

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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*Dear Presidents,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Houses of the Oireachtas for their Opinion concerning the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).*

*The EU's aim for TTIP is to achieve higher economic growth and more jobs for EU citizens. The EU and the United States are the world's two biggest economic powers, together accounting for half of global GDP and about one third of global trade flows. Every day we trade goods and services worth EUR 2 billion. Total US investment in the EU is three times higher than in all of Asia, and EU investment in the United States is around eight times the amount of EU investment in India and China together. It is estimated that the transatlantic economy supports some 15 million jobs. An ambitious TTIP deal that increases our trade and investment opportunities with the United States would mean significant benefit for the EU's economy. Independent economic analysis setting out the facts on this can be found online<sup>1</sup>.*

*Indeed, the potential benefits of TTIP for consumers are wide-ranging and significant. They range from more competitive goods in the shops to more competitive EU industries able to expand their operations and contribute to stronger economic growth, more jobs and greater purchasing power for EU citizens. While it is not easy to make predictions, and the economic analysis necessarily captures a simplified picture of the EU economy, the Commission is convinced that European consumers would see tangible results once the deal is done. The*

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<sup>1</sup> [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/march/tradoc\\_150737.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/march/tradoc_150737.pdf)

*Commission welcomes further sound analysis, including by national authorities, on the possible impact in individual Member States.*

*With regard to transparency, the Commission's website<sup>2</sup> is a comprehensive source of information about TTIP and the state of play of negotiations, including position papers, explanatory documents, economic assessments, meeting reports and other information.*

*The Commission considers it vital to ensure that the general public has accurate and extensive information of the EU's intentions in the negotiations, to address the concerns and to evacuate misperceptions.*

*This new Commission has taken further steps to ensure greater transparency in the TTIP negotiations. These include<sup>3</sup>:*

- publishing EU negotiating texts as shared by the Commission with Member States and the European Parliament;*
- providing access to TTIP texts to all Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), by extending the use of a 'reading room' to those MEPs who had no access to restricted documents so far;*
- classifying less TTIP documents as "EU restricted", making them more easily accessible to MEPs outside the reading room;*
- publishing and updating on a regular basis a list of TTIP documents shared with the European Parliament and the Council.*

*A TTIP Advisory Group made up of 14 civil society, business and trade union experts meets regularly with the EU's negotiators to discuss progress, and minutes of these sessions are also available online. The Commission also holds regular Civil Society Dialogue meetings for hundreds of NGO representatives in Brussels (as do the United States on their side). Furthermore, the European Commissioner for Trade and the EU's negotiating team meet with many different interest groups – NGOs, trade unions and others as well as business – on TTIP every week. In this regard, the Commission would like to underline that it has strict rules to address any conflict of interest that could arise.*

*These negotiations are not a race to the bottom. Both parties would continue to be able to take measures necessary to achieve legitimate public policy objectives. In his Political Guidelines, President Juncker has indicated that he will not "sacrifice Europe's safety, health, social and data protection standards or our cultural diversity on the altar of free trade".*

*Making our regulations more compatible does not mean to go for the smallest common denominator but rather to see where we diverge unnecessarily. Only when the regulatory aim and effective results are the same it will be possible to arrive at harmonisation or mutual recognition. In addition, any common approach to health, environmental or financial risks by the world's two largest traders has a good chance of becoming the world-wide standard potentially raising the levels of protection world-wide.*

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<sup>2</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/>

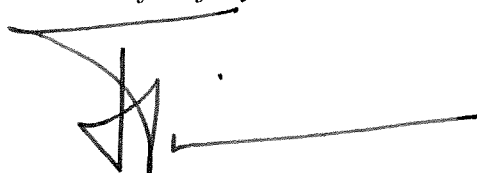
<sup>3</sup> <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=1205>

*With regard to investment protection provisions and Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) in TTIP, the Commission launched a public consultation on this subject, which closed on 13 July 2014. With this public consultation the Commission offered to the largest extent possible transparency, not only for all stakeholders involved, but also for all potentially interested citizens and gave ample opportunity to comment on the EU's proposed approach to the EU-US negotiations on investment. It received a total of nearly 150 000 replies. The report presenting the received contributions was published on 13 January 2015 and is available on the European Commission's website<sup>4</sup>. The results will now be discussed with the Member States, the European Parliament and all interested EU stakeholders.*

*Finally, as regards the view that EU free trade agreements and national Parliament's involvement should be regarded as mixed agreements, the Commission refers to its reply to the Opinion from the Dutch Tweede Kamer and 19 other chambers which the Houses of the Oireachtas have also received as co-signatory.*

*The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the concerns raised by the Houses of the Oireachtas and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*



*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*



*Cecilia Malmström  
Member of the Commission*

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<sup>4</sup> [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/january/tradoc\\_153044.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/january/tradoc_153044.pdf)