

EU TRADE NEGOTIATION TRACKER

Transcript from the Closing Press Conference of the Fifth Round of Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership (T-TIP) Negotiations

May 23, 2014

Washington, D.C.

MS. EISENHOWER: Good morning, everyone. My name is Anne Eisenhower. I'd like to welcome you here on behalf of the U.S. Trade Representative. Thank you for being here at the closing press conference for the fifth round of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations. I'd like to introduce Dan Mullaney, the chief U.S. negotiator, and Ignacio Garcia Bercero, the chief EU negotiator. They will both make opening statements, and then we'd like to open up to your questions.

This press conference will be on the record, and we ask that you limit your questions to one per outlet so everyone gets a chance to ask a question. We also ask that you limit your follow-up questions.

I'll now open the floor to Dan Mullaney.

MR. MULLANEY: Okay. Thank you very much, Anne. And good morning. And thank you all for joining us at the conclusion of this fifth round of negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or TTIP.

Nearly all of the TTIP negotiating groups met this week, and we are now discussing proposed agreement wording in most of the negotiating areas, and we fully expect to build on this progress and to move to discussions on agreement text in the remaining areas in the near future.

This week our teams have discussing tariffs, services and investment, government procurement – all areas where both sides have indicated high ambitions for additional market access. I also want to highlight our work this week in the area of standards and regulations, which, from the beginning, we identified as both challenging and important for this agreement. Our objective, simply stated, is to reduce barriers and costs that arise due to unnecessary regulatory and standards differences between our two economies while maintaining, however, high levels of health, safety, and environmental protection.

This will unlock opportunities not only for companies but also for their employees, for consumers, and for American families. We're pursuing this objective first by exploring cross-cutting disciplines to broaden input into the regulatory and standard-setting processes. Increased input will promote better and more compatible regulations while maintaining our high levels of protection.

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We are also discussing ideas to promote greater regulatory compatibility in a range of sectors, including medical devices, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, information communication technologies, automobiles, pesticides, and chemicals. And in each of these sectors, we're exploring concrete cooperative work to realize cost savings and regulatory efficiencies while maintaining high standards. Regulatory experts from across the U.S. Government are full members of our negotiating teams, and their contributions are, of course, indispensable to this effort.

Our work in the regulatory space and in a few other areas is proving challenging, but these challenges were not unexpected. We identified the likely tough issues we would face during the year that we spent exploring the possibility of launching this negotiation, and the political leaderships on both sides of the Atlantic have made good progress in the past months devising ways forward on the most difficult issues. My team and I welcome the senior level engagement, which testifies to the high priority that Ambassador Froman and the White House place on achieving a comprehensive and ambitious TTIP in an expeditious timeframe.

We do have our work cut out for us, though. The genuinely ambitious and comprehensive agreement we seek will require a lot of creativity and will require a lot of persistence. This week, as in all of our previous negotiating rounds, the U.S. and EU negotiating teams have the extraordinary opportunity for dialogue with a large number of representatives of the academic community, consumer groups, labor unions, environmental groups, farmers, ranchers, and employers, among others. These conversations which began well before we even launched these negotiations have helped us establish our priorities and have steered our approach to these negotiations.

We continue to look for ways to improve our interaction with stakeholders and we welcome input to make sure that we are doing the best job we can of ensuring that their views are factored in to our negotiating positions.

In conclusion, it's been a very good week. Our negotiations have worked hard and we are making steady progress, and we continue to – expect to continue to make strong progress in the months to come. Thank you very much, and I look forward to taking your questions.

Ignacio.

MR. BERCERO: Well, first of all I would like to thank very much Dan and the other colleagues in USTR for the excellent organization of this round. I'm impressed by the strong commitment of the two teams to move forward to discuss all the issues and to progressively build what after all is a highly ambitious undertaking.

