



TTIP bad for agriculture, health and the environment says U.S. and EU civil society

July 10, 2014

BRUSSELS – The next round of negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) will take place July 14–18 in Brussels, almost exactly a year since the first round in Washington, DC. Since that time, movements for local and regional farming and food systems and public health advocates on both sides of the Atlantic have coordinated efforts to raise their concerns around the agreement. Civil society groups from the U.S. and EU are deeply concerned that the agreement could serve to lower standards on food safety and public health.

“We must not let free trade agreements like TTIP move us towards even more intensive food production without thinking about how this will impact on the environment, public health, food safety, rural development and local communities. Civil society in both the EU and the U.S. is ready to raise the bar and instead of starting a race to the bottom,” said Robert Pederson of ARC2020, the European sustainable agriculture coalition. *Contact: Robert Pederson, Agriculture and Rural Convention 2020, +45 40 28 17 01 robert@arc2020.eu*

Ben Burkett, National Family Farm Coalition board president and Mississippi farmer stated, "This agreement, as currently being negotiated, threatens food sovereignty and jeopardizes important laws in Europe protecting family farmers there. Laws related to genetically engineered seeds and livestock, a fair pricing system for dairy farmers, and the ability to direct market our fruits, vegetables and other products to meet food procurement goals would be particularly threatened." *Contact: Ben Burkett, benburkett601@gmail.com or +1 (601) 310-5223, or Kathy Ozer, kozer@nffc.net or +1 (202) 543-5675.*

The groups also raised concerns about undue corporate influence in the trade talks. Corporate Europe Observatory's Nina Holland warned that, "[Lobbying by agribusiness](#) has outnumbered all other industry sectors. In fact, we have evidence that the European Commission has been actively seeking input from the joint pesticide industry on TTIP. Claims by politicians that 'food standards will not be lowered' should not be taken at face value, as this is precisely what the industry is after." *Contact: Nina Holland, Corporate Europe Observatory, +32 2 8930930 nina@corporateeurope.org*

"We hear a lot about the need to agree on common standards, but why should that happen within the black box of a trade agreement?" asked the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy's Karen Hansen-Kuhn. "The U.S. and EU have already agreed on an Organic Equivalency Arrangement and a bilateral agreement to protect wine names. The governments should bring civil society in on open discussions on the specific issues where we could reach common ground, outside of the confines of TTIP." *Contact: Karen Hansen-Kuhn, +1 (202) 413-9533, khansenkuhn@iatp.org*

Several groups raised specific concerns on what's at stake in the trade talks, including:

Animal agriculture and food safety:

"The animal advocacy movement has grown on both sides of the Atlantic. In the EU significant legislative provisions and standards have been set in place, reflecting the concerns of European citizens in regards to the continuous intensification of animal farming. A trade agreement with the U.S., where farm animal welfare legislation is minimal at best, will seriously undermine existing rules by allowing animal products produced to almost non-existent standards to enter the EU market while bringing a halt to further progress in legislative work." *Contact: Olga Kikou, European Affairs Manager, Compassion in World Farming, +30 6972 004 963, Olga.Kikou@ciwf.org.uk*

"We cannot let agribusiness interests on either side of the Atlantic use the U.S.-Europe trade deal to lower public health and safety standards. We must reject European industry attempts at undercutting safeguards related to mad cow disease as well as U.S. agribusiness' ambitious plans to lower European standards

related to hormone treated beef, chicken washed in chlorine and meat produced with growth stimulants.” *Contact: Kari Hamerschlag, Senior Program Manager, Food and Technology Program at Friends of the Earth, US, +1 510-978-4420, khamerschlag@foe.org*

Public health and consumers’ right to know:

“Although almost 70 percent of all processed foods—from soda to soup—sold in U.S. supermarkets contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs), the U.S. requires no labeling of these products. Consumers, in poll after poll, demonstrate that they want such products to be labeled so they can make a choice about what they feed themselves and their children. Presently, there are over 30 GMO labeling initiatives in 16 states, with legislation for labeling passing in three states. The U.S. is pushing the EU to curb its GMO labeling requirements and should this happen, it could undermine efforts in the U.S. to require labeling of those products.” *Contact: Debbie Barker, International Director, Center for Food Safety, +1 (202) 547-9359, DBarker@CenterforFoodSafety.org*

“Worldwide, 40 million children under five are overweight or obese. Part of this increase is related to the consumption of unhealthy processed food and drinks. Governments have to be able to protect their citizens and address these issues with adequate policy measures. TTIP will limit those possibilities. Under TTIP, Big Food and Big Soda companies would be able to increase the production of processed food and are enabled to sue governments if they try to limit the access to unhealthy food and drinks.” *Contact: Ella Weggen, Health Advocate, Wemos Foundation, +31 20 435 2062, ella.weggen@wemos.nl*

These and other civil society groups agree that TTIP threatens healthy food and sustainable agriculture in myriad ways, from rules on food safety and labeling to investment and procurement. They join many other groups in demanding that the governments publish negotiating texts so an open public debate can happen on the real agenda in the trade talks.