

TTIP: No thank you! That's not what a transatlantic partnership means

German NGO position paper on the planned EU-USA Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

Right now, the governments of Europe and the United States are planning a so-called 'Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership' (TTIP). BMW and Monsanto will be pretty pleased about this, as will Deutsche Bank, JP Chase Morgan, Google, BASF, Bertelsmann and ExxonMobil. But do people in Europe, the United States and the rest of the world really need a large, de-regulated transatlantic market? The TTIP does not provide answers to questions such as: How do we want to live? What is a 'good life' without the exploitation of people, animals and the environment? How can we work within the planet's natural limits, and guarantee good, fairly paid work? How can we achieve food sovereignty for everyone?

We are currently in the middle of an environmental, social and economic crisis. We need more democracy, social justice, climate protection and financial market regulation. We need more economic solidarity, protection of smallholders and an economy and agriculture orientated towards the common good. We need more effective consumer and data protection, or protection against the financial interests of international corporations.

The TTIP agreement promises more growth to business representatives in the EU and the US. They want more trade and more market freedom for businesses. In reality, this could well mean unlabeled GM foods and hormone-treated meat landing on our plates. We are witnessing the previously rejected ACTA agreement on copyright coming in through the back door - freedom of expression and data protection will lose out. Only the lowest consumer protection and environmental standards will remain. Governments and the EU Commission are going for secret negotiations while excluding the public and parliaments.

We want:

Democracy and transparency: Rather than secret negotiations, a broad public discussion is needed to reach a social and environmental negotiating mandate on both sides. This requires comprehensive and timely information, and a full public disclosure of all negotiation documents. In addition, the Commission must provide an external sustainability check by an independent body.

Legal protection for people instead of privileged rights for corporations: We don't want US corporations to have rights that go against European environmental and social laws. Special legal rights for companies in investor-state arbitration procedures, as promoted by the EU, undermine fundamental principles of the rule of law.

Core principles of climate and environmental protection, as agreed in Rio in 1992, are the precautionary principle and the *polluter pays* principle: If products or technologies pose risks, these need to be proactively avoided. As a result of pressure from the US export lobby, however, the TTIP would declare existing and planned rules based on these principles as trade barriers. A particular thorn in the side of US lobby groups is the current slow process of approving GM foods in Europe and the requirement to label them, as well as European sustainability standards for biofuels. The further development of the EU Chemicals Directive (REACH) and the EURO standard for car emissions, alongside the EU's strategy to limit the risks of environmentally hazardous plastics, are further obstacles to US export interests. In addition, it is important that the precautionary principle remains in place for new technologies, such as dangerous gas extraction by way of *fracking*. We need a fair economy that is both climate and resource-efficient on both sides of the Atlantic. The slowest partner should not be allowed to set the pace. To achieve this, prohibitions of particularly harmful products and procedures as well as taxes and duties are required. Obviously, this is not consistent with the TTIP free trade logic.

Protect **small and environment-friendly agriculture**: For Europe's farmers and consumers the TTIP carries no benefits. In the US the consumption of cloned meat and hormone-treated meat is allowed. The same goes for milk produced by doping cows with genetically modified growth hormones. Poultry meat is treated with chlorine and there is no rigorous and consistent approval process or a labeling requirement for genetically modified plants. Genetically modified salmon is about to be approved. All this would subsequently also be allowed in Europe. Patenting and liability laws greatly differ in both trading zones. The TTIP would open the doors for agricultural exports at dumping prices. Europe's farmers would be subject to even greater competitive pressure. U.S. exporters would push their soy and dairy products onto the EU market and undermine our efforts to replace soybean with indigenous protein crops. Instead of more "grow or perish" we need to protect small and environment-friendly farming.

High consumer and health standards: Europe's stricter standards must be the baseline for all negotiations. In addition, comprehensive labeling must be mandatory - even for processed products.

Labor and human rights must be protected by clear and enforceable rules that are binding: TTIP is sold to the general public as an engine for job creation. However, existing free trade agreements such as the NAFTA agreement between the US, Canada and Mexico have had the opposite effect. Trade unions complain about job losses, declining wages, weakened minimum labor standards and growing income disparities as labor standards are aligned by their respective lower level. In the EU, mass unemployment, pressure on wages and the expansion of precarious employment are the result of weak social standards in a liberalized internal market. This is not a model for a transatlantic free trade area.

International solidarity and cooperation instead of ever more competitive pressures. Through the TTIP; both the EU and the US want to hedge their global supremacy. Emerging and developing countries will lose important market shares.

Safeguard and develop public services instead of more liberalization offensives. Essential public services – e.g. in the areas of education, health, water, energy or transport – should not be privatized. They have to be accessible to everybody, be of high quality and meet high social and environmental standards. This requires a regulatory leeway at the national and local level which the TTIP negotiations threaten to curtail further. This in return means that more pressure for privatization is to be expected.

Protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions instead of more liberalization. UNESCO's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions secures film, theater, orchestra and other cultural programs as well as local public broadcasting programs. The TTIP negotiations will put this creative space up for grabs.

Financial sector regulation and a reduction of economic imbalances instead of more deregulation and free trade. The liberalization of financial markets and economic imbalances within the EU as a result of wage competition are a major cause of Europe's economic crisis. With TTIP financial services are to be further liberalized. The political power of the financial industry would be strengthened but wages and tax dumping and thus decreasing public revenues would be the result.

Innovation, education and freedom of information instead of more exclusive rights to corporations' "intellectual property": Protectable "intellectual property" is found in many sectors - technology, pharmaceuticals, seeds, movies and music. Under the pretext of protecting inventors, big publishers, labels and media companies are increasingly trying to control users of culture and information. Science and education are obstructed while more and more works are being orphaned or lost forever as their digitization is not permitted. We need a fair balance of interests between creators, users and re-users! In 2012, the ACTA agreement was stopped by a wave of public outrage as the media industry would have been granted with extensive monopoly rights and the control of the Internet. TTIP is a new attempt to introduce these monopoly rights.

We therefore call on all interested people and organizations to actively participate in the debate on this new deal! Let's show our politicians and industry leaders that free trade and investor protection recipes dating from the 20th Century are not a solution to our current challenges - together with our friends in Europe and the US. A transatlantic partnership for the urgent socio-ecological transformation in the 21st Century looks very different! In the United States and other EU countries there is more and more opposition to this proposed agreement - together we will stop it!

Signatories:

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