



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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European Commissioner for Trade

Remarks on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

*Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort*

Plenary debate of the European Parliament on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership/ Strasbourg

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From the outset, let me underline the importance of this Parliament's interest, commitment and contribution to preparations for negotiations of a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). I thank Professor Moreira as rapporteur for the Committee on International Trade (INTA) for the work done so far. Since our last debate in October, you will have been pleased with the final report of the High Level Working Group. The elements that were important to you are in it.

The Commission broadly welcomes the draft Resolution that you have prepared in the context of the mandate discussions. It is constructive and I see it as firm support towards launching negotiations along the lines of the High Level Working Group report. Our objectives for the negotiating directives are to have a broad text that gives us the necessary negotiating flexibility. Otherwise, we will never be able to also obtain concessions from the Americans. This means we should at all costs avoid taking issues off the table before negotiations even start. But let me be clear: this does not mean that there will be no red-lines during negotiations. No fundamental EU policy is up for being traded away!

Cultural diversity, as enshrined in Article 167 (paragraph 4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and in the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, is a guiding principle of the Commission's actions, including in the context of trade. The Commission is fully committed to defend this policy in the TTIP negotiations.

Let me be crystal clear with respect to audiovisual services and, in agreement with Commissioner Vassiliou, signal what our red lines will be:

- The EU and the Member State measures in support of their audio-visual sector can be maintained and will not be subject to negotiations. The EU and the Member States will retain the policy space to promote cultural diversity, for example, through subsidies, tax incentives etc. This will of course also include the development of new instruments to finance cultural works. This applies, in particular, to cinema and public broadcasting.
- No one will touch the existing quotas or the necessary policy space to adjust our policy in view of the technological change, but, on the other hand, we do not believe there could be a serious argument in favour of increasing such space, for example, by reserving the right to forbid 100% foreign movies and TV programmes, for example, on video on demand services.
- We acknowledge that the main challenge in the future to support Europe's audiovisual sector is to address the evolution of digital technology. The EU and the Member States will need policy space to do this. We will reserve the necessary policy space to regulate at the EU level in order to adapt our policies to technological evolutions in the audio-visual sector!

We believe that a full-scale exclusion of audiovisual services from EU commitments in the TTIP negotiations is neither necessary nor justified. Having red-lines does not mean taking entire areas off the table before negotiations have even started. We are deeply convinced that there are more workable solutions than fully excluding the audiovisual sector while still preserving those red lines. The European Parliament cannot credibly push for certain important sectors of EU interest as mentioned in the resolution and at the same time plea for an exclusion of audiovisual services!

Let me insist that we need to see the broader picture. I think we all agree that these negotiations will be a unique opportunity to make a difference. This deal can create a tremendous impact on jobs and growth on both sides of the Atlantic without costing "a cent" of tax payers' money – which is something to highlight towards more critical constituencies. If we add to this the fact that safety, health and environmental standards will under no circumstances be lowered, we should have what it takes to convince those

who may still have doubts. Now that the process towards launching negotiations is underway both in the US and on our end, what we need – above all – is strong and continued political will from us all. Continued political focus on delivering results across all areas is the single most useful recipe for success. This negotiation is too big to fail and we all have enough things on the table to benefit from. Let's build on this. I count on your continued constructive support in that direction.