

# People, environment and democracy before profit and corporate rights

Joint statement of European Civil Society groups working against the TTIP threat, May 2014

## 1. Who are we?

We are an EU-wide coalition of civil society organisations who share a deep concern about the various threats posed by the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership TTIP (also known as Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement or TAFTA). We represent a wide range of public interests including **environmental protection, public health, agriculture, consumer rights and protection of food and farming standards, animal welfare, social and labour standards, workers' rights, migrant rights, unemployment, youth and women's issues, development, public access to information and digital rights, essential public services including education, integrity of financial systems, and others.**

We are strongly committed to challenging the ongoing negotiations for the TTIP, in order to ensure transparent and democratic policy debate. Any agreements must serve the public interest and our common future.

## 2. What is TTIP?

TTIP is a far-reaching agreement currently being negotiated between the European Commission (on behalf of EU Member States) and the USA government. It is less about trade as tariffs are already generally very low between the EU and the USA, and mostly about regulations, standards, corporate rights and investment guarantees.

The proposed TTIP supposedly aims at facilitating direct investment, and eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles to market access for corporations from both sides of the Atlantic.

However, evidence from business and industry positions reveals that the focus on non-tariff barriers and regulatory convergence is being used to push deregulation, increased investment guarantees, intellectual property rights leading to monopolies, and a race to the bottom. The proclaimed but unsubstantiated economic benefits are marginal to society at large even in the best case scenarios. All evidence to date suggests that these goals threaten important rights acquired in long democratic struggles and societal interests of the public in the EU, US, and the rest of the world.

Negotiations are happening behind closed doors, without comprehensive and effective public consultation. National parliaments are not even informed about the details of the Commission's negotiation texts - but the rare snippets of information that have been released -- or leaked -- raise considerable concerns.

## 3. What are our concerns?

- **the lack of transparency and democratic procedures**, which makes it impossible for citizens and civil society to monitor the negotiations in order to ensure that public interests are being protected. Currently these negotiations are extremely biased: business lobby groups are given privileged access to information and opportunities to influence the negotiations.
- **the proposed investment protection chapter**, particularly the inclusion of an Investor State Dispute Settlement provision. **ISDS** mechanisms give investors exclusive rights to sue states when democratic decisions – made by public institutions in the public interest – are considered to have negative impacts on their anticipated profits. These mechanisms

rely on rulings outside the national courts and thereby undermine our national and EU legal systems, our democratic structures for formulating laws and policies in the public interest.

- the **creation of new anti-democratic governance structures and procedures** that aim to 'harmonise regulations' like the proposed **Regulatory Cooperation Council**. These structures would make the TTIP a moving target, constantly developed in secret by unelected bureaucrats and big business. These undemocratic structures threaten to lower important standards and rules designed for the protection of public interests, or prohibit future improvements, regardless of necessity and public mandate. We are also concerned about the aim to strengthen protection and enforcement of "intellectual property rights" which could impede our rights to health, culture, education and free expression.

#### **4. Our shared demands and goals:**

Based on the values of international solidarity, social justice and environmental sustainability, and the respect of all human rights, we work together with our allies in the US and other parts of the world and **we demand:**

- a) **Transparency now:** the EU Commission's negotiation texts as well as all negotiation documents must be made public to allow for an open and critical public debate on the TTIP.
- b) **A democratic process**, including scrutiny and assessment of the negotiation texts, which ensures that policies are in the public interest and which involves the EU Parliament, debate in national parliaments, civil society organisations, trade unions and stakeholder groups.
- c) **No ISDS:** any provision containing Investor State Dispute Settlement mechanisms must be taken permanently out of the negotiations and no other mechanism introduced (including indirectly via other pre-existing or subsequent trade agreements) which grants privileged rights to investors.
- d) **No regulatory cooperation council:** all regulation of business operations, trade conditions and setting of product- and production-standards must be in the hands of democratically controlled bodies and processes.
- e) **No deregulation of standards** safeguarding and serving the public interest: the level of social and labour standards, consumer and public health protection, care for the environment including regeneration of our natural resources, animal welfare, food safety standards and environmentally sustainable agricultural practices, access to information and labelling, culture and medicine, financial market regulation as well as data protection and other digital rights **need to be enhanced**, not "harmonised" down to the lowest common denominator. Mutual recognition is not acceptable in as far as it undermines democratically agreed standards and safeguards. The precautionary principle must be widely applied.
- f) **No further deregulation and privatisation of public services.** We demand guaranteed access to high quality education, health care and other public services and government procurement which promotes local jobs and local economies, local content, positive discrimination, social entrepreneurship, sustainable economics and serves the public interest.
- g) **The promotion of environmentally sustainable agricultural practices** and protection of small family farming.
- h) **Public authorities must keep the political power** and structures necessary to protect certain sensitive sectors and safeguard standards important to our quality of life. Internationally agreed labour and environmental standards must be respected and enforced. The continuous violation of labour standards should be addressed by imposing monetary fines.

Any EU-US trade agreements, now and in the future, should meet these demands, follow these principles and promote cooperation, social justice and ecological sustainability.

