



An Roinn Gnó,  
Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta  
Department of Business,  
Enterprise and Innovation

# Report of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation to the Oireachtas

Under Section 2 (5) of the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002  
for the period from January to June 2020

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>Part I – Developments in the EU</b> .....	3
<b>1. Competitiveness Council (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)</b> .....	3
<b>1.1. Meetings of the Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry)</b> .....	3
<b>1.1.1. Formal Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) - Brussels, 27 February 2020</b> .....	3
<b>1.1.2. Informal Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) -Video Conference, 20 March 2020</b> .....	5
<b>1.1.3. Informal Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) -Video Conference, 15 May 2020</b> .....	5
<b>1.1.4. Informal Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) -Video Conference, 12 June 2020</b> .....	6
<b>1.2. Meetings of the Competitiveness Council (Research and Space)</b> .....	6
<b>1.2.1. Informal Competitiveness Council (Research) – Zagreb, 4 February 2020</b> .....	6
<b>1.2.2. Formal Competitiveness Council (Research) – Brussels, 28 February 2020</b> .....	7
<b>1.2.3. Informal Ministerial Videoconference on the European research and innovation response to COVID-19 – 7 April 2020</b> .....	7
<b>1.2.4. Informal Videoconference of Research Ministers – 29 May 2020</b> .....	7
<b>1.2.5. Informal Video Conference (Space) – Brussels, 29 May 2020</b> .....	8
<b>2. Foreign Affairs Council (Trade)</b> .....	8
<b>2.1. Meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council (Trade)</b> .....	8
<b>2.1.1. Informal Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) Videoconference –16 April 2020</b> .....	8
<b>2.1.2. Informal Formal Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) Videoconference –9 June 2020</b>	
9	
<b>3. German Presidency of the Council of the EU (July – December 2020)</b> .....	9
<b>3.1. Schedule of Meetings during the German Presidency</b> .....	10
<b>3.2. Overview of key issues likely to arise in relevant Councils during the German Presidency</b> .....	11
<b>Part II - Oireachtas Scrutiny Proposals January – June 2020</b> .....	13

## Introduction

Under the terms of the European Union (Scrutiny Act) 2002, Ministers submit Reports to the Oireachtas every six months on developments at European Union level in their area of responsibility.

This Report has two parts. The first part summarises the key legislative and policy developments within the remit of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation that arose during the period January to June 2020 when Croatia held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. It also provides an overview of the German Presidency, which runs for the second half of 2020.

The second part provides an update on the EU legislative proposals for which information notes were submitted to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Business, Enterprise and Innovation under the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002.

### Part I – Developments in the EU

The policy areas which fall within the responsibility of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation at EU level are in the main dealt with at the Competitiveness Council in both its formations of Internal Market and Industry and of Research and Space, and at the Foreign Affairs Council in its Trade formation.

The Croatian Presidency was dominated by the outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which had practical consequences for the holding of Council meetings and the content of their agendas.

#### **1. Competitiveness Council (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)**

The Competitiveness Council is normally held over two days, with Day 1 dedicated to Internal Market and Industry items and Day 2 dedicated to Research and Space items, however the impact of COVID-19 resulted in changes to the planned calendar of Council meetings. The Informal Council scheduled for March in Croatia was cancelled as was the Formal Council due to be held in May in Brussels. These were replaced by three Informal Video Conference Councils.

##### **1.1. Meetings of the Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry)**

The Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) met on four occasions during the period January to June 2020:

- Formal Competitiveness Council - Brussels, 27 February 2020
- Informal Competitiveness Council by Video Conference - 20 March 2020
- Informal Competitiveness Council by Video Conference - 15 May 2020
- Informal Competitiveness Council by Video Conference - 12 June 2020

##### **1.1.1. Formal Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) - Brussels, 27 February 2020**

Ireland was represented at the February Council by Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Mr Pat Breen. Council was chaired by Mr Darko Horvat, Croatian Minister of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts. The Commission was represented by Mr Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market and by Mr Maroš Šefčovič, Commission VP for Institutional Relations and Foresight.

