



# FACTSHEET

## Food and TTIP

### 🔍 Food in the TTIP negotiations?

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) trade deal currently being negotiated between the EU and US aims to reduce trade barriers and regulatory differences on food production standards so that a broader range of foodstuffs circulate in a wider transatlantic market.

### 🔍 European approach to food safety 🔍 American approach to food safety

- In the EU we apply the **'precautionary principle'**, which helps set food safety standards when there is scientific uncertainty, to prevent potential harm to human health. In other words, EU regulators seek to proactively regulate risks.
  - In the EU, food safety is guaranteed by the **'farm-to-fork'** approach which involves the measures necessary (hygiene prerequisites, traceability, etc.) all along the production chain to ensure the food sold to consumers is ultimately safe.
  - **'Other legitimate factors'** - such as societal, economic, ethical or environmental concerns as well as consumer expectations are taken into consideration in food regulation, for example the use of food labelling in GMO products as dictated by consumer choice.
  - **Food risk evaluation** is performed by officially authorised bodies.
- In the US, the concept of safety of food is based on the **'reasonable certainty of no harm'**. This also means US regulators wait for evidence of harm before regulating.
  - The US system mostly verifies the safety of the end-product and is therefore more prone to resorting to pathogen reduction treatments of carcasses by **chemical washing**.
  - **'Other factors'** such as societal, economic, ethical or environmental concerns as well as consumer expectations are often considered barriers to trade in the US.
  - US authorities rely largely on companies' **private assessments** of food risk evaluation.





## What are the potential benefits for consumers of including food in TTIP?

- Consumers might be offered a bigger variety of products, at lower prices.
- The EU and US could join forces to create food alert systems to quickly exchange information and identify sources of food contamination on both sides of the Atlantic.
- The EU and US could develop more efficient food traceability systems, which would allow for animal and ingredient identification, considering food is transported globally.

## What are the potential risks for consumers of including food in TTIP?

- The regulatory framework expected with TTIP could lead to a system of mutual recognition of food standards between partners. This means:
- American meat which has been treated with veterinary drugs for growth promotion and/or their byproducts (which are banned in the EU) may find their way onto European shelves.
  - The importation of chemically treated poultry to the European market may be seen as the “easy fix” to clean up dirty meat by food industry. This would endanger the ‘farm-to-fork approach’ which ensures clean meat throughout the production chain.
  - Genetically modified organisms or products containing GMOs might enter the European market without being labeled, as GMO labelling is not mandatory in the US.

## BEUC requests?

- Both trading partners should strive for **upward harmonisation** in the food sector by upholding ‘best in class’ food safety and consumer protection policies currently in place on both sides of the Atlantic.
- The fundamental principles of the EU legislative framework, particularly the ‘**precautionary principle**’, and the consideration of ‘**other legitimate factors**’ such as consumer preference, in risk management, should be non-negotiable.
- Reducing **non-tariff barriers** should only be done to avoid unnecessary duplications and only provided consumer protection and information rights remain untouched.
- The EU should also remain firm in their opposition to **growth promoters** in view of the risk they pose to human health.
- **GMO** labelling requirements should remain untouched and also apply to imported food products.
- The use of **meat decontamination treatments** should not become the norm in the EU, as is currently the case in the US.
- **Mutual recognition or equivalence of standards**, whereby one party must accept products deemed in compliance under the other party’s regulations, is unfeasible given the underlying differences in food risk management and assessment rules of both sides.

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

