

Dead or alive? European business will keep fighting for TTIP

Brussels 19, 2016 – Senior EU industry representatives staunchly defended the need for a free trade agreement between Europe and the US during an exchange between media and business. The debate showed that the European business community will keep fighting for the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP). With the benefits for the European economy at the forefront, panellists declared their commitment for the long haul towards an ambitious, comprehensive trade agreement rather than the stepwise or ‘TTIP-lite’ approach that has been touted.

Stated moderator **Arnaldo Abruzzini, CEO, EUROCHAMBRES**: “It’s been three years since TTIP negotiations are ongoing. CETA negotiations took five years to conclude, and if we look to our own EU single market, even after 30 years we are still trying to perfect it. So let’s put things into perspective – **it’s much too early to say that TTIP is dead**. Our take is that we are at the halfway mark. A lot of good work has been done by negotiators on both sides. Let’s not give in to the temptation to dilute our ambitions at this early stage for a quick win that could short change EU citizens.”

Europe faces major challenges such as a stagnating, aging population and stable GDP. In a climate where European manufacturing and jobs are under threat across the 28 Member States, and major industries like steel struggle to defend their industry from Asian operators, an alliance with our biggest trading neighbours, the US, is not only logical but critical. Panellists particularly underlined the positive impact concluding TTIP will have for Europe’s citizens through boosting jobs for SMEs.

Here, they explain why:

Arnaldo Abruzzini, *Chief Executive Officer, EUROCHAMBRES*

“No other trade agreement has ever attempted to integrate the concerns of SMEs so strongly into its framework, which is one of the elements that makes TTIP special. Reducing the administrative burden on SMEs so they can more easily trade across the Atlantic would be hugely significant. Who else if not small businesses will benefit from regulatory cooperation? Transatlantic trade today is fraught for SMEs as they negotiate complex customs rules – small business owners are disproportionately affected by this. In that regard, we look for negotiations to continue as long as necessary towards an ambitious, comprehensive TTIP so we can better empower small business owners.”

Eleonora Catella, *Senior Adviser, BusinessEurope*

“Our prosperity here in Europe is dependent on being open to the world – not just relying on exports but also imports from major trading partners like the US. Europe must realise where our prosperity comes from – in this case, market access for our manufacturing industries. The US is the partner offering the greatest possibilities to set high standards in a number of areas. Political pressure to keep aiming high must continue.”

Pascal Kerneis, *Managing Director, European Services Forum*

“Increasing manufacturing activity has a domino effect in increasing the need for linked services – for example, a new factory needs services from construction, electricity and telecoms to cleaning, banking and recruitment. That’s where we see big potential for TTIP to increase the number of EU service industry jobs. Public procurement also offers potential because if our companies are permitted through TTIP to offer their services to for example local authorities then this brings work to build the necessary infrastructure and making this process more competitive increases value for taxpayers’ money. TTIP is about people – they’re the ones providing and using the services.”

Rene van Sloten, Executive Director, Industrial Policy, Cefic

“For the EU chemical industry, although sales are rising, our share of the world market in chemicals has dropped radically due to the increasing competitiveness of Asia. It’s paramount that TTIP goes ahead so that the US and EU can join forces to maintain their role on the world stage. Trade already takes place with or without TTIP. But with TTIP in place, SMEs would benefit because the big chemical companies are their customers so they benefit from the bigger companies’ commercial success. TTIP can achieve this by cutting red tape and thus lowering costs, making it more interesting to trade with the US - without compromising on the safety of people or the environment.”

For further follow-up interviews, please contact:

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