanie</i>	Ms Rasa Budbergytė
M. Max Hengel	Luxembourg	M. Paul Galles
Ms Romilda Baldacchino Zarb	Malta / <i>Malte</i>	Mr Joseph Beppe Fenech Adami
Mr Ion Groza	Republic of Moldova / <i>République de Moldova</i>	Ms Reghina Ȃpostolova
M. José Badia	Monaco	Mme Béatrice Fresko-Rolfo
Mr Miloš Konatar	Montenegro / <i>Monténégro</i>	Zz...
Ms Reina De Bruijn-Wezeman	Netherlands / <i>Pays-Bas</i>	Mr Bob Van Pareren
Ms Ria Oomen-Ruijten	Netherlands / <i>Pays-Bas</i>	Ms Agnes Mulder
Ms Artina Qazimi	North Macedonia / <i>Macédoine du Nord</i>	Mr Vlado Misajlovski
Ms Lisa Marie Ness Klungland	Norway / <i>Norvège</i>	Ms Linda Hofstad Helleland
Ms Danuta Jazłowiecka	Poland / <i>Pologne</i>	Mr Tomasz Latos
Mr Bolesław Piecha	Poland / <i>Pologne</i>	Ms Marta Kubiak
Mr Andrzej Szejna	Poland / <i>Pologne</i>	Ms Mirosława Nykiel
Mr Nuno Carvalho	Portugal	Ms Mónica Quintela
Mr Pedro Cegonho	Portugal	Ms Jamila Madeira
Mr Andi-Lucian Cristea	Romania / <i>Roumanie</i>	M. Ion Prioteasa
Ms Alina-Ştefania Gorghiu	Romania / <i>Roumanie</i>	Mr Cristian-Augustin Niculescu-Țăgârlaş
Ms Diana Stoica	Romania / <i>Roumanie</i>	Ms Daniela Oteşanu
Ms Marica Montemaggi	San Marino / <i>Saint-Marin</i>	Mr Marco Nicolini
Ms Tatjana Pašić	Serbia / <i>Serbie</i>	Ms Jelena Milošević
Ms Dunja Simonović Bratić	Serbia / <i>Serbie</i>	Mr Uglješa Marković
Mme Anna Záborská	Slovak Republic / <i>République Slovaque</i>	Mr Juraj Šeliga
Mr Dean Premik	Slovenia / <i>Slovénie</i>	Ms Iva Dimic
Ms María Fernández	Spain / <i>Espagne</i>	<i>Mr José Latorre</i>
Mr Antón Gómez-Reino	Spain / <i>Espagne</i>	Ms Belén Hoyo
Ms Carmen Leyte	Spain / <i>Espagne</i>	Mr Salvador Vidal
Mr Mattias Jonsson	Sweden / <i>Suède</i>	Ms Yasmine Bladelius
Ms Beatrice Timgren	Sweden / <i>Suède</i>	Ms Borianna Åberg
Ms Sibel Arslan	Switzerland / <i>Suisse</i>	M. Pierre-Alain Fridez
M. Jean-Pierre Grin	Switzerland / <i>Suisse</i>	Mme Ada Marra
Ms Emine Nur Günay	Türkiye	Mr Mehmet Mehdi Eker
Mr Halil Özşavli	Türkiye	Ms Sena Nur Çelik
Mr Hişyar Özsoy	Türkiye	Ms Feleknaş Uca
Ms Selin Sayek Böke	Türkiye	M. Haluk Koç

Mr Artem Dubnov	Ukraine	Ms Lesia Zaburanna
Ms Olena Khomenko	Ukraine	Ms Larysa Bilozir
Ms Yuliia Ovchynnykova	Ukraine	Mr Andrii Lopushanskyi
Mr Geraint Davies	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Ms Kate Osamor
Ms Sally-Ann Hart	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Mr Richard Bacon
Baroness Doreen E. Massey	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Ms Ruth Jones
Mr David Morris	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Ms Sheryll Murray

Other Parliamentarians present / Autres Parlementaires present.e.s

Ms/Mme Salma Benaziz, Chairperson of the Moroccan delegation to PACE / *Président de la délégation marocaine auprès de l'APCE*

Mr/M. Nicos Tornaritis, Chairperson of the delegation of Cyprus to PACE / *Président de la délégation chypriote auprès de l'APCE*

Ms/Mme Edite Estrela.....Portugal

Mr/M. Thomas Pringle.....Ireland / Irlande

Partners for Democracy / Partenaires pour la Démocratie

Mr / M. Rachid Talbi El Alami	Speaker of the House of Representatives / <i>Président de la Chambre des représentants</i>
Mr / M. Allal Amraoui	Deputy, House of Representatives / <i>Député, Chambre des représentants</i>
Mr / M. Abdellah Bouanou	Deputy, House of Representatives / <i>Député, Chambre des représentants</i>
Mr / M. Arif Hassan	Deputy, House of Representatives / <i>Député, Chambre des représentants</i>
Ms/Mme Imane Lamaoui	Deputy, House of Representatives / <i>Député, Chambre des représentants</i>
Mr / M. Hassan Oumribte	Deputy, House of Representatives / <i>Député, Chambre des représentants</i>
Mr / M. Driss Sentissi	Deputy, House of Representatives / <i>Député, Chambre des représentants</i>
Mr / M. Ahmed Akhchichine	Councillor, House of Councillors / <i>Conseiller, Chambre des conseillers</i>
Mr / M. Abid Badil	Councillor, House of Councillors / <i>Conseiller, Chambre des conseillers</i>