Our negotiating teams have successfully continued during this week's discussions that will lay the groundwork for this ambitious agreement. As mentioned already by (inaudible), we have moved forward in the work that is needed in all negotiating areas – that is to say, market access, the regulatory issues, and rules. In a number of topics like technical barriers to trade, competition, or state-to-state dispute settlement, we are already working on the basis of text

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and we are trying to see how we can bring together the European and the American proposals. This is, by the way, also the case of small and medium enterprises, which, as you would recall we announced in the previous round that we have decided to create in this agreement for the first time a chapter on small and medium enterprises, and we have already begun also to work on a common text on this issue.

We expect this process to intensify in each time more areas. For instance, this week we had very intensive discussions throughout the week on sustainable development, labor, and the environment, and we expected that soon – probably by the time of the next round – we would also be able to start working on the text of our basis on the chapter on this topic.

As in other rounds, a particular focus of our attention has been this regulatory component. This is one of the areas where we expect more from these negotiations, both in terms of horizontal regulatory disciplines and concrete outcomes in a number of key sectors. The work that we are doing in this area is driven by the acknowledgement that the outcome of our negotiations must be in accordance with the mandate of the regulators, and that in no case it can compromise the levels of protection which are reflected in European Union or U.S. legislation.

Horizontally, we have continued to discuss how to enhance cooperation between our respective regulators, and in this context we have also been discussing issues like the input of stakeholders in the regulatory process, impact assessments, et cetera. As regards to sectoral work, there has been good involvement and interaction between the regulators from both sides. And as Dan has mentioned, it has been quite impressive the amount of time and work that has been put forward by regulators to begin to identify areas of potential commonalities.

I very much hope that this work should allow us to identify soon the specific objectives that we want to achieve in different sectors, as well as the steps that will be needed to achieve those objectives.

Let me also underline that in the context of this discussion, no size fits all. The solutions that could be envisaged are very much sector-specific. For instance, in the case of the automotive sector where we had, I believe, very intensive and productive discussions, what the regulators have been doing is comparing our respective technical regulations on safety, identified and discussed the type of data which is needed to find compatible levels of safety, and how to compile such data.

In a sector like chemicals where harmonization or mutual recognition is clearly not an option, the issues which are being examined is much more how to identify practical ways of enhancing the exchange of information in a manner that would help the regulatory processes on both sides of the Atlantic.

Like Dan, I would very much want to work on again the opportunities that we had on Wednesday to engage more than 300 civil society representatives, including business, consumers, NGOs, representatives of the States, and it was exactly – extremely useful

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occasion to discuss issue with Dan and all the members of my team that were also very much engaged in the many presentations that were made during that session.

I welcome that the number of participants in these events increase with every round. On our side, we attach huge importance to this dialogue and interaction with civil society, and I would wish to indicate that the next occasion for this engagement will be in Brussels, the 3rd of June. I thank you very much and I would certainly welcome very much opportunity to answer your questions. Thanks.

MS. EISENHOWER: Thank you. We'll open the floor to questions. If you could use your microphones when you ask the question and identify yourself. And we'll start with Shawn Donnan.

QUESTION: Hi. It's Shawn Donnan from *The Financial Times*. Could you just tell us what the state of play is on whether or not to include an energy chapter in TTIP, and whether there was any discussion of that this week? And Dan, in particular, if you could explain what the U.S. position is right now in terms of whether an energy chapter should be included. And also, did you have any discussions this week on including financial services regulation?

MR. MULLANEY: Sure. Yes, we discussed – one of the groups that was meeting this week was energy and raw materials. As you may recall in the high-level working group report, we agreed that we would, during the course of these negotiations, discuss rules, modes of cooperation, others ways to advance in the area of energy and raw materials. And so that group did meet. One of the issues being explored is whether to have a separate energy chapter that addresses specific issues or the extent to which issues affecting energy are already reflected in other parts of the agreement. And so that's part of the – part of the conversation that's – that has been taking place during the course of this week.

We are also, of course, discussing in the area of financial services. Certainly, we have full discussions in the area of financial service, market access, and there will be discussions, I think, this afternoon in the area of regulation. Although, in that area of course, our position hasn't changed, that there are ongoing dialogues in appropriate international fora, and we do think that those dialogues should continue in parallel with the TTIP negotiations.