The items discussed at the February Formal Competitiveness Council were:

#### European Green Deal-a transition to climate neutral and circular EU industry –

On the basis of a Presidency note, Ministers were invited to discuss key elements of the proposed European Green Deal and to exchange views on the most appropriate policies needed to:

- support the industry's contribution to the attainment of the climate neutrality objective in 2050,
- reduce the risk of carbon leakage and
- facilitate and accelerate the transition to a circular economy through digitalisation.

It was agreed that the EU needs to ensure that the transition to a climate neutral EU industry is fair, inclusive and sustainable. Ministers also noted that development of competitive EU industries and attainment of the goals of the European Green Deal can be achieved in tandem

#### Council Conclusions on Better Regulation –

The Council adopted Conclusions entitled “Ensuring competitiveness and sustainable, inclusive growth”. In its conclusions, the Council stressed the importance of principle-based and rigorous impact assessments, taking into account both the costs and benefits. It expressed full support for an impartial regulatory scrutiny board within the Commission. It noted the Commission's intention to apply the so-called "one in, one out" instrument and highlighted that this regulatory offsetting approach should not lower social and ecological standards while maximising the benefits of regulation for business and citizens. It iterated its commitment to the "think small first" principle and the need to systematically consult SMEs and micro-enterprises. It welcomed the announced replacement of the REFIT platform by the Fit-for-Future platform and called on the Commission to ensure the visibility of the new platform. Finally, the Council underlined the importance of ex-post reviews and recalls the need for a set of minimum quality standards.

#### European Semester-Single Market Performance Report –

On the basis of a presidency note, the Council had an exchange of views on the findings of the Single Market Performance Report drawn up by the Commission.

Ministers broadly agreed on the need for a holistic approach regarding the integration of the Single Market, while at the same time focusing on specific areas with untapped potential, such as services. They agreed that better implementation and enforcement of single market rules, as well as further standardisation, harmonisation and mutual recognition remain the main instruments for maximising the benefits of the Single Market.

The 2019 Single Market Performance Report assesses the economic performance of the EU's Single Market and highlights the areas in which member states need to undertake structural reforms in order to optimise this performance. It covers goods, services, energy, digitalisation, public procurement and integration of capital markets. It accompanies the Commission's Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy 2020, which sets policy priorities focused on competitive sustainability and mark the starting point of the 2020 European Semester.

## Any Other Business

### Commission's Work Programme 2020

Presidency invited Commissioner Breton to present the Commission's Work Programme, adopted and published on 29 January, to Council making particular reference to the internal market and industrial aspects.

### Impact of COVID-19 on EU Industry

Commission updated Ministers on the measures that had been taken by the Commission and its assessment of the impact that the virus was expected to have on EU industry.

### Barriers to the Single Market - Information from the Czech Republic & Results of the business survey on the barriers to the Single Market - Information from Lithuania

The Czech and Lithuanian delegations outlined the results of surveys they had each conducted on barriers encountered by businesses operating across the Single Market. Council took note of the information provided.

#### **1.1.2. Informal Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) -Video Conference, 20 March 2020**

This Council took place by video conference to allow EU Competitiveness Ministers to discuss the impact of COVID 19 on EU industry and the Single Market. Ireland was represented by Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Mr Pat Breen. Council was chaired by Mr Darko Horvat, Croatian Minister of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts. The Commission was represented by Mr Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market, and by Ms Margrethe Vestager, Executive VP for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age.

On the basis of a Presidency Paper, Ministers considered how best to ensure sufficient supply and free movement of essential equipment and goods within the Single Market and identified the most affected sectors in their Member States. Quick responses, solidarity, coordinated measures at EU and national level, supporting businesses and specific measures for the most impacted sectors were highlighted as key to overcoming the current difficulties.

The importance of the Single Market in securing recovery afterwards, as well as in tackling the immediate crisis, was also noted.

#### **1.1.3. Informal Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) -Video Conference, 15 May 2020**

Ireland was represented at the May Council by Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Mr Pat Breen. Council was chaired by Mr Darko Horvat, Croatian Minister of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts. The Commission was represented by Mr Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market and by Ms Margrethe Vestager, Executive VP for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age.

On the basis of a Presidency Paper, Ministers spoke of their priorities for the EU's economic recovery with a view to informing the Commission's Recovery Plan, which was then being prepared and was subsequently published on May 27.

