

ESF2025-01

**Mr. Maroš Šefčovič**

Commissioner for Trade and Economic  
Security & Interinstitutional Relations and  
Transparency  
European Commission  
200, rue de la loi  
BE – 1049 – Brussels

Brussels, 30 April 2025

Subject:     **Services Trade and the Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships (CTIPs)**

Dear Commissioner Šefčovič,

The European Services Forum (ESF) represents the interests of the European services sectors in international trade and investment activities. We are committed to actively promoting the liberalisation of international trade and investment in services.

We take note of the European Commission's proposal for **Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships (CTIPs)**, as outlined in European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's 2024-2029 [political guidelines](#), and highlighted in the framework of the [European Competitiveness Compass](#) released on 29 January 2025. The CTIPs aim to create a comprehensive framework for international collaboration on clean energy, critical raw materials, clean-tech trade, and investments.

This letter is to introduce the European Services Forum priorities for the CTIP, which can be summarised in a simple message: Please do not forget the services dimension of the CTIPs.

ESF fully supports the CTIPs idea and encourage negotiations with interested partners. However, ESF wants to reiterate that comprehensive trade and investment agreements should remain the EU's top priority to further open business opportunities for European businesses by contributing to the EU diversification of the supply chains. We understand that large and comprehensive FTAs have become more difficult to negotiate and ratify but see that nevertheless many FTAs continue to be signed around the world. The EU must continue its offensive trade policy.

One should however certainly not exclude other opportunities. It is true that smaller and more targeted agreements/partnerships in e.g. clean tech, medical goods or other specific industries could lead to more tangible and swifter results for EU's trade policy. Agreements of this kind could open market access not only for the raw materials as such, but also to related critical sectors. In particular, the European Services Forum welcomes the conclusion of a Digital Trade Agreement (DTA) with Japan and Singapore, and more recently with Korea and strongly supports the continuation of these kind of agreements with other interested partners, notably with Canada and in Latin America with countries with which the EU has already signed FTAs.

Coming to the Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships, we understand that CTIPs are designed to unify existing initiatives, such as Energy Partnerships, Green Partnerships, and Critical Raw Materials Strategic Partnerships, into a coherent framework. This integration aims to unlock private sector investments and to align these investments with the EU's strategic goals, ultimately contributing to sustainable growth and the resilience of clean technology supply chains.

On these regards, ESF would like to call the EU institutions on the necessity to include the services dimension into these CTIP negotiations. To achieve efficient and comprehensive “partnerships”, these agreements will have to encompass provisions and commitments on all the “green services” in a broad sense.

The EU private sector is a champion of environmental and energy related services. Not only in the traditional restricted classification that include very important waste and water management services, clean air services, noise reduction services and nature and landscape protection services. Commitments on these services will of course need to be taken.

Before going into details, one need to highlight that trade in services negotiations encompass i) cross-border trade in services (mode 1 and 2 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services - GATS), ii) commercial presence abroad, i.e. mode 3 GATS, meaning possibility of foreign direct investment; and iii) temporary movement of natural persons (mode 4 GATS), meaning professional mobility attached to the provision of the services. The possibility to invest and establish in a country, and the possibility for professionals to move in a country is of concern not only to services sectors, but also to all manufacturers that want market access, including in the sectors of “clean” industries.

Beyond the usual “environmental services”, there is indeed a vast list of services that should need to be negotiated to ensure the success of the Partnerships:

