



15 April 2015

Open letter on TTIP blocking urgently needed reforms in food safety, farm production, workers' rights and animal welfare

Dear Commissioners Andriukaitis, Hogan and Malmström,

We are writing to express our concerns about the dangers posed by the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, TTIP, to the integrity of the EU's food and farming system, the welfare of workers in these sectors and the general public. Improvements are urgently needed in Europe's food production and farming practices for public health, environmental, animal welfare and worker safety reasons, and TTIP not only threatens progress in these areas but also threatens to weaken current standards.

While the quality and safety of food in Europe is arguably among the best in the world, fundamental reforms are needed to adequately protect workers and the public and increase animal welfare. We urgently need strong action on antimicrobial resistance. With intensive farming systems heavily relying on antibiotics, we could be heading towards a massive public health crisis. We also need to ensure that novel foods in all their forms are properly and carefully regulated. From GMOs to the descendants of clones, these new products need to be subject to rigorous scientific assessment, as well as public approval and guaranteed consumer choice, before entering the EU market.

TTIP will hinder us from achieving all of this because legislative priority will shift from ensuring and valuing food safety and quality, workers' rights and animal welfare to the maximisation of trade and, consequently, the pursuit of lowest-common-denominator standards.

Furthermore, European policy governing food production fails to reflect the real costs of farming and the impacts of our food consumption patterns on the environment – including greenhouse gas emissions, water pollution, and the loss of soil fertility and biodiversity. We need fundamental reforms of food and farming policies that prioritise environmentally sustainable methods of food production and consumption, reducing the pressure on natural resources and making our food system resilient to climate change. The food system must be transformed by putting local sustainable food economies at its core.

TTIP will hinder us from achieving this by promoting more trade in industrially produced food, locking us into an unsustainable path, and will inhibit citizens' access to more local and sustainable food systems.

Improvements are also greatly needed in both the contract arrangements and working conditions of the EU's agricultural and food workers. Many working in these industries are in precarious employment and on low pay. Precarious employment in all its forms involves job insecurity, a low level of legal and labour law protection and deprives workers of the right and their capacity to ensure safe working conditions and safe food.

If TTIP is agreed, these workers will be faced with increasingly precarious employment as they are undercut by cheaper imports from the US. Regulatory convergence resulting from the trade agreement would lower farming and food production standards and practices and will expose EU workers and consumers to harmful chemicals currently banned from food production.

TTIP will hinder us from achieving all of this because legislative priority will shift from pursuing high levels of sustainability and protection for citizens and the environment, to the maximisation of trade and, consequently, the pursuit of lowest-common-denominator standards.

The TTIP agreement will cripple our ability to democratically undertake urgently needed reforms in food safety, farm production, workers' rights and animal welfare, and in so doing goes against the needs and rights of the majority of European and US citizens.

We ask you to re-consider the potential damage TTIP could cause in terms of blocking much-needed reforms in food safety, food production, workers' rights and animal welfare.

Yours Sincerely,

Philip Lymbery, Chief Executive, Compassion in World Farming



Harald Weidenhofer, General Secretary, EFFAT



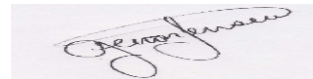
Todor Ivanov, Secretary-General EuroCoop



Magda Stoczkiewicz, Director Friends of the Earth Europe



Génon K. Jensen, Executive Director, HEAL



Paolo Di Croce, Secretary General of Slow Food