The main areas identified for attention included restoring the Single Market and recommitting to further strengthening it. Investing in those industrial sectors that have the most potential for innovation and growth and that have been the most affected was also a priority. It was generally agreed that the objectives of the EU's green and digital policies should be integrated into the plan.

#### **1.1.4. Informal Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) -Video Conference, 12 June 2020**

Ireland was represented at the June Council by Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Mr Pat Breen. Council was chaired by Mr Darko Horvat, Croatian Minister of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts. The Commission was represented by the Commissioner for Internal Market, Mr Thierry Breton.

The Commission gave a presentation on its Recovery Plan, which was published on May 27. Ministers then exchanged views.

Ministers broadly welcomed the Commission's Plan and said that the Competitiveness Council should be charged with the monitoring and implementation of the Single Market and industrial aspects of it. All Member States agreed that the twin transition to green and digital will be key to the EU recovery. There was also widespread support for the further deepening of the Single Market and swift removal of barriers introduced during the crisis and others. Priorities for supporting EU industry were also discussed. Some Ministers called for a review of the EU competition and state aid policies in the light of new technological and global market developments.

## **1.2. Meetings of the Competitiveness Council (Research and Space)**

Research Ministers met on four occasions during the period January to June 2020:

- Informal Competitiveness Council – Zagreb, 3 - 4 February 2020
- Competitiveness Council – Brussels, 28 February 2020
- Informal Ministerial Videoconference on the European research and innovation response to COVID-19 – 7 April 2020
- Informal Videoconference of Research Ministers – 29 May 2020

### **1.2.1. Informal Competitiveness Council (Research) – Zagreb, 4 February 202**

Ireland was represented at this informal meeting by Minister of State for Training, Skills, Innovation, Research and Development, Mr John Halligan TD. The meeting was chaired by Ms Blaženka Divjak, Croatian Minister of Science and Education. The Commission was represented by Ms Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth.

Ministers were invited to exchange views on the future European Research Area (ERA) priorities and in particular on the issue of researcher mobility and brain circulation. Brain circulation is about ensuring the free and balanced circulation of researchers across the EU.

There was broad consensus that while a lot has been achieved since the ERA was introduced 20 years ago, more needs to be done to make it more effective and reduce fragmentation across Member States. While Ministers agreed on the importance of brain circulation, there were different areas of emphasis. Many highlighted the importance of having attractive researcher career progression paths, attractive working conditions and access to sophisticated infrastructure and funding while others called for equal salaries to address brain circulation.

### **1.2.2. Formal Competitiveness Council (Research) – Brussels, 28 February 2020**

Ireland was represented at this Council meeting by Deputy Permanent Representative, Ms Maeve Collins. The meeting was chaired by Ms Blaženka Divjak, Croatian Minister of Science and Education. The Commission was represented by Ms Mariya Gabriel Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Educations and Youth.

The Council agreed a Partial General Approach for the Strategic Innovation Agenda of the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT). The Partial General Approach will provide a mandate for the negotiations on the EIT with the European Parliament.

Ministers exchanged views on international cooperation in the area of research and innovation. There was broad consensus on the importance of timely discussions and the need for a strategic approach to international cooperation in the next EU framework programme, Horizon Europe. Ministers encouraged openness but at the same time called for vigilance when needed. Many stressed that participation should be based on reciprocity and respect EU values.

### **1.2.3. Informal Ministerial Videoconference on the European research and innovation response to COVID-19 – 7 April 2020**

Ireland was represented at this informal videoconference by Minister of State for Training, Skills, Innovation, Research and Development, Mr John Halligan. The meeting was chaired by Ms Blaženka Divjak, Croatian Minister of Science and Education. The Commission was represented by Commissioner Mariya Gabriel.

The Croatian Presidency arranged this ministerial meeting to enable Research Ministers to exchange views on how to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Ministers welcomed the research and innovation Action Plan prepared by the Commission, which set out ten actions to be implemented in the immediate term. The actions include coordinating funding for COVID-19 related research and innovation activities and sharing research data and infrastructure.

