

Contact: Laurens Rutten: +32 (0)2 789 24 01
Date: 23/11/2016

European Parliament fails to give consumers legal clarity on EU-Canada trade agreement (CETA)

Today, the European Parliament voted 419–258 to reject a motion asking the European Court of Justice (ECJ) for an opinion on the legality of the EU-Canada trade agreement (CETA). The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) is disappointed in the lack of parliamentary support for a legal check that could increase consumer trust in global trade treaties.

89 European parliamentarians had tabled the motion in order to obtain clarity on whether the Court deems the EU-Canada agreement to be in line with EU law. This Court's opinion is key [as serious concerns exist](#)¹ – voiced by academics and associations of judges, amongst others – on the legality of the proposed investment court system in CETA.

Consumer trust is fundamental for well-functioning global markets. With public support for trade liberalisation waning, it is important that the Court verifies all concerns on the legality of CETA. This will allow consumers to increase their trust in trade agreements.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), commented:

"A legal check of CETA is indispensable for eliminating uncertainty on the conformity of the EU-Canada deal with the EU treaties. Legislators need to make sure that an unsound legal system doesn't have major implications for consumer protection and public policy measures down the line.

"Consumer organisations had hoped that the European Parliament would assume its responsibility to ensure that trade deals are properly vetted before entering into force. Without this legal check by the EU's highest judges we will soon find ourselves in the same situation again, as the EU is about to propose the establishment of a *multilateral* investment court system."

ENDS

¹ See analyses:

- ECJ advocate general Kokott: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/cambridge-yearbook-of-european-legal-studies/article/investment-arbitration-and-eu-law/96D57753C361BD22F35D37BE6EE9CC5D>
- Inge Govaere (Professor of European Law at Ghent University and Director of the European Legal Studies Department at the College of Europe, Bruges): https://www.coleurope.eu/system/files_force/research-paper/researchpaper_1_2016_govaere.pdf?download=1