

People, environment and democracy before profit and corporate rights

Joint statement of European Civil Society groups working against the TTIP threat, May 2014

1. Who are we?

We are an EU-wide coalition of civil society organisations who share a deep concern about the various threats posed by the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership TTIP (also known as Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement or TAFTA). We represent a wide range of public interests including **environmental protection, public health, agriculture, consumer rights and protection of food and farming standards, animal welfare, social and labour standards, workers' rights, migrant rights, unemployment, youth and women's issues, development, public access to information and digital rights, essential public services including education, integrity of financial systems, and others.**

We are strongly committed to challenging the ongoing negotiations for the TTIP, in order to ensure transparent and democratic policy debate. Any agreements must serve the public interest and our common future.

2. What is TTIP?

TTIP is a far-reaching agreement currently being negotiated between the European Commission (on behalf of EU Member States) and the USA government. It is less about trade as tariffs are already generally very low between the EU and the USA, and mostly about regulations, standards, corporate rights and investment guarantees.

The proposed TTIP supposedly aims at facilitating direct investment, and eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles to market access for corporations from both sides of the Atlantic.

However, evidence from business and industry positions reveals that the focus on non-tariff barriers and regulatory convergence is being used to push deregulation, increased investment guarantees, intellectual property rights leading to monopolies, and a race to the bottom. The proclaimed but unsubstantiated economic benefits are marginal to society at large even in the best case scenarios. All evidence to date suggests that these goals threaten important rights acquired in long democratic struggles and societal interests of the public in the EU, US, and the rest of the world.

Negotiations are happening behind closed doors, without comprehensive and effective public consultation. National parliaments are not even informed about the details of the Commission's negotiation texts - but the rare snippets of information that have been released -- or leaked -- raise considerable concerns.

3. What are our concerns?

- **the lack of transparency and democratic procedures**, which makes it impossible for citizens and civil society to monitor the negotiations in order to ensure that public interests are being protected. Currently these negotiations are extremely biased: business lobby groups are given privileged access to information and opportunities to influence the negotiations.
- **the proposed investment protection chapter**, particularly the inclusion of an Investor State Dispute Settlement provision. **ISDS** mechanisms give investors exclusive rights to sue states when democratic decisions – made by public institutions in the public interest – are considered to have negative impacts on their anticipated profits. These mechanisms

rely on rulings outside the national courts and thereby undermine our national and EU legal systems, our democratic structures for formulating laws and policies in the public interest.

- the **creation of new anti-democratic governance structures and procedures** that aim to 'harmonise regulations' like the proposed **Regulatory Cooperation Council**. These structures would make the TTIP a moving target, constantly developed in secret by unelected bureaucrats and big business. These undemocratic structures threaten to lower important standards and rules designed for the protection of public interests, or prohibit future improvements, regardless of necessity and public mandate. We are also concerned about the aim to strengthen protection and enforcement of "intellectual property rights" which could impede our rights to health, culture, education and free expression.

4. Our shared demands and goals:

Based on the values of international solidarity, social justice and environmental sustainability, and the respect of all human rights, we work together with our allies in the US and other parts of the world and **we demand:**

- a) **Transparency now:** the EU Commission's negotiation texts as well as all negotiation documents must be made public to allow for an open and critical public debate on the TTIP.
- b) **A democratic process**, including scrutiny and assessment of the negotiation texts, which ensures that policies are in the public interest and which involves the EU Parliament, debate in national parliaments, civil society organisations, trade unions and stakeholder groups.
- c) **No ISDS:** any provision containing Investor State Dispute Settlement mechanisms must be taken permanently out of the negotiations and no other mechanism introduced (including indirectly via other pre-existing or subsequent trade agreements) which grants privileged rights to investors.
- d) **No regulatory cooperation council:** all regulation of business operations, trade conditions and setting of product- and production-standards must be in the hands of democratically controlled bodies and processes.
- e) **No deregulation of standards** safeguarding and serving the public interest: the level of social and labour standards, consumer and public health protection, care for the environment including regeneration of our natural resources, animal welfare, food safety standards and environmentally sustainable agricultural practices, access to information and labelling, culture and medicine, financial market regulation as well as data protection and other digital rights **need to be enhanced**, not "harmonised" down to the lowest common denominator. Mutual recognition is not acceptable in as far as it undermines democratically agreed standards and safeguards. The precautionary principle must be widely applied.
- f) **No further deregulation and privatisation of public services.** We demand guaranteed access to high quality education, health care and other public services and government procurement which promotes local jobs and local economies, local content, positive discrimination, social entrepreneurship, sustainable economics and serves the public interest.
- g) **The promotion of environmentally sustainable agricultural practices** and protection of small family farming.
- h) **Public authorities must keep the political power** and structures necessary to protect certain sensitive sectors and safeguard standards important to our quality of life. Internationally agreed labour and environmental standards must be respected and enforced. The continuous violation of labour standards should be addressed by imposing monetary fines.