### **1.2.4. Informal Videoconference of Research Ministers – 29 May 2020**

Ireland was represented at this informal videoconference by Minister of State for Training, Skills, Innovation, Research and Development, Mr John Halligan. The meeting was chaired by Ms Blaženka Divjak, Croatian Minister of Science and Education. Executive Vice-President for Europe fit for a Digital Age, Ms Margrethe Vestager and Commissioner Mariya Gabriel represented the Commission.

Professor Peter Piot, Special Advisor to the President of the Commission, Ms Ursula von der Leyen, on research and COVID-19 spoke of the role of research and innovation in the crisis. He said the crisis underlined the value of EU cooperation and had demonstrated that the Union must build up its capacity to respond to the crisis and build up resilience as there will be future pandemics.

There was broad consensus that Member States need to learn from the crisis to ensure that we are better prepared in the future to respond to crises. Research and innovation have a critical role to

play in supporting the recovery and Europe's wider policy objectives, but Member States need to work more effectively together. Ministers acknowledged the work done by the Commission to ensure a coordinated and timely R&I response to the crisis, but several said that it was now time to return to the formal ways of working across the EU institutions.

### **1.2.5. Informal Video Conference (Space) – Brussels, 29 May 2020**

Ireland was represented by the Minister of State for Training, Skills, Innovation, Research and Development, Mr John Halligan. Croatian Minister of Science and Education Ms Blaženka Divjak chaired the meeting. Internal Market Commissioner, Mr Thierry Breton, represented the Commission.

The session commenced with a policy debate concerning how improved evaluation of the socioeconomic impact of space programmes can contribute to better policymaking and environmentally sustainable industrial development.

The Council Conclusions on "Space for a sustainable Europe", which focus on the EU's role in the development of an economically sustainable and competitive European space sector, with particular reference to the importance of fostering the knowledge and skills necessary to support this growing sector, were adopted through a written procedure in advance of the Council meeting.

## **2. Foreign Affairs Council (Trade)**

### **2.1. Meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council (Trade)**

The Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) met on two occasions during the period January to June 2020:

- Informal Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) Videoconference – 16 April 2020
- Informal Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) Videoconference – 9 June 2020

#### **2.1.1. Informal Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) Videoconference –16 April 2020**

The Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) was originally scheduled for 12 March 2020 but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An informal meeting of Trade Ministers subsequently took place on 16 April 2020 via videoconference. Trade Ministers discussed the Trade aspects of the COVID-19 outbreak, including its implications for trade relations and the sustainability of global integrated value and supply chains during their meeting.

Ireland was represented at the Informal videoconference meeting by Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Ms Heather Humphreys T.D. The meeting was chaired by Mr Gordan Radman, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, with the participation of the EU Commissioner for Trade, Mr Phil Hogan for what was his first EU Trade Council meeting since his appointment to the von der Leyen Commission.

The meeting had a single item agenda – Trade aspects of the COVID-19 outbreak. Ministers were also asked to share views on the proposed revision of the PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) export authorisation regime as well as the recently issued guidelines on Foreign Direct Investment screening. At the meeting, there was broad support for both measures given the temporary, targeted, time-limited and proportionate nature of the PPE "Regulation" as well as for the recent DG TAX UD initiative waiving VAT and duties on EU imports of medical equipment in specific circumstances.

In her intervention, Minister Humphreys drew from the paper Ireland had shared in advance with Ministers, which addressed the challenges COVID-19 was presenting for global supply chains. In this regard, Minister Humphreys also took the opportunity to restate Ireland's commitment to full implementation of Single Market rules. A number of EU Ministers also welcomed and acknowledged the merits of the points made in Ireland's paper on Global Supply/Value Chains. Ministers also acknowledged that efforts must continue to keep trade flows open and avoid unnecessary disruption of global value and supply chains.

As this was an "Informal" VC meeting no formal conclusions were agreed.

### **2.1.2. Informal Formal Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) Videoconference –9 June 2020**

Due to COVID-19 this informal meeting of Trade Ministers took place on 9 June 2020 via videoconference. Ireland was represented by Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Ms Heather Humphreys T.D. The Council meeting was chaired by Mr Gordan Radman, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, with the participation of the EU Commissioner for Trade, Mr Phil Hogan.