MR. BERCERO: Perhaps I will say one comment on my side. I mean, it is well known that from the European Union point of view it will be a very important achievement of these negotiations. It would agree on a set of rules and principles relating to trade in energy and raw materials. It's an issue of global significance. It's not just purely an issue between us and the United States, but we have always also seen this agreement as being an opportunity to send and project our principles and our values in a more global manner. So this issue is one which we attach a great importance, these discussions are continue. We still have not reached the point, as they say, common understanding on the issue of a chapter. But I believe that we are having very intensive engagement on the matter.

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On financial services regulation, it is well known that our position is different to that of the United States. We believe that the TTIP provides a good opportunity to establish a much more solid framework for cooperation between our regulators in the financial services sector, and we believe that this can be done in a manner which in no way would weaken the financial services protections that we are all extremely attached to, the independence of the regulators, or interfering with the work that is being done along with – we also cooperate in the G-20. But it is clear that this is an issue in which we still do not have a common view. And as Dan has said, discussions on this continue.

QUESTION: Yes, Len Bracken, Bloomberg BNA. If I could follow up with that, could both sides mention the different regulators that are participating in the negotiations on financial services? I know in the United States, there's a great deal of regulators for specific industries.

MR. MULLANEY: Yeah, we have a lot of regulators participating in the round in the range of regulatory areas. In the area of financial services, U.S. Treasury Department is participating in those discussions.

MR. BERCERO: Yeah, but perhaps just to clarify, on financial services regulation, we are not discussing specific regulatory issues in specific aspects of financial services. What we are putting forward, our ideas are very much of a horizontal framework for regulatory cooperation. So I think it is logical that at this point in time, the people who are there on our side is (inaudible), who is responsible for financial services regulation within the European Commission, and on the U.S. side, it is the Department of the Treasury.

QUESTION: Okay. Patrick (inaudible). Just very short: Do you – reached any advances in – concerning the questions of public procurement? Is there any redline from the EU side? Did you get any of – any explanations from the EU, from the American side what's going on with these – the state regulations? And connected to that, did you get any advances concerning the – did you make any advances in tariff questions? Did you come to a conclusion how to agree on the tariff question?

MR. BERCERO: Well, during this week, we had discussions on tariff, basically, of a technical nature, to clarify some elements of our respective offers. We had, I think, very intensive discussions on government procurement, looking both into the rules of the government procurement chapter and to begin to discuss what would be the elements for any change of offers on the government procurement. So I think we had a lot of discussions on this matter. It has taken quite some time because it is very important aspect of this negotiation. And we will all need to reflect, on this basis, what the next steps will be.

MR. MULLANEY: Yeah, I think government procurement – again, in the High Level Working Group report, we agreed that we would be looking for opportunities to expand market access and government procurement, and we're deeply engaged in that. I think those conversations are ongoing as we speak, if I'm not mistaken. And on the tariff issue, as Ignacio said, I mean, we exchanged first tariff offers in February. We're engaging in

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discussions on the tariffs and the market access issues for goods during the course of this week, and we expect those conversations to continue.

QUESTION: Hi, Kristi Ellis with *Women's Wear Daily*. Are you discussing a separate textile chapter? And on textiles in particular, what is the U.S. position on a rule of origin, and what is the EU position on a rule of origin? And lastly, did you also discuss tariffs as it related to the textile sector? Thank you.

MR. BERCERO: There have been specific discussions on textiles. We have looked into tariffs. We have also looked into regulatory issues in the textiles sector, where there's also a lot of interest to see what can be done in a number of areas like labeling to see where we could have greater convergence of regulatory approaches. The United States has explained to us its ideas for a specific textile chapter. It's not something which is part of our model. We don't do that in our agreements. We – but we are certainly ready to hear and to reflect on what United States has put forward.

Now, for the time being, on the rules of origin field, apart from explaining to each other our respective rules on textiles, I don't think that conversation has gone beyond that.

