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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)/Council
No. Cion doc.:	11667/23 and 11668/23 + ADD 1-2
Subject:	Council Decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Interim Agreement on Trade between the European Union and the Republic of Chile - <i>Adoption</i>

Statement by Belgium and France

1. Belgium and France attach particular importance to relations with Chile, which they regard as a reliable supporter of multilateralism and an important democratic partner.

2. Belgium and France therefore welcome the modernisation of the Association Agreement in force since 2003 between the European Union and Chile and the signing on 18 July 2023 of the Memorandum of Understanding between the EU and Chile on a strategic partnership on sustainable raw materials value chains. The modernisation of the Association Agreement was necessary in order to take account of new political and economic realities and the progress made in the partnership between the European Union and Chile.
3. In particular, Belgium and France welcome the addition of new provisions and commitments on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD). Throughout the negotiations, Belgium and France called for the inclusion of ambitious, binding and enforceable provisions on the environment, climate and social rights.
4. In that regard, Belgium and France welcome the joint statement by the European Union and Chile on trade and sustainable development, which demonstrates not only the willingness of the parties to implement the common trade and sustainable development priorities identified in the Agreement – and to do so by fully involving civil society – but also their commitment to further strengthen the provisions on trade and sustainable development by initiating a formal review process of TSD commitments as soon as the Interim Free Trade Agreement enters into force, and to conclude that process within 12 months of that entry into force.

5. With regard to the elements relating to trade and sustainable development already present in the Agreement, Belgium and France attach particular importance to the parties' commitment to respect, promote and effectively implement the core principles of the ILO, and to work on the ILO's new fundamental principle on health and safety at work, as well as their commitment to respect and effectively implement the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Climate Agreement, including the Paris Agreement's commitments as regards its nationally determined contributions, and the Convention on Biological Biodiversity.
6. Also in relation to trade and sustainable development, Belgium and France stress the importance of the commitments made in Chapter 7 of the Agreement in terms of cooperation on sustainable food systems, and will closely monitor the work of the relevant subcommittee, in particular with the aim of agreeing annually on the actions to be taken to pursue the objectives of that chapter. The same applies to Chapter 8 on energy and raw materials, and in particular to the joint commitment to carry out assessments of environmental impact in respect of projects or activities relating to energy or raw materials that may have a significant impact on population; human health; biodiversity; land, soil, water, air or climate; and cultural heritage or landscape. The involvement of local communities will be a focal point in that regard.
7. As regards the procedure for reviewing the 'Trade and Sustainable Development' chapter of the Agreement, Belgium and France call for alignment with the June 2022 Communication on the TSD Review, inter alia to further improve the applicability mechanism of the 'Trade and Sustainable Development' chapter, including the possibility of applying a compliance phase, and relevant countermeasures as a last resort.
8. It is on the basis of this work plan that Belgium and France agree to sign the EU-Chile agreements.

9. Belgium and France will closely monitor the implementation of the common priorities identified in the Agreement, as well as the negotiations on the review of the TSD chapter and compliance with the 12-month period following the entry into force of the Interim Free Trade Agreement for the finalisation of that review process. Belgium and France call for full transparency from the Commission during that process.
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