Ministers discussed WTO issues, in particular the question of the selection of the next WTO Director-General, consequent on the decision of the incumbent DG to step down early (with effect from September 2020) There was broad agreement that the process should, ideally, be an expedited one such that a new Director General could take office on 1 September 2020, thereby avoiding the necessity of appointing an Acting DG.

Ministers also expressed broad support for the Commission's approach to prioritising certain WTO initiatives in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes ensuring transparency on trade restrictions introduced in response to the COVID-19 crisis; a possible initiative for facilitating trade in healthcare products (since shared with the "Ottawa" Group<sup>1</sup> of WTO member countries); sustainable development-related negotiations, such as fisheries subsidies; and work on e-commerce, domestic regulation in services and investment facilitation.

Ministers also further discussed the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for trade policy. Ministers welcomed the Commission's intention to bring forward a review of the EU's trade policy this year to ensure that trade plays its part in the post-COVID-19 recovery. Ministers also noted the EU's participation in the recent G20 Meeting of Trade and Investment Ministers where the EU's Trade Commissioner had set out a broad framework that should guide the G20 countries' approach to both short-term and longer-term responses to the COVID-19 pandemic such that trade can contribute to economic recovery from the pandemic with emergency measures taken by countries being targeted, temporary, transparent and proportionate to the crisis.

### **3. German Presidency of the Council of the EU (July – December 2020)**

Germany assumed the Presidency of the Council of the EU on 1 July 2020. With a Presidency Programme entitled "Together for Europe's recovery", the German Federal Government is putting the focus of its Presidency on overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic and seeking answers to the challenges of the future that need to be addressed while setting itself the goal of making Europe stronger, more equitable and more sustainable. The Strategic Agenda of the European Council of

---

<sup>1</sup> In 2019, Canada hosted a representative group of WTO members, known as the Ottawa Group, in order to address specific challenges that are putting the multilateral trading system under stress. The Group comprises Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, European Union, Japan, Kenya, South Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore and Switzerland

June 2019 and the European Commission's adjusted Work Programme of 27 May form cornerstones of Germany's programme.

The guiding principles of Germany's Presidency are:

- overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic permanently, as well as the economic recovery,
- a stronger and more innovative Europe
- a fair Europe
- a sustainable Europe
- a Europe of security and common values
- a strong Europe in the world.

A major priority of the German Presidency is to ensure a rapid conclusion of the negotiations on the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the period from 2021 to 2027.

### **3.1. Schedule of Meetings during the German Presidency**

#### Scheduled European Council meetings (EU Heads of State or Government)

- European Council – 17/18 July
- European Council – 15/16 October
- European Council – 10/11 December

#### Scheduled Competitiveness Council meetings

- Informal Competitiveness (Research & Innovation) Council – 21 July (VC)
- Formal Competitiveness (Internal Market and Industry) Council – 24 September (Brussels)
- Formal Competitiveness (Research) Council – 25 September (Brussels)
- Informal Competitiveness (Internal Market and Industry) Council – 22/23 October (Konigswinter/Bonn)
- Formal Competitiveness (Internal Market and Industry) Council – 19 November (Brussels)
- Formal Competitiveness (Space) – 20 November (Brussels)
- Formal Competitiveness (Research and Innovation) Council – 27 November (Brussels)

#### Scheduled Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) meetings

- Informal Council – 20/21 September (Berlin)
- Formal Council – 9 November (Brussels)

## **3.2. Overview of key issues likely to arise in relevant Councils during the German Presidency**

### **Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry)**

The aim of the German Presidency is to work together to lead a strengthened European economy out of the COVID-19 crisis and to boost competitiveness, innovative capabilities and resilience.

The revival and strengthening of European industry on the basis of the European industrial strategy and taking account of the needs of SMEs is a central goal of the German Presidency. The Presidency aims to further develop the European SME Strategy presented by the Commission in March 2020 and to boost the resilience and economic potential of SMEs. This involves a coherent and effective coming together of industrial policy, SME policy, digital and innovation policy and a systematic link with other fields of economic and social policy, including for example competition policy.

The German Presidency intends to adopt Council Conclusions on “A deepened Single Market for a strong recovery and a competitive, sustainable Europe”. Also, Conclusions on industrial policy, the IP Action Plan and Better Regulation. The SME Envoy Network Report and a new Consumer Agenda may also be considered during its Presidency. The German Presidency is also focussed on the opportunities offered by digitalisation and the European Green Deal.

