

European Commission

Directorate-General for Trade



Press release

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EU-US trade – latest round of talks on transatlantic trade pact ends in Brussels

EU and US officials today ended a sixth round of week-long negotiations in Brussels on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), a new trade and investment agreement.

The EU's Chief TTIP Negotiator, Ignacio Garcia Bercero, made a statement at the end of the round.

The statement appears below in full.

STARTS

Good afternoon.

The fact that TTIP was one of the first political debates in the new Parliament illustrates the political importance attached to these negotiations.

The Commission welcomes the public debate on TTIP and we will continue engaging intensively in this public debate in every phase of the negotiations.

Coming back to this week's negotiating round, we have had intense discussions in most of the areas we intend to cover in this agreement. The work this week has again been highly technical. This work is essential to prepare the ground for the political decisions that would need to be taken at a later stage of the negotiations.

Classic market access issues

To give you a brief overview of the nature of our discussions this week, let me first start with what we refer to as the classic market access issues. As you know this encompasses the areas of tariffs, services and public procurement. For these three areas the EU has high ambitions.

On services, for example, we have had detailed discussions this week on the basis of the offers that both sides have put on the table and that reflect the highest levels of commitments that we have both reached in existing agreements, in our case for example with Korea. The objective is therefore to build from that and identify additional elements in TTIP which would go beyond our respective bilateral, plurilateral or multilateral commitments.

As you know, for the EU, procurement is one of the most fundamental elements of these negotiations and both sides set as objective to substantially improve access to government procurement opportunities at all levels of government on the basis of national treatment.

On this basis, we have discussed during the week how to achieve ambition on all the items which need to be addressed in order to fulfill such objective including procurement by federal entities, the conditions attached to the use of federal funds for procurement by non-Federal entities, and the measures applied at the sub-federal level.

Regulatory agenda

As in previous rounds, a lot of the time has been devoted to the regulatory agenda. Again, this is considered to be the most economically significant part of TTIP and what makes TTIP different from the other trade agreements. That said, this is an area where a lot of the technical groundwork needs to be done with the full involvement of regulators.

This week we have again had thorough discussions, with the participation of regulators from both sides, on both the horizontal and sectoral elements of the regulatory agenda of TTIP.

For those issues that cut across sectors, we have continued to discuss how to ensure close regulatory cooperation between our respective regulators on different areas of regulations including standards and conformity assessment and, of course, on everything that has to do with sanitary and phytosanitary matters.

Much of the time this week has also been dedicated to discuss what can concretely be achieved on a number of specific sectors. There are nine sectors we are currently discussing, with an intense engagement of the relevant regulators from both sides. Pharmaceuticals, cars, chemicals or engineering are examples of those sectors.

While there is technical work still to be done in these areas, the EU expects that over the next few months a clear understanding in reached on what are the concrete objectives we want to achieve in TTIP and what are the steps that the regulators on both sides will need to take to fulfill these objectives within the time frame of the TTIP negotiations.

Before closing this overview of the work on the regulatory agenda of TTIP, let me underline three important considerations:

1. There is an unequivocal and firm commitment to the main guiding principle in these negotiations: nothing will be done which could lower or endanger the protection of the environment, health, safety, consumers or any other public policy goals pursued by the EU and US regulators
2. Enhanced regulatory cooperation is essential if the EU and the US wish to play a leading role in the development of international regulations and standards based on the highest levels of protection.
3. TTIP should deliver concrete results in terms of enhanced regulatory compatibility in sectors.

Other negotiating areas

During this week we also held discussions in other negotiating areas such as sustainable development/labour and environment, energy, and SMEs. The nature of the discussions varies from area to area.

As regards, for instance, state-to-state dispute settlement, we have continued our work on the basis of a consolidated text and made progress in bringing our positions closer.

We are also finalising consolidated texts in areas such as SMEs or trade facilitation. For other areas, such as SPS for example, we expect to have textual proposals from each side before our next round.

I should also note that in certain areas, such as sustainable development for example, we are engaged in thorough discussions on the different elements that we want to address in these negotiations so as to ensure that when we move to textual proposals this reflect the high ambition we want to achieve in TTIP and respond to the legitimate expectations for such a 21st century agreement.

Engaging with stakeholders

As chief negotiators one of the highlights of this week was again the opportunity we had, together with our teams, to engage intensively with over 400 representatives of civil society, from consumers to environmental NGOs, from trade unions to public health representatives as well as with businesses. I would like to highlight not only the large number of presentations made but also the many interesting ideas that were put forward on how to ensure TTIP brings concrete benefits to our citizens and businesses. Let me highlight a couple of those interventions, which I believe us negotiators should further consider:

For example, I was particularly interested to hear from the European Social and Economic Committee that transparency vis-à-vis stakeholders is not only important during the negotiating process but that negotiators should also reflect on how to ensure that civil society is engaged in the monitoring of the implementation of TTIP once the agreement is up and running.

We also listened with great attention the presentations made by representatives from SMEs such as the UK Federation of Small Businesses, Chamber of Commerce of Rhône-Alpes or the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry. These presentations illustrated how TTIP could bring concrete benefits to SMEs, not only through the specific SME chapter, but also how other chapters of TTIP could be of relevance. Some of the points highlighted include the following:

- Rules of origin should be trade facilitating
 - Unnecessary duplication of requirements can prevent SMEs from doing business across the Atlantic.
- Examples mentioned include the complexity of customs procedures, duplication of inspections of manufacturing

facilities, duplication of certification requirements, need to present similar data to different regulatory agencies etc

- Easy access to information on regulatory requirements and other conditions for export, through a web portal, is of crucial importance for SMEs

I note there were also interesting suggestions from other participants in all areas covered by these negotiations. Of course not all new ideas can be delivered, but all of them deserve our serious consideration. All in all, this confirms how important it is for our negotiators to continue our engagement with all stakeholders throughout the negotiating process. This is the only way we can ensure the final agreement responds to the high ambitions our leaders set for us last year and reflects the expectations of our citizens.

Let me conclude by highlighting again the strong political support that exists for TTIP, our commitment to engage in the essential public debate that is taking place, and how significant it is for us to make as much progress as possible in all the technical work that will be needed to ensure political decisions can be taken at the later phase of the negotiation.

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Find out more

Visit the [EU's dedicated webpages for updates and background information about the EU-US trade negotiations now underway](#).

And follow the EU's negotiating team on Twitter: [@EU_TTIP_team](#) .

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