MR. MULLANEY: Yeah, I think Ignacio probably correctly stated the state of play. We traditionally have had a separate chapter for textiles largely based on various specific enforcement-type issues. We have engaged in discussions, as Ignacio mentioned, on the nontariff barrier side issues like labeling, ways that we can facilitate trade. And I think the specific discussions of rules of origin, as Ignacio said, those discussions are beginning.

MS. EISENHOWER: Doug.

QUESTION: Hi, Doug Palmer with Reuters. I almost hate to ask this question, but I guess Commissioner De Gucht said again today that when it comes to hormone-treated beef, that it's not on the table. He also said GMOs is not on the table. But on hormone-treated beef, I mean, is the U.S. – I mean, does the U.S. not expect any additional market access for hormone-treated beef? Would it just be – I mean, I know that there's a quota in place now. Would that just be incorporated into the agreement and there would be no additional market access beyond that. Is – I mean, do you accept the position that hormone-treated beef is not on the table at all in this negotiation?

MR. MULLANEY: Well, two things. One is on the market access side. We are looking for increased market access, and I think we've made plain that our objective is the elimination of all tariffs to open up the markets on both sides to the maximum extent possible. In the area of food safety, and specifically what's technically called the sanitary – phytosanitary measures, or SPS measures, we're engaging in deep conversations, which again, I think are occurring as we speak on – building on the rules in the World Trade Organization on SPS measures, including the use of science, the use of risk assessment with respect to these measures.

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MR. BERCERO: Just perhaps a comment, because I think it's important to make a somewhat broader statement. One thing that we have always been making very clear is that we cannot envisage and quite frankly we don't think that the United States would envisage either changing our food safety law as a result of a trade negotiation. Hormone-treated beef is something that is prohibited under European Union law, and certainly we would not envisage any changes of our legislation.

In the case of GMO, the situation is a little bit different. It is not that GMOs are prohibited in the European Union. More than 50 GMOs have been authorized. But there is an established procedure that needs to be followed before any GMO is authorized, and what we have said – the procedure, which is established by our legislation, is not certainly something that we are going to change. Of course, that does not mean that we are not always ready to look into how the rules are applied in practice. But as far as issues which touch upon our food safety legislation I think it's very difficult to imagine that any democratic country could go their parliaments and suggest that a food safety law can be changed because of a trade agreement. So that would have been, I think, very clear from the very beginning of these discussions.

MR. MULLANEY: But I also should add that part of this discussion, as I mentioned, does have to do with building on the WTO obligations to base measures on science and risk assessment. And I think Ignacio's assessment of the GMO – the biotech situation is accurate in the sense that in the past and following on our WTO challenge that we had, our concern has mostly been with how the rule operates and not the regulation itself, per se.

QUESTION: Hello. Jeremy Tordjman with the AFP news agency. Do you think it was appropriate to hold these negotiations the same week than the European relations? Two of the main contenders for the European presidency commission have criticized this choice.

MR. BERCERO: Well, let me say first that of course we are carrying out this negotiation on the basis of a mandate that has been given throughout unanimously by the council of the European Union and with the very strong support of the European parliament. The work that we are doing in any case at this point in time in this negotiation is essentially work of a technical nature. We are just simply looking into a number of issues that would help in the future taking to heart political decisions. But nothing of the work that we are doing at this point in time is in any way prejudging those decisions that will be taken further down the line.

QUESTION: Hi. Matt Schewel from Inside U.S. Trade. Mr. Garcia Bercero, I believe that you told to some business representatives earlier this week that the two sides had agreed on principles to guide your discussions on horizontal regulatory cooperation in TTIP. And two parts of my question are – so can you explain – or both of you explain: What is the form of this agreement on horizontal regulatory cooperation? Is it informal principles or legal text? And secondly, what is the substance of that agreement? Does it reflect U.S. demands for a notice-and-comment process similar to that use in the U.S. or more the EU demands?

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MR. BERCERO: Well, let me start by clarifying that on the issue which is called normally regulatory coherence, we have had during this week, I think, very good and very intensive discussions involving a huge amount of regulators from both sides, but we have not at all reached the point in which we already have an agreement or a text on which we are working. We hope that the further we are reaching increasingly a better understanding about the way to move forward would make it possible for us soon to move (inaudible) text to our base discussion, but that is not the case so far.

