

Press release

European Commission; Brussels, 27 January 2014

Expert group to advise European Commission on EU-US trade talks

Today the Commission launches a special Advisory Group of experts representing a broad range of interests, from environmental, health, consumer and workers' interests to different business sectors to provide EU trade negotiators with high quality advice in the areas being negotiated in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) talks.

The creation of this group confirms the Commission's commitment to close dialogue and exchange with all stakeholders in the TTIP talks, in order to achieve the best result for European citizens. The group's broad composition, with fourteen members of different perspectives and with different expertise to offer, will be an important instrument in this process. The Advisory Group complements transparency initiatives, such as stakeholder consultations during negotiating rounds and regular debriefing through the EU's Civil Society Dialogue (CSD).

The group's advice will help the European Commission to ensure that a future TTIP genuinely facilitates trade between the EU and the US, and benefits all citizens in Europe. The members' broad representation of interests will also help to ensure that Europe's high standards in, for example, protection for consumers and the environment, are respected and upheld in the negotiations.

The group's role is consultative, with the aim to examine specific challenges which may arise during the TTIP negotiations in their fields of expertise, and to provide candid feedback to EU negotiators. Ignacio Garcia Bercero, the EU chief negotiator, will chair the group and work directly with the experts. To enable them to provide the best advice possible, he will share detailed information about progress in the talks, and for the first time, will also when necessary share EU negotiating documents, in a manner that ensures confidentiality.

The members are experts in consumer interests, labour law, the environment and public health, business, manufacturing, agriculture and services sectors. They have been selected on the basis of their broad competence in their fields and their wide-ranging experience of EU trade policy or international regulatory policies. As a result, they are able to represent a common interest shared by stakeholders in a particular area, rather than merely individual organisations.

The group (which will operate in line with the [Commission's standard Rules on Expert Groups](#)) met informally on 21 January 2014 to discuss initial working arrangements and practical details. The first full working session will be held on 25 February 2014.

Details of the group's meetings, including agendas and meeting reports, will be published on the [TTIP website](#) and on the [public Register of Expert Groups](#).

Background

The EU-US negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) started in July 2013 and aim to remove trade barriers in a wide range of economic sectors, to make it easier to buy and sell goods and services between the EU and the US. The third round of negotiations took place in Washington DC in December 2013 ([press release](#)) and the next round is scheduled for 10-14 March 2014.

During the negotiation process there is full democratic oversight by all 28 EU Member State governments and the democratically elected European Parliament. The European Commission, which negotiates TTIP on behalf of the European Union, keeps Member States and the European Parliament up to date with progress in the negotiations and receives their input before and after each round. At the end of the negotiations, it will be the Council, made up of Member States' governments, and the European Parliament that will approve or reject the trade agreement.

To ensure that a plurality of interests is taken into account during the negotiations, the European Commission seeks and listens to views from all interested parties, for example at the stakeholder briefings held at each of the three negotiating rounds so far, with more than 350 stakeholder participants at the last meeting in Brussels ([report](#)), as well as the several Civil Society Dialogues of which the latest took place on 14 January in Brussels with more than 160 civil society representatives ([report](#)). The newly established Advisory Group comes on top of these consultations.

Members of the Advisory Group

Edward Bowles, Services interests
Regional Head of Public Affairs, EMEA, Standard Chartered Bank

Jos Dings, Transport and environment interests
Director, Policy Team, Transport & Environment

Ulrich Eckelmann, Labour and trade union interests
General Secretary of industri-ALL European Trade Union

Benedicte Federspiel, Consumer interests
Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue Steering Committee

Roxane Feller, Food and drink sector interests
Head of Economic Department, FoodDrinkEurope

Monique Goyens, Consumer interests
Director-General, BEUC

Ivan Hodac, Manufacturing interests
Former Secretary General, ACEA

Tom Jenkins, Labour and trade union interests
Senior Advisor to the General Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation

Pascal Kerneis, Services interests
Managing Director, European Services Forum

Monika Kosinska, Health sector interests
Secretary-General, European Public Health Alliance
(alternate during maternity leave – **Susanne Løgstrup**, Director, European Heart Network)

Pekka Pesonen, Agricultural sector interests
Secretary-General, COPA-COGECA

Pieter de Pous, Environment interests
EU Policy Director, European Environmental Bureau

Reinhard Quick, Manufacturing interests
Director, VCI

Luisa Santos, Business interests
Director, International Relations, BusinessEurope

The group experts are participating on a voluntary basis and will receive no remuneration.

Source:

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