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No mandate for unbalanced TTIP trade talks

As EU governments are set to approve this Friday June 14 the European Commission's mandate to negotiate the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) deal with the US, The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) calls for a transparent process which does not lead to a watering down of consumer standards.

Official channels allow US industry to give its input throughout the negotiation process¹, BEUC is concerned that excluding civil society will lead to an uninformed and imbalanced outcome.

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, commented:

"Trade talks between the EU and US will affect almost every aspect of our life. Data protection, food safety or medical devices are not the sole prerogative of business and politicians. International bodies such as the World Health Organisation or World Trade Organisation share texts and progress with civil society. There is no good reason to justify the EU's reluctance to do the same."

The focus of the trade talks will be on regulatory issues. BEUC calls for negotiators to aim for the highest standards and does not want to see a deal which averages down existing EU and US consumer protection.

Monique Goyens said:

"Clearly these trade talks will be about finding a common denominator for the issues at stake. In practical terms, this means that everybody has to give a little. Political promises that this would not be the case are either overly optimistic or verging on misleading."

ENDS

¹ The Industry Trade Advisory Committees

² BEUC is a member of the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD), a partnership of consumer organisations in the EU and US. TACD was established to protect consumer interest in European and American policy making. The initial submission by TACD to the negotiations can be found here: <http://bit.ly/11B1td0>