



The European Consumer Organisation



Friends of the Earth Europe



EUROPEAN PUBLIC SERVICE UNION



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EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK



Press Release

For immediate release

Civil society groups call on European governments to reject the CETA agreement

Brussels 22. September – A broad group of civil society and consumer organisations as well as trade unions call on the EU’s trade ministers to reject the signature of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with Canada [1]. The trade ministers are gathering in Bratislava today and tomorrow to discuss the ratification of the CETA agreement.

The agreement is highly controversial with more than three million Europeans signing a petition against CETA and its twin agreement TTIP and more than 2000 municipalities declaring themselves TTIP- and CETA-free [2]. The groups argue that CETA threatens public policies through its investment dispute resolution mechanism, brings no benefits to Europe’s citizens, and endangers the delivery of high quality public services.

Fabian Flues, trade campaigner at Friends of the Earth Europe said: *“The investment provisions in CETA grant unjustified privileges to foreign investors, threatening policy-making in the public interest. Investment protections has been used in the past to undermine environmental regulations and biased, unaccountable tribunals have cost European tax payers billions already. The investment chapter in CETA would massively expand these investor privileges and is reason alone to reject the agreement.”*

Liina Carr, confederal secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation said: *“Under CETA, workers are second class citizens compared to investors. Labour and environmental protection is not enforceable under CETA, whereas investors are given a special legal procedure to enforce their rights. CETA will do nothing to promote quality jobs and decent pay, while presenting a threat to the delivery of high-quality public services.”*

Monique Goyens, director of the European Consumer Organisation BEUC said: *“Disappointingly, CETA fails the consumer crash test. CETA does not provide tangible benefits to consumers and contains provisions that could undermine current and future levels of consumer protection. For instance, CETA will allow foreign investors to sue governments and get compensation when governments pass a law to protect consumers better.”*

A coalition of civil society organisations and trade unions is present in Bratislava to highlight the opposition to the CETA ratification during the trade minister meeting [3].

NOTES

[1] The organisations are: Friends of the Earth Europe, the European Consumers Organisation (BEUC), The European Trade Union Congress, the European Public Services Union, the European Anti-Poverty Network, the Health and Environment Alliance and the CEE Bankwatch Network

[2] An overview of the signatures can be found here: https://stop-ttip.org/blog/eci-is-closed-signature-gathering-continues/?noredirect=en_GB; on the CETA- and TTIP-free zones, see <http://foeeurope.org/2000-CETA-and-TTIP-free-zones-in-Europe>

[3] The full programme can be found at: <http://stopceta.net/bratislava/>

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