EU Trade Policy

Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership or “TTIP”

Briefing note
(STATUS January 2016)

The European Union is currently negotiating a trade and investment deal with the United States Government, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership or so-called TTIP.

The main goal of the TTIP is to facilitate trade, cooperation and investments between the US and the EU. The agreement has three main elements: improving market access, improving regulatory coherence and dismantling unnecessary regulatory barriers and improved cooperation when it comes to setting international standards.

In 2013, the European Commission received the mandate to negotiate on behalf of the EU and its 28 Member States. Nevertheless, the Commission has a legal obligation to consult the Council on all aspects of the TTIP-negotiations and also involves in the negotiations the European Parliament and stakeholders through frequent meetings. The Directorate General within the European Commission in charge of the negotiations with the US Government is DG TRADE. At the end, the text negotiated by the Commission will have to be approved by the EU's Member States in the Council and ratified by the European Parliament. Depending on the policy areas covered in the final agreement the 28 national parliaments of the EU's Member States might also have to approve the deal.

Since the first round of talks in June 2013, in total 11 negotiating rounds have taken place between the EU and the US. These rounds alternatively take place in Brussels and in the US. The next round (the 12th) is schedule to take place in February 2016 in Brussels.

The EU publishes detailed and extensive reports of the negotiations and the EU textual proposals on its website in all EU official languages. Unfortunately, the US side does not follow the same transparency rules and most of the US negotiation texts remain confidential.
The ambitious goal is to reach a TTIP agreement by the end of this year following which it will be submitted to the other two Institutions for their approval.

TTIP will have **24 chapters** made by 3 parts:

1. **Market access**
2. **Regulatory cooperation**
3. **Rules**

Within the 2nd part (Regulatory cooperation), there is a key chapter dedicated to Food Safety and Animal and Plant Health (called “Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)”) of which negotiations are led by the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE). This Chapter aims to incorporate and build upon the Veterinary Agreement of 1998 between the EU and the US. The European Union's initial proposal for legal text on the “SPS” in TTIP was tabled for discussion in the 7th negotiating round of 29 September - 3 October 2014 and published on 7 January 2015. This chapter (+ background doc) aims to speed up approval times by US on food imports from the EU, as well as to help EU and US Regulators work more closely together in future on issues like animal welfare, and to uphold the EU’s strict food safety standards.

While both Parties wish to ensure food, animal and plant imports are safe and burdensome procedures are reduced, the SPS area includes several controversial issues, such as:

- Food safety standards and hygiene criteria along the food chain; the aim is for the EU to keep its restrictions on hormones or growth promotors in livestock farming just as the US will keep its rules on microbial contaminants.
- Medicines use and antimicrobial resistance; originally this topic was not covered in the first drafts, however now the EU has tabled a textual proposal to be included. The US still officially has to react on it.
- Medicated feed and growth promotors;
- Animal welfare standards; the US is very reluctant to include any animal welfare references in the SPS chapter of the TTIP. This needs further discussion.

FVE will keep monitoring the debate.

FVE has a long term relationship and agreed Letter of Understanding on corporation with both the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA). The 3 organisations have together also developed 5 joint statements namely on Animal Welfare, Veterinary Education, Judicious and Responsible use of Antimicrobials, Rabies and the Veterinary Profession as Global Public Good.
Background readings

- TTIP in a nutshell
  http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/about-ttip/
- Read the EU’s position in the negotiations
- Negotiation rounds - press material