### **Competitiveness Council (Research)**

The German Presidency priorities include:

- Ensuring a more dynamic, effective and target-oriented European Research Area (ERA) to strengthen European resilience and technological sovereignty. The Presidency will prepare Council Conclusions on the new ERA priorities for adoption by the Council in November;
- Advancing the legislative deliberations on the outstanding parts of Horizon Europe, notably the budget and international cooperation, concluding the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) regulations and progressing the trilogues on the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT); and
- Strengthening the synergies between the ERA and the European Higher Education Area.

### **Competitiveness Council (Space)**

The German Presidency has presented an ambitious programme for the term of their presidency. The German Presidency will focus on two blocks of work, including (i) ongoing space related policy initiatives such as COVID-19 management and upcoming discussions on the Space Regulation, in addition to the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (FFPA) and (ii) their proposed initiative, ‘establishing key principles for the global space economy’. Their proposed initiative responds to the increasing importance of space and its services and products for the sector and will be confirmed by a Space Council Resolution in November 2020.

## **Foreign Affairs Council (Trade)**

With regard to the Trade agenda, a leading role for Europe in strengthening the open and rules-based international trade system will be a crucial input to overcoming the health and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end the German Presidency intend both to drive forward a modernisation agenda for the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to launch ambitious bilateral, regional and plurilateral agreements, for example in the area of digital commerce. Concluding free trade and investment protection agreements is identified a key factor in diversifying and safeguarding supply chains and in generating the necessary growth. Progress on finalising the agreement with Mercosur and the modernised agreement with Mexico have been identified as key priorities. Supporting the European Commission in bringing the EU's Free Trade Agreement negotiations with New Zealand and with Australia to a conclusion and making progress in the talks with Chile, Indonesia and Tunisia have also been identified as priorities. In trade relations with China, the German Presidency want to help establish a more level playing field. The German Presidency will continue work on the Sustainable Development Goals and Trade Policy.

## Part II - Oireachtas Scrutiny Proposals January – June 2020

COM Number	Subject	Section	Date Examined by Committee	Current Update on Proposal
COM(19) 614	Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the CETA Joint Committee as regards the adoption of the List of Arbitrators pursuant to Article 29.8 of the Agreement	Trade Policy Unit	Not Examined	Adopted by Environment Council on 19/12/2019  Council Decision (EU) 2019/2246 <a href="http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2019/2246/oj">http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2019/2246/oj</a>  No Transposition Required
COM(20) 024	Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION authorising Member States to ratify, in the interest of the European Union, the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) of the International Labour Organization	ILO International Section	Not examined	The Council has not yet adopted a decision. A vote was expected on the Council General Approach at the March EPSCO Session, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic all Council meetings were cancelled. The Council Legal Service are assessing some procedural issues in the current proposal.
COM(20) 029	Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the renewal of the Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation between the European Community and the Government of the Republic of India	Innovation, Research and Development Policy Unit	Not examined	Council Decision adopted by written procedure on 9 June 2020.

COM Number	Subject	Section	Date Examined by Committee	Current Update on Proposal
COM(20) 032	Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the renewal of the Agreement on cooperation in science and technology between the European Community and Ukraine	Innovation, Research and Development Policy Unit	Not examined	Council Decision adopted by written procedure on 9 June 2020.
COM(20) 065	WHITE PAPER On Artificial Intelligence - A European approach to excellence and trust	Digital Single Market		The Commission's next steps in relation to AI will be informed by submissions received during the public consultation that accompanied the White Paper. These submissions are currently being considered by the Commission.
COM(20) 092	Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the extension of the entitlement for co-productions as provided for in Article 5 of the Protocol on Cultural Cooperation to the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Korea, of the other part	Trade Policy Unit	Not examined	<p>Adopted 25/03/2020</p> <p>Council Decision (EU) 2020/470  <a href="http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2020/470/oj">http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2020/470/oj</a></p> <p>No transposition required</p> <p>The period of entitlement was extended for a duration of three years, from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2023.</p>