In terms of what we want to achieve, and I think this is a common goal, we both believe that it will be very important that our regulators have a much stronger basis to cooperate, because the more that we cooperate together the more that we would avoid unnecessary conflicts between our regulations, but also the more that we would be able to influence globally the development of regulations. So I think that's something which is a very important objective. And we also think that taking into account the legal and institutional framework of each side, stakeholders have an important input to make into the process. I think (inaudible) be appropriate to look into this issue in terms of demands from one side to the other, because at the end of the day, we and I'm sure the United States is going to do things guided by what they think is good regulatory practice and not by demands which are being presented by the other side.

MR. MULLANEY: Yeah, I think Ignacio made a fair comment. I mean, we're basically looking for the same thing, I think, which is a process that results in more compatible regulations in the sense that there are not unnecessary differences in those regulations and standards – that is, differences that are dictated by levels of protection. So if there are unnecessary differences that can be smoothed over in a way that does not impact safety, protection for consumers, protections for the environment, protection for labor, we're looking for ways to do that. And I think jointly in the regulatory coherence chapter, one of the things we've looked at is the notion of broad input into the standard-setting and the regulatory process. Very significantly, if members of the public, stakeholders with an interest, have an opportunity to comment on proposed regulations, proposed directives or other issues, sufficiently late in the process that the measures are specific, but specifically – but sufficiently early in the process that the regulators can take actions as a result of comments, I think this can result in both better regulation and less divergent regulation.

And at the same time, as Ignacio said, the opportunities for input and cooperation between our regulators also can produce that result of regulations that achieve our levels or protection for the consumer, for the environment, for labor, but do so in a way that doesn't create unnecessary barriers to trade.

QUESTION: These principles just – you're seeming to say, as Mr. Garcia Bercero said, is important – that one, it's important to have the stronger basis for cooperation between regulators, and two, you have to take into account the legal and institutional framework of each side for interacting with stakeholders. Is that something that –

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MS. EISENHOWER: You're not supposed to – not to do follow-ups, so just wrap it up. I want to get more questions.

QUESTION: Is that something that you agreed on recently, at this round, or is it just in general what's been guiding you the whole time?

MR. BERCERO: We are progressively reaching better common understanding on these issues.

QUESTION: Sam Gilston with Washington Tariff and Trade Letter to follow up on the regulatory scheme. Could you identify which U.S. regulatory agencies participated this week besides Treasury, whether FDA, FCC – which agencies were there? And have you identified any federal laws – for instance, the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, or Federal Communications Act, that may need to be amended in order to provide for this regulatory coherence or whatever harmonization or horizontalism you propose? And have state regulators been involved in this, since so many of the services regulations are at the state level? What is their role?

MR. MULLANEY: Yeah, I don't have a comprehensive list of the agencies that have been present, but the agencies that have interest in the areas that we've been discussing, that I mentioned at the outset, are participating in these conversations. That includes Food and Drug Administration; includes NHTSA, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; it includes EPA, Environmental Protection Agency; and others. We are – as I said, the regulators, in conjunction with the negotiators, are looking for opportunities to reduce these cost – the cost differences in barriers due to regulatory divergences. Their task is not to look at whether the federal laws would need to be changed. We're looking for ways to eliminate unnecessary differences, streamline trade, while we achieve the regulatory objectives. And I have to say that the presence of the regulators at the table who have their regulatory objectives in mind are critical to this process.

With respect to state and local governments, we have a – one of our advisory committees consists of state and local officials. And so we consult with them regularly along with our other members of our trade advisory committees, including in the labor community, agricultural community, business, consumer groups, environmental groups, and others.

QUESTION: But how are you bringing them into the state issue, into the talks?

MR. MULLANEY: As I said, they are part of our advisory – we're consulting with them, we have regular meetings with state and local officials.

