



European
Commission

Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership Advisory Group

Meeting report, 25 February 2014

1. Welcome

2. Introductions

3. Adoption of the agenda

4. Update following political stocktaking

The Chair explained the results of the political stocktaking in Washington D.C. on 17-18 February 2014 between Commissioner Karel de Gucht and US Trade Representative Michael Froman.

The following points were raised during this part of the discussion:

- Exchange of offers on market access. Members were interested in the process and the EU's expectations of the US regarding its offer on market access for goods. The group discussed the links between market access in goods, services and public procurement, as well as the other parts of the negotiations on regulatory coherence and rules. The group also discussed how market access for services and public procurement may vary between state and federal levels in the US. The Chair confirmed existing reservations that the EU maintains in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in public services, and the exclusion of audiovisual services from the Commission's negotiating mandate for TTIP.
- Maintaining consumer protection. The Chair underlined that EU legislation bans hormone beef and requires strict risk assessments in the area of GMOs. EU legislation is the benchmark and there will be no compromise in this respect. The precautionary principle is enshrined in the Treaties. Some members asked why the Commission refers to these examples as other food safety issues, such as chemical decontamination or anti-microbial treatment, are also important. The Chair indicated that the Commission would strictly follow the procedures enshrined in EU law regarding any application to authorise any anti-microbial treatment of meat, or to decide on other food safety issues.
- Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC). Members were interested in more information on this proposal. The Chair confirmed that it remains only a proposal, as floated in the Commission's paper "[Cross-cutting disciplines and institutional provisions](#)" of July 2013. The Commission intends to publish a more detailed description of the role and functions of a possible RCC soon.

- Negotiating timetable. Damien Levie, deputy chief negotiator, updated the group on expectations for the 4th round of negotiations due to take place from 10-14 March 2014 in Brussels. He explained that these are due to cover all three pillars of the agreement (market access, regulatory coherence and rules), including market access for services and investment, public procurement, regulatory coherence at horizontal level and in specific sectors such as automotive, chemicals, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and textiles, rules on labour and environmental standards, intellectual property, and energy and raw materials, as well as ways to make trade simpler for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

5. Documents and information-sharing

The Chair explained that the Commission had already made a number of position papers and other explanatory documents available on DG TRADE's TTIP website, and that more should be available soon. He also set out the ways in which he hoped to arrange further access to relevant documents for the group in future, for example via a secure reading room.

Members discussed how best to ensure they could perform their advisory role in an efficient way, bearing in mind the time available during meetings and work that might be done outside meetings. It is important to be able to prepare for discussions in advance on the basis of background documents that allow for meaningful advice to be offered. Ideas included updates in writing, a roadmap showing the state of negotiations, and sub-groups to discuss detailed topics. The Chair agreed to consider these ideas, and confirmed that negotiations are continuous on all issues. The group agreed to share areas of key interest with the secretariat for forward planning purposes.

6. Consultation on investment protection

Leopoldo Rubinacci, lead negotiator on investment, set out the plans for the forthcoming consultation on investment protection. It was agreed that the group would come back to the subject at the next meeting, when the consultation is open, in order to discuss its content in more detail.

The following points were raised during this part of the discussion:

- Nature of the consultation. Mr Rubinacci confirmed that this consultation would be about investment protection in TTIP only: this is because the EU-US investment relationship is on a vastly different scale to the EU's other investment destinations, and so needs to be considered specifically. Some members also asked whether they would be other consultations launched on other more specific sectors included in the TTIP negotiations. The Chair referred to the special nature of investment protection, since the US negotiating text had previously been subject to public consultation.
- Accessibility of the consultation. Members emphasised that given the public interest generated in investment protection and Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), the consultation would need to be intelligible for members of the public as well as technical experts. It is important to explain exactly what investment protection and ISDS are in the context of TTIP.
- Consultation questions. Members indicated that questions would need to be balanced, rather than targeted at a particular audience, and should be asked in an open way. There would need to be opportunity for stakeholders to set out their views in general as well as responding to specific questions. Some members wished to provide input for the draft questionnaire, but given the intent to launch the consultation in March this was not possible. However, the group agreed to discuss the consultation in more detail at the next meeting once it was launched.
- Practical issues. Members explained that the web-based consultation system has some shortcomings. Mr Rubinacci underlined that stakeholders were welcome to come in and discuss the consultation in person, as well as to take advantage of an engagement event that should be organised during the three-month response period.
- Assessment of results. Members discussed how to take account of different responses from different stakeholders, such as those represented by the group, in a balanced way.

7. Improving engagement with stakeholders (e.g. via events during rounds, Civil Society Dialogues)

Miranda Dawkins, member of DG TRADE's US-Canada unit, explained plans for stakeholder engagement events during the 4th round of negotiations, in addition to the Commission's other initiatives such as the Civil Society Dialogue. The group was invited to offer ideas for improvements and new initiatives.

The following points were raised during this part of the discussion:

- Presentations event. Members suggested that this event (modelled on previous versions in Washington D.C.) risks covering too broad an area. Demand is high because almost all aspects of TTIP are available for discussion. A more valuable engagement opportunity might be created by choosing two or three specific aspects and inviting more detailed presentations, or organising workshops. Some members felt that the event had been a success in the US, and could be so in Brussels: it is important to find a balance between broad and specific coverage.
- Civil Society Dialogue. Members felt that there was a place for this, but it was not so much a discussion as an opportunity to air views.
- European Parliament. Members asked whether stakeholders had opportunities to explain their positions to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). The Chair confirmed that the EP and its committees organise a number of events relevant to trade and TTIP.
- Other Commission expert groups. Members observed that consultations with expert groups in other areas of the Commission (e.g. CNECT, AGRI) were also taking place on specific sectorial aspects of TTIP. Clarifying the system of consultations with expert groups on TTIP would be beneficial.

8. Any other business

Members discussed how to interact with the press in relation to the group. It was agreed that no member can speak on behalf of the group without prior agreement from the rest of the membership. Members would continue to act in their individual or organisational capacities in relation to the press, although they may mention that they are members of the group.

Attendees

Members of the TTIP Stakeholder Advisory Group

BOWLES Edward (Services)
DEFOSSEZ Faustine (Environment, alternate for Pieter de Pous)
DINGS Jos (Environment)
NELISSEN Guido (Labour and trade union)
FEDERSPIEL Benedicte (Consumers)
FELLER Roxane (Food and drink)
GOYENS Monique (Consumers)
BERGELIN Erik (Manufacturing, alternate for Ivan Hodac)
JENKINS Tom (Labour and trade union)
KERNEIS Pascal (Services)
WOODFORD Emma (Health, alternate for Monika Kosinska)
PETIT Arnaud (Agriculture, alternate for Pekka Pesonen)
QUICK Reinhard (Manufacturing)
SANTOS Luisa (Business)

Commission officials

GARCIA-BERCERO Ignacio (DG TRADE)	TTIP Chief Negotiator
LEVIE Damien (DG TRADE)	Deputy TTIP Chief Negotiator
RUBINACCI Leopoldo (DG TRADE)	Lead, Investment
BELLING Ida (DG TRADE)	Official
SALOME Adeline (DG TRADE)	Official
DAWKINS Miranda (DG TRADE)	Official
BEZEGOVA Edita (DG TRADE)	Trainee