COM Number	Subject	Section	Date Examined by Committee	Current Update on Proposal
COM(20)116	Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the EPA Committee established under the stepping stone Economic Partnership Agreement between Ghana, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, as regards the adoption of the Rules of Procedures of the EPA Committee	Trade Policy Unit	Not examined	Not yet adopted by Council. The technical Draft Decision (Presidency compromise text WK 3475 2020 REV 2) was agreed at Council Working Party level (written consultation of the ACP Working Party which concluded on 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2020). Submitted to Coreper 9 <sup>th</sup> July 2020.
COM (20) 135	Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009 introducing exceptional trade measures for countries and territories participating in or linked to the European Union's Stabilisation and Association process	Trade Policy Unit	Not examined	The Proposal was introduced on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2020 regarding the amendment of the current Council Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009 introducing exceptional trade measures for countries and territories participating in or linked to the EU's Stabilisation and Association process. The Regulation was adopted by the EU Commission via written procedure and is currently undergoing discussions within the Council as part of an ordinary legislative procedure.  The draft Council Decision has yet to be adopted.
COM (20) 156	Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION amending Regulation (EU) No 1387/2013 suspending the autonomous Common Customs Tariff duties on certain agricultural and industrial products	Inward Investment Unit	Not examined	No further scrutiny required. Regulation came into effect EU-wide on 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2020. This regulation is updated twice a year – January and July - to include new suspensions and delete old ones and operates in tandem with 1388/2013.
COM (20) 157	Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION amending Regulation (EU) No 1388/2013 opening and providing for the management of autonomous tariff quotas of the Union for certain agricultural and industrial products	Inward Investment Unit	Not examined	No further scrutiny required. Regulation came into effect EU-wide on 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2020. This regulation is updated twice a year – January and July - to include new quotas and delete old ones and operates in tandem with 1387/2013.

<b>COM Number</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Date Examined by Committee</b>	<b>Current Update on Proposal</b>
COM (20) 183	Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION on temporary measures concerning the general meetings of European companies (SE) and of European Cooperative Societies (SCE)	Company Law	Not examined	Council Regulation (EU) 2020/699 of 25 May 2020, published in the Official Journal: OJ 27.05.2020 L165 p 25.  As a Regulation with Directive Effect no transposition is required.
COM (20) 185	Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union within the CARIFORUM-EU Trade and Development Committee of the Economic Partnership Agreement between the CARIFORUM States, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, with regard to the establishment of a Special Committee on Services	Trade Policy Unit	Not examined	Not yet adopted. The technical Draft Decision (COM (20) 185) was agreed, without amendment, at Council Working Party (ACP Working Party) level in June 2020.
COM (20) 192	Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION establishing the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the EPA Committee set up by the stepping stone Economic Partnership Agreement between Côte d'Ivoire, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, in connection with the adoption of the procedure for the settlement of disputes and the code of conduct for arbitrators	Trade Policy Unit	Not examined	Not yet adopted. Text revisions to COM (2020) 192 are under discussion at Council Working Party (ACP Working Party) level.

<b>COM Number</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Date Examined by Committee</b>	<b>Current Update on Proposal</b>
COM (2020) 193	Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION establishing the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the EPA Committee set up by the stepping stone Economic Partnership Agreement between Côte d'Ivoire, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, in connection with the adoption of the list of arbitrators	Trade Policy Unit	Not examined	Not yet adopted. Text revisions to COM (2020) 193 are under discussion at Council Working Party (ACP Working Party) level.
COM (2020) 213	Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the government of the People's Republic of China on cooperation on, and protection of, geographical indications	Trade Policy Unit	Not examined	The draft Decision was amended by Presidency Compromise Proposal (WK 5703/2020), and these amendments are reflected in the updated Council Decision (ST 8359/2020) circulated on 9 <sup>th</sup> July 2020.  The Decision is not yet adopted.
COM (2020) 214	Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the signing, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement between the European Union and the government of the People's Republic of China on cooperation on, and protection of, geographical indications	Trade Policy Unit	Not examined	The draft Decision was amended by Presidency Compromise Proposal (WK 5703/2020), and these amendments are reflected in the updated Council Decision (ST 8356/2020) circulated on 9 <sup>th</sup> July 2020.  The Decision is not yet adopted.