Secretariat of Delegation or of Political Group / Secretariat de Delegation ou de Groupe politique

Ms / Mme Sonja Langenhaeck, Delegation Secretary, Belgian delegation to PACE / *Secrétaire de délégation, délégation belge auprès de l'APCE*

Mr / M. Razvan Tanase, Delegation Secretary, Romanian delegation to PACE / *Secrétaire de délégation, délégation de la Roumaine auprès de l'APCE*

Mr / M. Kenan Arpacioğlu, Delegation Secretary, Turkish delegation to PACE / *Secrétaire de délégation, délégation turque auprès de l'APCE*

Ms/Mme Handan Karakas Demir, Delegation Secretary, Turkish delegation to PACE / *Secrétaire de délégation, délégation turque auprès de l'APCE*

Ms / Mme Francesca Arbogast, Executive Secretary of the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group (SOC) / *Secrétaire exécutive du Groupe des socialistes, démocrates et verts (SOC)*

Mr / M. Saad Ghazi, Head of the Multilateral Relations Department, Morocco / *Chef du Service des relations multilatérales, Maroc*

Mr / M. Saad Ghazi, Director of External Relations and Communications / *Directeur des relations extérieures et de la communication*

Experts / Expert.e.s

Ms/Mme Latifa Belakhel, Head of Division of Non-transmissible Diseases, Ministry of Health and Social protection / Chef de la division des maladies non transmissibles, Ministère de la Santé et de la Protection sociale

Ms/Mme Hind Benzha, Director of Property Development, Ministry of Development of the national territory, Urban development, Housing and City policy, *Directrice de la promotion immobilière, Ministère d'Aménagement du Territoire National, de l'Urbanisme, du logement et de la politique de la ville*

Ms/Mme Rajae Chafil, Climate Change Competence Centre of Morocco (4C Maroc), member of the special Commission on the New Development Model / *Directrice du Centre 4C Maroc, membre de la Commission spéciale sur le nouveau modèle de développement*

Mr / M. Mustafa Merizak, Co-ordinator of the Standing Committee for the Promotion of the Culture of Human Rights and the Consolidation of Democratic Construction / *Coordinateur du Comité permanent chargé de la promotion de la culture des droits de l'homme et de la consolidation de la construction démocratique*

Mr / M. Chakib Nejari, professor of epidemiology and public health, Vice-President of the Health Pole, Euromed University (Fes) / *professeur d'épidémiologie et de santé publique, vice-président en charge du pôle santé, Université Euromed de Fès*

Mr / M. Hassan Radoine, Director of the School of Architecture, Planning and Design (SAP+D) at Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, *Directeur de l'École d'architecture, Université polytechnique Mohammed VI*

Mr / M. Abdelouahed Rahal, General Director of Commerce, Ministry of Industry and Commerce / *Directeur Général du commerce, Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce*

Mr / M. Radouan Yessouf, Assistant Director of the Centre for Strategy and Development of the Moroccan Agency for Energy Efficiency / *Directeur adjoint du pôle stratégie et du développement, Agence marocaine pour l'efficacité énergétique*

Others / Autres

Mr / M. Spyridon Papadatos, Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of **Europe** / *Conseil consultatif pour la jeunesse du Conseil de l'Europe*

Ms / Mme Emma Pagliaruso, Youth and Environment Europe / *Jeunesse et environnement Europe*

Council of Europe staff / Secrétariat du Conseil de l'Europe

Ms / Mme Carmen Morte Gomez, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Rabat / *Cheffe du Bureau du Conseil de l'Europe à Rabat*

Mr / M. Stéphane Gignoux, Project manager / *Gestionnaire du projet*

Ms / Mme Hafsa Mekouar, Project Communication Officer / *Chargée de communication*

Ms / Mme Meryem Assibaï, Project assistant / *Assistante du projet*

Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly / Secrétariat de l'Assemblée Parlementaire

Ms / Mme Louise Barton, Director, Directorate II – Human Dignity and Sustainable Development / *Directrice, Direction II – Dignité humaine et développement durable*

Mr / M. Alessandro Mancini, Assistant to the Head of Secretariat, Parliamentary Projects Support Division / *Adjoint au Chef de Secrétariat, Division de soutien des projets parlementaires*

Mr / M. Mustafa Arabul, Project assistant / *Assistant du projet*

Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development /
Commission des questions sociales, de la santé et du développement durable

Ms / Mme Tanja Kleinsorge Head of the Secretariat / *Cheffe du Secrétariat*

Ms / Mme Aiste Ramanauskaitė Secretary to the Committee / *Secrétaire de la commission*

Ms / Mme Anita Gholami Co-Secretary/ *Co-Secrétaire*

Mr / M. Guillaume Parent..... Co-Secretary/ *Co-Secrétaire*

Ms / Mme Prisca Barthel.....Europe Prize section / *Section Prix de l'Europe*

Ms / Mme Sylvie Elter Assistant / *Assistante*