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*Mr Peter PELLEGRINI
President of the Národná Rada
Námestie Alexandra Dubčeka 1
SK – 812 80 BRATISLAVA*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Národná Rada for its Opinion on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

This Commission has made unprecedented efforts to make TTIP the most transparent bilateral trade and investment negotiation ever conducted by the EU. The Commission's website¹ on TTIP is a comprehensive source of information which contains EU factsheets, position papers and, where available, textual proposals in most areas of the negotiations. In addition, the Commission is fully engaged with the European Parliament and the Member States, to which it remains accountable throughout the negotiating process in line with the Lisbon Treaty. Organising access to negotiating documents for Members of national Parliaments is however the responsibility of Member State governments.

The Commission shares the Národná Rada's view regarding the importance of preserving Europe's high standards of protection in areas of social rights, environmental protection, public services, health, consumer and product safety. TTIP will not in any way reduce this 'acquis' nor will it lead to a limitation of our right to regulate at any level. As regards small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) the Commission recognises the contribution they make to economic growth, employment, and innovation and TTIP should enhance their ability to export to, and import from, the US market.

The Commission has taken note of the Národná Rada's comments concerning Investment Protection and Investor to State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) within TTIP. The proposals presented to the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade and to the Council in May 2015² aim to clarify and improve investment protection standards and the functioning of investment dispute settlement in order to ensure that the right of governments to adopt measures for the well-being of citizens is fully safeguarded. The Commission is working closely with the Member States, the European Parliament and other stakeholders to develop

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/>

² http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/may/tradoc_153408.PDF

a proposal on a modern investment protection policy for EU agreements which ensures that protecting and encouraging investments does not affect the ability of the EU and its Member States to pursue public policy objectives.

Finally, the Commission recalls that the Regulation (EU) No 1219/2012³ establishing transitional arrangements for bilateral investment agreements between Member States and third countries provides that Member States' bilateral investment agreements may be maintained in force, in accordance with the regulation, until they are replaced by an agreement between the Union and the same third country. Consequently, should negotiations on a TTIP that includes a chapter on investment protection and investment dispute settlement be successfully concluded, the existing bilateral investment agreement of the Slovak Republic with the United States of America would be replaced by the provisions set out in TTIP.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Národná Rada and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Miguel Arias Cañete
Member of the Commission*

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:351:0040:0046:EN:PDF>