Signed:





11.11.11, Belgium

Action For Breast Cancer Foundation, Malta

Africa Contact, Denmark

Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN)

Aitec-IPAM, France

aktion / arbeitsunrecht, Germany

Aktion Selbstbesteuerung e.V., Germany

APRODEV - Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organisations in

Europe  
aquattac, Europe-wide  
Arbeitsgemeinschaft bäuerliche Landwirtschaft - AbL, Germany  
ARC 2020 (Convention agricole et rurale 2020), Belgium  
ÄrztInnen für eine gesunde Umwelt (AeGU, ISDE), Austria  
ASEED Europe, Netherlands  
Association d'Amitié Franco Vietnamienne, Comité de Choisy le Roi - Val de Marne, France  
Attac Austria  
ATTAC-Denmark  
Attac Finland  
Attac France  
Attac Germany  
Attac Iceland  
Attac Ireland  
Attac Norway  
ATTAC SPAIN  
Attac Sweden  
ATTAC VLAANDEREN, Netherlands  
ATTAC Wallonie-Bruxelles, Belgium  
Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour  
Austrian Trade Union Federation  
BI Fracking freies Hessen, Germany  
BI lebenswertes Korbach e.V., Germany  
Both ENDS, the Netherlands  
CADTM Europe  
Campact e.V., Germany  
Campaña "No al Tratado Transatlántico de Comercio e Inversiones", Spain  
CEE Bankwatch Network  
Center for Encounter and Active Non-Violence, Austria  
La CGT, France  
Colibri, Germany  
Collectif citoyen les Engraineurs, France  
Collectif contre le grand marché transatlantique - Stop TAFTA, France  
Collectif des Associations Citoyennes, France  
Collectif Roosevelt, France  
Compassion in World Farming, Europe-wide  
Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), Belgium  
Dachverband Entwicklungspolitik Baden-Württemberg (DEAB), Germany  
Eco Ruralis, Romania  
Ecologistas en Acción, Spain  
Educación para la Acción Crítica-EdPAC. Spain  
Ein Welt Forum Freiburg, Germany  
European Attac Network (EAN)  
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)  
European Environmental Bureau  
European Federation of Journalists  
The European Public Health Alliance, Europe-wide  
European Water Movement

Farms not Factories, UK  
Fairwatch, Italy  
Fondation Sciences Citoyennes, France  
Food & Water Europe  
Fracking Free Ireland  
Freedom Fight Info, Serbia  
Friends of the Earth Europe  
Friends of the Earth Spain  
GAIA - Grupo de Acção e Intervenção Ambiental, Portugal  
Générations Futures, France  
German League for Nature and Environment (Deutscher Naturschutzring - DNR)  
German NGO Forum on Environment and Development, Germany  
GLOBAL 2000 - Friends of the Earth Austria  
Global Marshall Plan Initiative, Europe-wide  
GMO Information Center ("InfOMG"), Romania  
Golias Hebdo et Golias Magazine, France  
Grain, International  
Greenpeace  
The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), Belgium  
Heaven or sHell, Sweden  
IBFAN Europe  
IBFAN Georgian Group  
Ibfan Italia  
Initiativ Liewensufank, Luxembourg  
INKOTA-netzwerk, Germany  
Institute for sustainable development, Slovenia  
Irish Doctors Environmental Association, Ireland  
Keep Ireland Fracking Free, Ireland  
Kein Patent auf Leben! ("No Patents on Life!"), Germany  
LEF - FGE, Belgium  
Limerick Earth Day Network, Ireland  
Local Urban Development European Network (LUDEN), Belgium  
Medici per l'Ambiente - ISDE Italy  
Mehr Demokratie, Germany  
MENSCHENRECHTE 3000 e.V. (Human Rights 3000), Germany  
MIM Moral in Motion, the Netherlands  
Mouvement politique des objecteurs de croissance, Belgium  
Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), Germany  
Naturefriends International  
NaturFreunde Deutschlands, Germany  
New Left Perspectives, Bulgaria  
Nicos Poulantzas Institute, Greece  
NOAH - Friends of the Earth Denmark  
ÖBV-Via Campesina Austria  
Organization for Workers' Initiative and Democratization (OWID/BRID), Croatia  
Panoptikon Foundation, Poland  
Platform aarde Boer consument, The Netherlands  
Plataforma Rural, Spain

Pokret za slobodu, Serbia  
Portmarnock Community Association, Beach committee, Ireland  
PowerShift, Germany  
PROVIEH - Verein gegen tierquälerische Massentierhaltung e.V., Germany  
Quercus – National Association for Nature Conservation, Portugal  
La Quadrature du Net, France  
Romania Fara Ei, Romania  
Schaliegasvrij Nederland, The Netherlands  
Seattle to Brussels Network  
Service Civil International  
Slow Food Germany  
Slow Food International  
Social center Haspel, Bulgaria  
SOLIDARITÉ, France  
Solidary Bulgaria  
SOMO, the Netherlands  
StopTTIP UK  
SÜDWIND, Austria  
Transnational Institute  
Transport & Environment, Belgium  
Umanotera, Slovenia  
Umweltinstitut München e.V., Germany  
Unión Sindical Obrera (USO), Spain  
UNISON, UK  
Védegylet Egyesület, Hungary  
War on Want, UK  
WEED – World Economy, Ecology & Development, Germany  
Wemos, the Netherlands  
Women in Europe for a Common Future, France, Germany, The Netherlands  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Holland  
World Development Movement, UK  
Workinggroup Food Justice, The Netherlands  
X minus Y Solidarity Fund, The Netherlands