Special issue

Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

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The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), towards an EU–US trade deal: an overview and chapter-by-chapter guide in plain English

With TTIP, we want to help people and businesses large and small by: - opening up the United States to EU firms; - helping cut the red tape firms face when exporting; - setting rules to make it easier and fairer to export, import and invest. This guide explains TTIP’s contents in detail.

Negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the European Union and the United States reached their ninth round in New York in April 2015. Discussions have covered a broad range of topics, and substantial work undertaken, in particular on the chapters of the agreement covering customs and trade facilitation, services, SMEs, sector-specific regulatory cooperation, and tariffs. Several issues remain highly controversial on both sides: Investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS), Geographical Indications (GIs), the horizontal regulatory cooperation mechanism, and a separate chapter on energy. The tenth round of negotiations is due to be held in July 2015, in Brussels. New draft recommendations on TTIP were adopted by the Committee on International Trade (INTA) on 28 May 2015, two years after negotiations began, and will need to be discussed and voted in plenary before submission to the European Commission (the Union’s negotiator).

Ten rounds of negotiations on the EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) over the past two years have produced scant results. Since the talks were launched – with high expectations – in June 2013, negotiators have shied away from addressing real substance or tackling difficult issues. The political objectives of the EU mandate and those expressed by the European Parliament in its recent resolution on the TTIP, as well as the US Congress’s objectives as specified in the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) Act, have been clear: all recommend eliminating tariffs and dismantling non-tariff barriers to further liberalise transatlantic markets and promote higher rates of growth and job creation. In early October 2015, the negotiating parties finally presented upgraded proposals on how to eliminate tariffs. They will also need to present offers on access to public procurement markets and begin discussions on the new Investment Court System (ICS), as proposed by Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström on 16 September 2015. ..
**TTIP : Opportunities and challenges in the area of technical barriers to trade, including standards** / European Parliament - Jacques Pelkmans (2015)

The study explores the possibilities for reducing the costs of technical barriers to trade (TBTs) between the US and the EU, found in standardization, technical regulations and/or conformity assessment procedures and acceptance of their results. This is important for many industrial sectors but also horizontally as TBTs generally. The EU proposal is ambitious, but without a US text, feasibility is hard to assess, given that the two systems differ considerably. A preliminary attempt to construct the US demands and some partial solutions for TTIP are discussed. The ‘living agreement’ is critical for an effective TBT chapter and needs to be given time, as long as it is driven by an agreed ambitious objective of reducing TBTs as much as possible.


In TTIP the EU has offensive interests in greater coverage of public procurement markets in the USA. Consumers stand to gain from lower prices and better use of public funds. There is an opportunity to negotiate better access for EU suppliers. EU smaller or medium sized suppliers would especially benefit from more transparent US state and city public procurement procedures.


This study, provided by the Policy Department A at the request of the Industry, Research and Energy Committee (ITRE), aims to assess whether and to which extent European energy markets and manufacturing industries would be affected by the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Although the negotiations are currently on-going, the analysis shows that the TTIP will improve the EU’s security of energy supply through adding liquidity and competition to the natural gas market. The TTIP will not directly lower either environmental or social legislation, but the study recommends the ITRE Committee to be aware of the potential for weakening of legislation implementation such as REACH and FQD

Liberalization of financial services is a controversial chapter in the negotiations towards a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). The financial crisis raised concern that trade liberalization could have an adverse effect on the regulatory power of sovereign states. This analysis illustrates that trade agreements have thus far been able to ensure the regulatory sovereignty of states; however, this independence has naturally resulted in some regulatory divergence. Discussions on regulatory cooperation within TTIP negotiations are a challenge to transatlantic relations, as the United States fears that such cooperation may dilute its own regulatory reforms.

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**Comparison of the EU service offers for the TTIP and TiSA negotiations** / European Parliament - Christopher Hartwell, Jan Teresiński, Bartosz Radzikowski (2015)

A comparison of the services offers which the European Union has made for the negotiations on the EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) shows that, in general, both treaties follow similar approaches and points of difference are minor; both TiSA and TTIP apply a positive listing approach in regards to market access and negative listing in regards to national treatment, and the rules governing market access and national treatment do not differ between the two agreements. The most significant differences in sectorspecific provisions are featured in the transport sector and educational services, while the highest harmonisation of provisions is in the energy sector and communications. Overall, the service provisions in TiSA and TTIP are very similar, although it seems that the level of trade liberalization is higher in TiSA.

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This in-depth analysis examines options for regulatory cooperation in TTIP and assesses its challenges and opportunities for consumer protection. It looks at existing regulatory approaches illustrated by reference to a range of case studies drawn from other briefing papers in the TTIP series for IMCO. Based on established practice and on the Commission’s recently published proposal on regulatory cooperation, the briefing eventually discusses the likely approach in the TTIP. Despite desirable opportunities there are also significant challenges of reconciling the different regulatory philosophies ahead. In broad terms it finds that the European Parliament’s regulatory powers will not be affected by the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, but suggests that the EP will need to ensure that the EP’s priorities shape the TTIP regulatory cooperation agenda and not the other way around.
TTIP and Chemicals: Why It Matters? Harmful chemicals are found in many products consumers come in very close, frequent and prolonged contact with, such as clothes, kitchen tools, toys, cosmetics, and the list goes on. The EU has put in place the World’s most ambitious regime to control chemical risks and reduce exposure to dangerous substances. However, the nature and scope of the transatlantic trade deal could potentially weaken this protective safety net. Therefore, BEUC and its members closely follow the negotiations to ensure that TTIP under no circumstance will act to delay or undermine progress on reducing consumer exposure to toxic chemicals.