Any EU-US trade agreements, now and in the future, should meet these demands, follow these principles and promote cooperation, social justice and ecological sustainability.

Signed:





11.11.11, Belgium

Action For Breast Cancer Foundation, Malta

Africa Contact, Denmark

Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN)

Aitec-IPAM, France

aktion / arbeitsunrecht, Germany

Aktion Selbstbesteuerung e.V., Germany

APRODEV - Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organisations in Europe

aquattac, Europe-wide

Arbeitsgemeinschaft bäuerliche Landwirtschaft - AbL, Germany

ARC 2020 (Convention agricole et rurale 2020), Belgium

ÄrztInnen für eine gesunde Umwelt (AeGU, ISDE), Austria

ASEED Europe, Netherlands

Association d'Amitié Franco Vietnamienne, Comité de Choisy le Roi - Val de Marne, France

Attac Austria

ATTAC-Denmark

Attac Finland
Attac France
Attac Germany
Attac Iceland
Attac Ireland
ATTAC SPAIN
Attac Sweden
ATTAC VLAANDEREN, Netherlands
ATTAC Wallonie-Bruxelles, Belgium
Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour
Austrian Trade Union Federation
BI Fracking freies Hessen, Germany
BI lebenswertes Korbach e.V., Germany
Both ENDS, the Netherlands
Campact e.V., Germany
CEE Bankwatch Network
Center for Encounter and Active Non-Violence, Austria
La CGT, France
Colibri, Germany
Collectif citoyen les Engrenateurs, France
Collectif contre le grand marché transatlantique - Stop TAFTA, France
Collectif des Associations Citoyennes, France
Collectif Roosevelt, France
Compassion in World Farming, Europe-wide
Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), Belgium
Dachverband Entwicklungspolitik Baden-Württemberg (DEAB), Germany
Eco Ruralis, Romania
Ecologistas en Acción, Spain
Educación para la Acción Crítica-EdPAC. Spain
Ein Welt Forum Freiburg, Germany
European Attac Network (EAN)
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)
European Environmental Bureau
European Federation of Journalists
The European Public Health Alliance, Europe-wide
European Water Movement
Farms not Factories, UK
Fairwatch, Italy
Fondation Sciences Citoyennes, France
Food & Water Europe
Fracking Free Ireland
Freedom Fight Info, Serbia
Friends of the Earth Europe
Friends of the Earth Spain
GAIA - Grupo de Acção e Intervenção Ambiental, Portugal
Généralisations Futures, France
German League for Nature and Environment (Deutscher Naturschutzring - DNR)
German NGO Forum on Environment and Development, Germany

GLOBAL 2000 - Friends of the Earth Austria
Global Marshall Plan Initiative, Europe-wide
GMO Information Center ("InfOMG"), Romania
Golias Hebdo et Golias Magazine, France
Greenpeace
The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), Belgium
Heaven or sHell, Sweden
IBFAN Europe
IBFAN Georgian Group
Ibfan Italia
Initiativ Liewensufank, Luxembourg
INKOTA-netzwerk, Germany
Institute for sustainable development, Slovenia
Irish Doctors Environmental Association, Ireland
Keep Ireland Fracking Free, Ireland
Kein Patent auf Leben! ("No Patents on Life!"), Germany
LEF - FGE, Belgium
Limerick Earth Day Network, Ireland
Local Urban Development European Network (LUDEN), Belgium
Mehr Demokratie, Germany
MENSCHENRECHTE 3000 e.V. (Human Rights 3000), Germany
MIM Moral in Motion, the Netherlands
Naturefriends International
NaturFreunde Deutschlands, Germany
Nicos Poulantzas Institute, Greece
NOAH - Friends of the Earth Denmark
ÖBV-Via Campesina Austria
Platform aarde Boer consument, The Netherlands
Pokret za slobodu, Serbia
Portmarnock Community Association, Beach committee, Ireland
PowerShift, Germany
PROVIEH - Verein gegen tierquälerische Massentierhaltung e.V., Germany
Quercus – National Association for Nature Conservation, Portugal
La Quadrature du Net, France
Romania Fara Ei, Romania
Schaliegasvrij Nederland, The Netherlands
Service Civil International
Slow Food Germany
Slow Food International
SOLIDARITÉ, France
SOMO, the Netherlands
StopTTIP UK
SÜDWIND, Austria
Transnational Institute
Transport & Environment, Belgium
Umweltinstitut München e.V., Germany
Unión Sindical Obrera (USO), Spain
UNISON, UK

Védegylet Egyesület, Hungary

War on Want, UK

WEED – World Economy, Ecology & Development, Germany

Wemos, the Netherlands

Women in Europe for a Common Future, France, Germany, The Netherlands

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Holland

World Development Movement, UK

Workinggroup Food Justice, The Netherlands

X minus Y Solidarity Fund, The Netherlands