

# BEUC Factsheet

# Transatlantic Trade and investment Partnership (TTIP)

## What is TTIP?

- The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is the trading agreement under negotiation between the European Union and the United States. The official objective of TTIP is to boost transatlantic trade and investment, which is projected to drive growth and create jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.
- The agreement aims to remove trade barriers within a wide range of economic sectors and would consist of three main parts:
  - **Market access** (including tariffs)
  - **Regulatory issues & Non-Tariff Barriers** (NTBs)
  - **Rules** (e.g. intellectual property rights, customs and trade facilitation, trade and sustainable development).

In practice, as trade tariffs between partners are already quite low, negotiations will mainly focus on reducing regulatory barriers.

## How do negotiations work?

- The European Commission formally appointed its negotiation team following granting of the mandate by the Council of the European Union in June 2013. This mandate has not been published.
- The negotiation process remains highly secretive and non transparent. The mandate and the negotiation texts are unavailable to the public. The Commission holds the leading role in negotiations, with the European Parliament and Council having the final decision without the right to alter the text. Despite the European Commission setting up an Advisory Group, in which the BEUC Director-General Monique Goyens participates, the negotiations lack democratic guarantees.



U.S chief negotiator Dan Mullaney to the left, EU chief negotiator Ignacio Garcia Bercero to the right. TACD Stakeholder Forum –October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013

## What are the potential benefits of TTIP for consumers?

The European consumer could benefit from a TTIP agreement with:

- **Lower prices** and a **wider variety** of traded goods and services.
- The **elimination of customs duties** on goods personally imported from the US.
- A reduction of excessive pricing of **transatlantic telecommunications**.
- Common EU-US **traceability** and **alert systems** for products and better exchanges of information between regulatory agencies.



## What are the potential risks of TTIP for consumers?

TTIP poses a number of risks to European consumers:

- Access to the European market of **food** that has not been produced according to European safety standards. The concept of food safety in the US is based on “reasonable certainty of no harm” and not on the “precautionary principle” like in the EU.
- Undermining **data protection standards**. In the EU, the rights to privacy and protection of personal data are fundamental – broad in scope and linked to strong sanctions. In the US, privacy is simply a matter of consumer protection in a very limited number of areas such as with children and the internet, health and financial services.
- **Chemicals** banned in the EU, but used in products and cosmetics in the US, might find their way onto European shelves.
- The introduction of an arbitration system, the **Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS)**, which would allow foreign companies to claim compensation from governments (i.e. taxpayers) if they believe government actions or regulations diminish the value of their investment.

### BEUC asks for:

- **Full transparency** during the negotiation process including publication of texts at key stages and consultations with all stakeholders.
- **No weakening** of the levels of consumer, environment, labour, health and safety protections for citizens on both sides of the Atlantic.
- The Investor-State Dispute Settlement clause (**ISDS**) to be **discarded** from the agreement.

### BEUC and TTIP

BEUC is supportive of free trade in principle if it results in expanding consumer choice, making services and goods more accessible and less expensive for citizens. Nevertheless, we have serious reservations regarding the proclaimed potential benefits, should they come at the expense of consumer, health, environmental, labour and safety standards in Europe.

**Other sources:** [www.tacd.org](http://www.tacd.org), [www.beuc.eu/blog](http://www.beuc.eu/blog)