A transnational agreement but at what cost to SMEs: The potential effects of the United States / Europe free trade agreement (TTIP) on local economies and SMEs? / Veblen Institute for Economic Reforms

In the confrontation between promoters and opponents of the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), it is difficult to hear the voice of the SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises). Yet because of their importance in European economy, smaller enterprises have some of the strongest reasons to be concerned. Ever since negotiations started, high-level European and American institutions and the largest employers’ organisations have been vocal about the supposed benefits of such an agreement for SMEs. This contrasts with the much more restrained position of SME representatives themselves. Only 0.7% of European SMEs export to the United States and the value of exported goods and services is less than 2% of the added value produced by European SMEs as a whole. Yet despite the relative lack of importance of transatlantic trade for European SMEs, TTIP could have a seriously destabilising effect on them by (i) significant diverting inter European trade (which represents the bulk of the SME exporting) to the USA (ii) encouraging the importing of cheap American products and (iii) supporting large groups to enter European markets in which SMEs are strong. Over the past months, numerous European SMEs have expressed their concern, both individually and collectively, over the potential risks to their activity resulting from the current negotiations. To get a better understanding of the subject, several organisations, and in particular the European Economic and Social Committee, have recommended that the European Commission make a detailed assessment of the impacts the TTIP would have on each country and each sector. To date, this legitimate request remains unanswered (...)

Even after years of TTIP talks, new study still unable to point to any major benefits / bilaterals.org 29/01/2016 by Glyn Moody

Last year, Ars provided an extensive introduction to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement currently being negotiated between the EU and the US. This massive deal—it involves half the world’s GDP and a third of its trade—was launched back in 2013, largely on the basis that it would provide a significant fillip to both economies. The previous EU commissioner responsible for trade, Karel de Gucht, claimed it would be “the cheapest stimulus package you can imagine.” A study published in 2013 by the London-based Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR) on behalf of the European Commission predicted that the EU’s economy would be boosted by €119 billion, and the US’s by €95 billion
Here is how TTIP threatens small businesses in the UK / The Independent

As an entrepreneur, I know how difficult it can be to set up and run a successful business. To do this against a backdrop of the biggest companies in the world having an unfair advantage is a sure-fire way to threaten our vibrant business sector.

This is just one of the many reasons why the EU-US trade deal TTIP is a major threat to small and medium-sized business in the UK and Europe. And that’s why I’ve joined with other British business owners to launch the initiative, Business Against TTIP.

TTIP places our businesses under threat: it will force us into unfair competition with US firms with lower standards and lower costs, with the predicted loss of at least 680,000 jobs across Europe (…)

Opinion on the establishment of an investment tribunal in TTIP the proposal from the European Commission on 16.09.2015 and 11.12.2015 / bilaterals.org

A. Tenor of the opinion

The German Magistrates Association rejects the proposal of the European Commission to establish an investment court within the framework of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). The DRB sees neither a legal basis nor a need for such a court.

The clearly implied assumption in the proposal for an International Investment Court that the courts of the EU Member States fail to grant foreign investors effective judicial protection, lacks factual basis. Should the negotiating partners have identified weaknesses in this area in individual EU Member States, these should be taken up with the national legislature and clearly defined. It would then be up to the legislators and those responsible for the judiciary to provide remedy within the proven system of national and European legal protection. Only in this way can the full legal rights to which any law-seeking party in Germany and the European Union is entitled, be guaranteed. The creation of special courts for certain groups of litigants is the wrong way forward.(…)

Bernd Lange on TTIP: "If there is no ambitious deal on the table, there is no deal“ / European Parliament

Trade agreements can affect anything from employment to migration, so no wonder that people are interested in them. On 3 February our Facebook fans had the chance to ask Bernd Lange, the chair of the international trade committee, all about them during a chat. The German member of the S&D group, who is also in charge of drafting Parliament’s position on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), managed to answer more than 60 questions on trade agreements such as TTIP. (…)


Parliament sets red lines for TiSA negotiations / EuActiv (4/02/2016)

The European Parliament on Wednesday (3 February) adopted a number of recommendations - their red lines and blue lines - for the ongoing negotiations over the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA).

Launched in 2013 by 23 WTO members (with the EU counting as one), and representing 70% of the international trade in services, the TiSA negotiations are seeking to reinforce international rules and open markets in the area of digital, financial and transport services, among others.

EU trade ministers to hold first talks on granting China MES / EurActiv (2/02/2016)

Trade ministers will air their differences today (2 February) on the tricky issue of granting China market economy status starting in December, which Beijing considers to be ‘automatic’, following its admission to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Prompted by a 2016 deadline, the EU has to issue a verdict on whether Beijing has transitioned to a market economy in the 15 years since it joined the trade body.

Last month, the European Commission indicated that no final decision should be expected before the summer, after a proper impact assessment is carried on. A cross-party number of MEPs in January have also spelled out their red lines, saying that an ‘automatic’ switch is premature. (…)

TTIP: 'Reform' of investor dispute settlement clause not enough / EurActiv (01/2016)

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership has been flawed from the beginning. It is evident from the process that we need a new direction for our trade policy, write Max Andersson and Rasmus Nordqvist.

Max Andersson is an MEP from the Swedish Greens and Rasmus Nordqvist is member of the Danish Parliament for The Alternative party. The inclusion of an investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism has been the focal point of the debate, and rightly so. At the moment, various environmental measures, from phasing out nuclear power in Germany, to a moratorium on fracking in Canada, are being challenged by foreign investors under similar provisions in other agreements.
Opening hours
From Mon-Thu : 9.00 - 12.30 & 13.30-17.00
Fri : 9.00 - 12.30 & 13.30-15.30

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