- Let's start with the **Research and Development Services** in the area of energy, of climate change, of critical raw materials and on medical devices, etc.
- The **energy related services** (which include installation, maintenance and repair, aftersales services and digital monitoring services of solar panels and of onshore and offshore windmills – incl. dredging services; and the distribution of electricity through a smart grid) will all contribute to optimize the development of renewables and green energy production.
- In the field of improving energy saving through a Partnership, commitments will need to be taken in **construction services**, which can contribute to reduce house and household emissions of CO<sup>2</sup> (including residential heating, cooling, electricity, and cooking - responsible for 17-20 % of global carbon emission). The construction of well-isolated buildings and the management of recycling material (waste management services) will be crucial worldwide to fight climate change.
- The digitalisation of the green economy and green energy processes will require ambitious **digital trade chapters** with CTIP Partners, with state-of-the-art provisions and full open markets commitments for cross-border services for all **computer related services**, ensuring a smooth flow of data while respecting cyber security and data protection requirements. The new technologies indeed require critical raw materials, but these technologies aim then at setting up and using the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence processes that are embedded in the products through electronic sensors in windmills, engines, etc. and allow increased efficiency. Grasping the full benefits of CTIPs will need to negotiate binding commitments for a well-functioning supply chain of the “clean” industries, including the digital dimension.

- To ensure an always up-to-date process, companies active in these field might buy the service of **management consulting** firms that are very active in these domains of net-zero emission, circular economy, etc. This is a sector that is often underestimated, but “professional and management consulting services” exports and imports by the EU in 2023 reached €240 billion (all sectors included).
- Another important part of talks to ensure efficient Energy, Green and Critical Raw Material Partnerships will be the negotiations of favourable conditions for **green finance and green insurance services**. It is important to note that more than 40% of total EU Outward FDI and 60% of EU Inward FDI are coming from and going to “Financial & Insurance activities”. These activities are the main venue to allow green investment via the banks, investment funds and asset management providers.
- Similarly, good Intellectual Protection Rights (IPR) will need to be ensured so that the CTIP can thrive. The “**Charges for the use of IP**” is an important segment of trade in services, which for the EU reached €300 billion in 2023.
- Finally, though is not a direct services sector per se, negotiations of good regulatory conditions and access to **public procurement market** in the partners countries will be crucial for the success of the partnerships. It will be important to increase access for services companies active in the “green related services” to all public entities that are using public procurement in their functioning. This is obviously true for the construction services and construction related services, such as architecture and engineering services, urban planning, etc. Furthermore, all public administrations and entities also need for their daily activities to procure these kinds of services that have been listed here above.

Partner countries for future CTIP should be determined based on a clear methodology and following industry consultation. We believe that partner countries should include both developing and developed countries. In case the EU has already an FTA in place or under current negotiations, it should be first assessed whether an update of the FTA or of the negotiating mandate of ongoing talks should be pursued to include Energy and Raw Materials chapters and further Environmental and Energy related services provisions and commitments. Indeed, it will be important not only to focus on access to critical raw materials, but also processing and refining of these materials through the long value chain, and that includes the various services sectors that have been listed here above.

ESF takes note that the EU and South Africa have [announced](#) the launch of negotiations on a new Clean Trade and Investment Partnership during the bilateral summit that took place on 13<sup>th</sup> March in Cape Town. We welcome this initiative and call upon the Commission to take into consideration the recommendations made in this letter.

ESF reserves the right to come back on additional issues at a later stage and remains at disposal for any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Annette Meijer  
ESF Chairwoman

## List of members supporting the above position

- Amazon
- Amfori
- Apple
- Architects' Council of Europe –ACE
- BDO
- Bureau International des Producteurs et Intermédiaires d'Assurances – BIPAR
- BUSINESSEUROPE
- BUSINESSEUROPE WTO Working Group
- BSA The Software Alliance – BSA
- CISCO
- Danish Shipping
- DHL Group
- Digital Europe
- EK - Confederation of Finnish Industries
- EuroCommerce
- European Banking Federation - EBF
- European Community Shipowners' Associations – ECSA
- European Express Association – EEA
- Fédération de l'Industrie Européenne de la Construction – FIEC
- FratiniVergano European Lawyers
- General Council of the Bar of England & Wales
- Google
- IBM Europe, Middle East & Africa
- Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW)
- Insurance Europe
- Irish Business and Employers' Confederation - IBEC
- Le Groupe La Poste
- Microsoft Corporation Europe
- Mouvement des entreprises de France – MEDEF
- PostEurop
- Svenskt Näringsliv (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise)
- TechUK
- Telenor Group
- TheCityUK
- UPS