



European  
Commission

# **Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership: Chief Negotiators' Briefing to Stakeholders**

*6<sup>th</sup> round, 16 July 2014*

On 16 July 2014 in Brussels, the EU's chief negotiator Ignacio Garcia Bercero, together with his US counterpart Dan Mullaney, gave a briefing to over 300 EU and US stakeholders representing non-governmental organisations, consumer groups, trade unions, and business and professional organisations. The chief negotiators offered insight into the discussions so far and prospects after the sixth round. Participants asked a number of questions and heard views from the chief negotiators in a frank and wide-ranging dialogue. The discussion was moderated by Damien Levie, EU Deputy Chief Negotiator.

This event forms part of the Directorate-General for Trade's ongoing efforts to improve transparency and ensure opportunities for civil society engagement with the TTIP negotiations. It followed a [three-hour session of presentations](#) from over 70 different stakeholder groups on specific aspects of TTIP.

**Mr Garcia Bercero** opened the event by explaining the political context surrounding TTIP after the recent European Parliament (EP) elections. The fact that one of the first new EP plenary debates was about TTIP emphasises the importance attached to the negotiations in the EU. For Mr Garcia Bercero, the sixth round marked the intensification of the technical discussions required to ensure negotiators are able to reach political decisions on the key elements of a future TTIP agreement. For example, regulators from both the EU and the US have been heavily involved this week, working on the basis of the fundamental principle that nothing in TTIP will lower any standards of protection on either side of the Atlantic. Presentations at this morning's event highlighted some important topics for negotiators to consider, such as the role of civil society in monitoring the implementation of TTIP, and the value of TTIP for small businesses, especially when it comes to trade facilitation, rules of origin and clear information about exporting to the EU or the US.

**Mr Mullaney** continued on this theme, emphasising the value to both negotiating teams of hearing the morning's presentations. Small business interests in TTIP are crucial for its success: the agreement is not just for "big corporations", as small businesses create over half of US jobs and for the first time in a trade agreement TTIP will include a dedicated SME chapter. He agreed with Mr Garcia Bercero that this round has been marked by detailed technical discussions: while not necessarily newsworthy, this part of the process is essential to prepare for a successful negotiation. For example, both sides have exchanged initial services offers and are combing through the detail, such as opportunities for professionals (e.g. architects, accountants) to work in the EU and the US. The regulatory coherence discussions will produce efficiencies for traders and regulators, allowing the latter to concentrate on higher-risk issues (e.g. in the area of medical devices). Mr Mullaney repeated Mr Garcia Bercero's point that the need to ensure high level standards of protection in all areas had been communicated to all levels of the negotiating team: the commitment had been made by President Obama during the EU-US Summit in March 2014, and remains top priority.

The floor was then opened to questions and remarks from the participants.

Before the questions could proceed, a small number of NGO representatives who had registered for the event staged a short reading of a prepared statement to voice their concerns. Some had already taken the opportunity to make their views known in the morning session. The statement called for more transparency in the negotiations, and highlighted the potential impact on the democratic decision-making process in the EU of TTIP provisions on regulation and public services. In response to this, the two chief negotiators explained that the TTIP negotiations are already conducted with an unprecedented level of transparency<sup>1</sup> (such as today's event). The potential significance of a TTIP deal for both economies has led to an important and useful debate among a wide range of stakeholders, and the many outreach events, public documents and open door policy on both sides of the Atlantic are intended to help ensure that everyone can have their say and be heard by the negotiating teams. On the EU side, it is essential to underline – again – that the Commission is operating based on a mandate granted by Member State governments, that their representatives and the democratically elected European Parliament has full access to information about the TTIP negotiations in real time via frequent briefings from the Commission, and that it is the European Parliament which will need to ratify the agreement before it can come into force.

During the remaining question and answer time of the event, topics raised by stakeholders included the following:

- Access to negotiating texts for the public
- The results of the EU's consultation on investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS)
- How the EU and the US could "turn the tide" of public opinion and communicate effectively about TTIP, while addressing the legitimate concerns of stakeholders, in the absence of concrete results until the negotiations have concluded
- What progress had been made on energy and raw materials
- How the EU and US approaches to sustainable development in trade negotiations can be reconciled
- What TTIP would mean for future cooperation between the EU and the US in multilateral fora such as the World Trade Organisation

---

<sup>1</sup> "[Transparency in the TTIP negotiations](#)", DG Trade, March 2014.

- Progress on the regulatory pillar of the negotiations, including the notion of a Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC), and how this would interact with the committees that are usually set up under SPS and TBT chapters in EU and US free trade agreements
- How the "living agreement" element of the TTIP negotiations would function, and what this would mean in practice once the negotiations have been concluded
- To what extent financial regulation would be included in the negotiations
- The extent of ambition on both sides in market access for services, and how the negotiations were progressing in this area
- Whether an innovation chapter could be considered by the negotiating teams
- What impact TTIP could have on the business model of the print media sector in the EU

For more information about TTIP, please see DG TRADE's [dedicated website](#) and USTR's [dedicated website](#).