QUESTION: Brian Beary, Washington correspondent, *Europolitics*. The first exchange of offers on tariffs – the EU has expressed disappointment with the lack of ambition on the U.S. side. Did the U.S. come to the table with a second offer this time around? And another quick question: When is – have you got dates yet for the next round of talks?

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MR. BERCERO: Well, listen, I'm not going to comment on tariffs more than what I have commented before. We had a good technical discussions on the initial tariff offers, and I think that at this point in time, no particular interest in looking backwards, much more in looking forward.

On the question of the next meetings, it will be in July, but we do not yet have a particular day for that. We are still consulting and we should be able to determine it soon.

QUESTION: Hello. Frederick Coburn (ph), French correspondent of the French Public Radio. You know, both of you, that in Europe in general and in France in particular, the symbol of the fear is American chicken with bleach. So what do you have to say to the European consumers? And both of you two, is there anything in the other side of the Atlantic Ocean you don't want in your plate, both of you, for – of course, that's a question of taste, but I have questions. Thank you very much.

MR. MULLANEY: I mean, the United States has no intention of forcing Europeans to eat anything a European does not want to eat. That's not what this agreement is about. But it is significantly about providing protections and food safety for our populations, and so we think that the cooperative work that we do together to promote food safety, to work together to ensure that if tainted food is found in the food chain, that we can react quickly. I think the cooperative work we do, I think, can work to both of our advantages.

As I said, part of our discussion in this area, which you call sanitary – phytosanitary, or SPS – has to do precisely with discussions of whether certain food products are safe and how you analyze whether food products are safe based on science, based on risk assessment. So I think the extent we can build up the work that we're doing in that area to ensure that the food – the safety of the food that is in our food chain, I think, that – these are good, constructive things that we can work on together.

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

MR. MULLANEY: I mean, that's – that is a scientific determination. I mean, there's no particular – there's no actually – no such thing actually as bleached chicken. There are certainly certain processes that undergo tests and risk assessment to see whether they're safe. Both of us do that before food products are entered into the food chain.

MR. BERCERO: Please – no, let me just be very clear, as I said before. We would ensure in all cases that European law is respected. European law makes very clear that no (inaudible) treatment could be authorized unless there has been a scientific research assessment, which determines safety, efficacy, no risk of negative impacts on the environment. All of those issues are being analyzed scientifically by the European Food and Safety Administration, and the policy of the European Commission will be to look into the law, to look into what the EFSA recommendations are, to take a very careful reflection, and on that basis, to decide what to do.

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But we will ensure in all cases that our law is fully respected.

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

MS. EISENHOWER: Sorry. I think we need to move on. I'm sorry.

QUESTION: It was just the same question. I asked the question before. If you do not have anything to say, not a problem.

MR. MULLANEY: I mean, personally, I have fairly catholic tastes. I'll eat most – almost anything. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Okay. Stefan Neimann with ARD German Television, based in Washington. Mr. Mullaney, I tried to find members of Congress or colleagues from the mainstream U.S. media, major networks, who are passionate about TTIP or at least ostensibly interested, and failed.

I think it's fair to say that the European public is surprisingly interested in what's going on here in TTIP negotiations, whereas the U.S. public seems to be shockingly living in blissful ignorance in this regard. Would you agree with this assessment, and if so, why is it that no one seems to care? And is it frustrating for you that you negotiate in this atmosphere?

MR. MULLANEY: I think TTIP presents tremendous opportunities. We have two enormously integrated markets, we have daily trade of near – in trade and goods and services – of nearly \$3 billion a day. We have mutual, on-shored investments of about \$4 trillion. We make up a third of the world trade. We make up a half of the world's output. And this strong relationship supports 13 million jobs directly and many, many more indirectly.

So I think anything that we can – that anything we can do to increase the number of jobs that are supported by trade, which are by and large jobs that are better, higher paying, higher skill jobs, I think these are things that both the American people and I think the European public will – can appreciate. I myself haven't seen any lack of enthusiasm for work that we can do to increase jobs, to increase growth, to increase our integration.

