

Investment protection in TTIP: Innovations for small business?

After months of discussions, today's proposal for an Investment Court System by the EU Commission is giving more clarity as to where the Commission is heading in terms of investment protection in TTIP.

Investment is a critical component of our economic relationship with the US, and the "I" in TTIP. Contrary to what is often alleged, protection of investments is not only a concern of big business, it is also important for our SMEs.

EUROCHAMBRES has seen the *process leading to today's proposal as a window of opportunity for investment protection to be re-examined with the needs of SMEs in mind.*

In this regard, three innovative elements can be found in today's proposal: the possibility to have recourse to a sole Judge, enshrining mediation, and establishing concrete timeframes for the proceedings in the first and second instance.

"SMEs need efficient and, above all more cost effective ways to settle investment disputes. The Commission's proposal sets the right tone, but we are not there yet. Reducing high litigation costs so as to make the system more accessible to SMEs will remain critical", said Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES.

TTIP has all the potential to create a golden standard for an SME friendly trade agreement, and a reformed investment protection regime is just one of the areas where this goal can be attained.

"Further incentivizing the use of alternative dispute resolution and possibly examining alternative financial mechanisms to mitigate costs for SMEs could be additional tools to make the system more SME friendly", stated Mr. Abruzzini.

Today's proposal offers improvements to the current system, such as strengthening the independence of arbitrators, enhancing transparency or safeguarding the right to regulate.

Further information: Mr Dominic Boucsein, Tel. +32 2 282 08 53, boucsein@eurochambres.eu

Press contact: Ms Simona Obreja, Tel. +32 2 282 08 81, obreja@eurochambres.eu

All EUROCHAMBRES' press releases can be found [here](#)

