

Role of civil society in the TTIP

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European Economic and Social Committee

Civil society and TTIP negotiations

- Why there is a need for civil society to follow the TTIP negotiations?
 - Because EU trade policy is more complex and more contested
 - There is a need to prove that EU policy delivers and bring benefits for majority of the EU companies



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- 1. EESC follow-up of the TTIP negotiations
- 2. European Commission effort towards transparency
- 3. Public opinion perception



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EESC opinions related to the TTIP

- REX/464 - The position of the EESC on specific key issues of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations (adopted in September 2016)
- REX 433 – TTIP and its impact on SMEs (adopted in July 2015)
- REX/411 - Investment protection and ISDS in EU in EU trade and investment agreements (adopted in May 2015)
- REX/390 - Transatlantic Trade Relations and the EESC's views on an enhanced cooperation and eventual EU-US FTA (adopted in June 2014)



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1. EESC Follow-up of TTIP negotiations

- Project approach
- Creation of the Transatlantic Follow-up Committee
- Series of events to stimulate informed debate on TTIP both by the Committee and organised by the EESC groups



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EESC main events regarding TTIP:

- TTIP related discussion in the EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee (19 June 2014)
- EESC SMEs category meeting on TTIP (24 June 2014)
- Joint meeting on TTIP of the "Consumers" and "Agriculture" categories (26 June 2014)
- Hearing on Investment Protection and ISDS (3 February 2015)
- Joint hearing "Can TTIP be a tool for fostering internationalisation of European SMEs?" (29 May 2015)
- Group 1 Seminar on TTIP in Malta "Impact of the TTIP in Malta" (9 March 2015)
- Meeting on TTIP of the EESC SME Category (30 May 2015)
- Roundtable with the EU Chief negotiator on regulatory cooperation, co-organised with the European Commission (2 July 2015)



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EESC main events regarding TTIP (cont'd):

- TTIP discussion during the meeting of the EESC-EEA Joint Consultative Committee (Zagreb, 5 June 2015)
- "TTIP: What's in it for the social partners?", co-organised with the Luxembourg Presidency of the European Council, European Parliament and European Commission (17 November 2015)
- "The EU-US privacy shield – a new transatlantic framework for data flows" – open discussion (21 March 2016)
- Do we need an energy chapter in TTIP – civil society discussion (21 June 2016)
- Public Hearing on the opinion REX/464 " The position of the EESC on specific key issues of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations" (30 June 2016)



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2. European Commission efforts towards transparency

- Creation of civil society advisory group on TTIP
- Publication of the mandate
- Publication of EU proposals - <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=1230>
- Stakeholders meetings during the rounds
- Q&R session with the chief negotiators during the rounds
- Civil society dialogue meetings after the round



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3. Public opinion perception

- Public opinion perception not always based on facts and remains negative despite the efforts towards transparency
- Strong anti-TTIP campaign
- Need for informed debate still remains



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EESC recommendations for civil society participation in the TTIP

- Welcomes the institutional proposal of the European Commission for civil society monitoring for the whole agreement through the domestic advisory groups
- Calls for the possibility of joint meeting of the advisory groups and possibility to address joint recommendations
- Creation of the Civil Society Forum of TTIP as a tool for transparency and information on the implementation of the agreements
- EESC would like to play a role in TTIP monitoring



Updated

The EESC notes with satisfaction that in the recent proposal on the institutional set up of the agreement includes the creation of Domestic advisory groups (DAGs), composed of civil society representatives and competent to advise the parties on the application of the agreement. The Committee welcomes the fact that the mandate of DAGs is widened to cover any issue of interest under the agreement, an old claim of the EESC that is finally accepted by EU negotiators. It regrets however that the two DAGs are not foreseen as members of a joint consultative body for EU-USA civil society organisations. This body should be able to meet at its own initiative and issue joint recommendations to the Parties.

Regarding the EU chapters on TBT and SPS, the opinion acknowledges that proposals on standardisation, technical regulations, as well as marking and labelling are important for gaining access to new markets. However, it recommends “more detailed work on marking and labelling requirements” and “further reassurances that EU food legislation will not be changed”.

The EESC commends the Commission’s commitment to transparency, but urges it to discuss with the US the possibility of making later texts available to the public, or at least to the EU Advisory Group.

The EESC has an important institutional role to play in TTIP negotiations. The purpose is to develop a cooperative approach to trade policy between the European Commission and civil society.



For more information - <http://www.eesc.europa.eu>

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Thank you very much for your attention



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