I'm sure that whatever we're doing to communicate the benefits of greater integration in terms of jobs, in terms of growth, in terms of total welfare, I'm sure we can always do more and we should continue to do more. But we're also of – relatively early on in the process. We're – we just completed our fifth round. I think there's probably a lot of work that we need to do, and as things get more crystalized, I think the specific benefits will probably become more apparent over time.

But there's no question one can probably always – one can always do more to communicate the benefits of this endeavor, both in the United States and in Europe.

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QUESTION: Yes, hi. Lenai (ph) (inaudible), UTRADE Insights. If I can go back to the tariff question – Ignacio, you didn't want to comment, but Dan, maybe you could. Maybe you could explain why you haven't tabled a second offer yet. I think the EU was expecting this by last week.

And on procurement, right now, I think you're discussing more about what the U.S. can offer at a federal level. Can you tell us exactly what you're ready to do on this? And that's it. Thanks.

MR. MULLANEY: Yeah, sure. No, I mean, there was no undertaking to have submitted a second offer by last week. We submitted a first tariff offer, and now we're discussing and will be moving towards second tariff offers. I can't give you a timeframe for that, but I think we're both – on the U.S. side, we're motivated by the – our objective of eliminating tariffs across the board. And this process of tabling offers, discussing the offers, move on to next offers is just the process towards eliminating those tariffs.

On the government procurement, I think I spoke earlier to the fact that the High Level Working Group report did say that we would undertake to increase market access in the federal procurement area and the state and local area, and that's what we're doing. That's exactly the discussions that we're having this week, and the discussions that we've had in – during the four previous rounds.

MS. EISENHOWER: So we have time for one more question. Yes, in the blue.

QUESTION: Jim --

MS. EISENHOWER: Sorry.

QUESTION: Jim Berger, Washington Trade Daily. I have to, I guess, ask this question. You're coming into the one-year anniversary of the discussion of this TTIP. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being, "Well, we just started," and 10 being, "We're ready to sign," where are we? Or where are you?

MR. MULLANEY: At this point, we're at round 5. (Laughter.)

MR. BERCERO: I think I would agree with Dan. We are where we should be after 11 months.

MS. EISENHOWER: Okay. Let's just take one more. I think there was confusion. Go ahead.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) from Channel News Asia. Are you considering publishing position papers so stakeholders might be better informed about where you are and what's going on in the process?

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MR. BERCERO: Well, we have already published, I think, about 11 position papers which covered most of the areas of the negotiations. That's something that we have been doing progressively. I think only last week we published papers on five sectors indicating what we considered from our point of view could be done in terms of the regulatory objectives for those sectors. And we have been trying to throughout the negotiations, to put out documents. We explained what, from the European Union point of view, we aim to achieve in those sectors. And obviously, we have been welcoming throughout this discussion and we will continue to sow all opportunities to discuss these with the stakeholders in Europe.

We have an advisory group which meets with me regularly, who, by the way, also have access to the text that we present in the negotiations, so not only the public position papers. So for us, it's very important throughout this negotiation to have all the opportunities to interact with the public while maintaining the necessary confidence of the negotiators who have to work to progressively reconcile the text for proposals, and that's the reason why we have not made public and we do not intend to make public text for proposals.

MR. MULLANEY: Yeah, and our – I mean, our text proposal we do discuss with over 700 different advisors from a wide range of sectors, including academia, environment, other members of civil society as well as business, labor, state and local governments. In a more public setting, during the last round, we issued a paper which laid out with some specificity exactly what our objectives were in each of the areas. We have an open-door policy in terms of meeting with stakeholders with particular interests in the negotiation, and are always willing to engage in a dialogue about what the – what concerns or what issues they may have with various provisions.

And I have to say, based on the high quality of the presentations that we saw on Wednesday, it seems like the broad public, and in particular, members of civil society are, in fact, fairly well informed about what's going on in the negotiations. And those kinds of events as well as the many hundreds of private meetings that we have, I think, provide a good opportunity for stakeholders who are interested to learn more about the negotiations.

MS. EISENHOWER: Thank you. That's all we have time for today. Thanks for being here.

MR. MULLANEY: Thank you.

MR. BERCERO: Thank you.