



WORKERS UNITING STATEMENT ON THE TRANS-ATLANTIC
TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP (TTIP)

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The current global trade and investment regime does not work for workers. Existing 'free trade' agreements were largely designed to enhance protections for corporations at the expense of workers, while weakening the ability of countries to protect the health and welfare of their citizens. This narrow focus has contributed significantly to high unemployment, stagnant wages, a growth in poverty and increasingly skewed income distribution. If benefits from increased trade and investment are to be equitably shared by all segments of society, this approach must be changed.

Workers Uniting, representing three million workers in Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States, insists that a trans-Atlantic agreement strengthen social, labour and environmental rights by raising legal and regulatory standards across all member countries.

As an agreement between the world's two largest and most developed economic entities, TTIP has the potential to establish the global framework for trade for a generation to come. It is vital that TTIP mark a fundamental break with the ideology that has governed previous trade agreements. Workers Uniting will not support any TTIP agreement unless it is satisfied that the following minimum conditions are met:

Procurement

The right of governments to develop industrial policy must be respected. Governments must retain the authority to favour public delivery of services, such as environmental, water treatment and distribution, transport, energy or welfare services, without fear that such a policy would be considered a barrier to investment or trade in services. The TTIP should not alter any existing procurement regimes.

Public Sector

The threat to the public sector must be eliminated by ensuring there is a clear exemption from trade and investment liberalisation measures contained within TTIP for public services, public utilities and public transport (whether in public or private ownership)

Investor-to-State Dispute Settlement

We oppose the inclusion of Investor-to-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions in the TTIP. Such provisions enable corporations to challenge and effectively nullify domestic laws enacted to protect public health, safety, and living standards by suing states in private tribunals. We agree with Germany and France's rejection of ISDS in the TTIP.

Regulatory Harmonization

A number of specific measures should be taken to harmonize regulations upward across the trans-Atlantic area.

- Eleven European states have already endorsed a Financial Transactions tax (FTT). Incorporating a FTT in TTIP would provide sorely needed revenues to support public investment in infrastructure, education, and human services. This is a key recommendation of the Workers Uniting Political Economy conference held in 2013.

■ The Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) standard, a European Union regulation (1907/2006) governing chemical safety, should be applied across the TTIP area. These regulations are already followed by both European and U.S. companies that operate in the European market.

■ ILO core labour standards must be included in the TTIP in a legally binding chapter. To enhance labour standards in the United States, which has not ratified most of the fundamental ILO conventions, and to solidify hard fought rights of European workers, the TTIP should extend the framework of social legislation and enforcement mechanisms embodied in European Directives on, e.g., European Works Councils (2009/38/EC), Information and Consultation (2002/14/EC), and Temporary Agency Work (2008/104/EC). These regulations already cover both European and U.S. based companies operating in Europe, and are specifically directed at multinational investment and production regimes.

Conclusion

TTIP has the potential to make a positive difference for growth, jobs and sustainability. But this will not happen if the negotiations result in an agreement that only enhances the power and control of trans-national corporations.

Workers Uniting will raise these and other issues with negotiators either directly or via national and international trade union bodies, but Workers Uniting will not support any deal on TTIP unless we are satisfied that our basic concerns are addressed.