

Japanese and European public service unions condemn secrecy in trade negotiations and the lack of a progressive agenda addressing people's concerns



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全日本水道労働組合 (略称: 全水道)

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(30 June 2017) Today Public services unions from Europe and Japan have sent an open letter to Cecilia Malstrom and Fumio Kishida (Japanese Foreign Affairs minister) demanding greater transparency in the negotiations to reach a trade agreement between Japan and the EU (JEFTA). The unions representing over 9 million public sector workers from Japan and Europe want the negotiators to pursue a more open and progressive trade agenda.

EPSU, representing Europe's public service unions and the PSI Japan Council, representing public service unions in Japan, have been working closely together to gather information and propose alternatives to the current trade and investment agenda. The European Commission has not fulfilled its promises for more openness

and a shift towards more progressive trade following the broad opposition to CETA (the Canada-EU trade agreement).

EPSU General Secretary, Jan Willem Goudriaan says *"We are worried that JEFTA includes many of the controversial elements of the EU-Canada (CETA) agreement. We rejected in CETA the inclusion of the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism, and opposed the liberalisation of public services and extensive regulatory cooperation that would undermine democratic processes."* The European Commission claimed that CETA would set a standard and the EU would not settle for less. Goudriaan adds: *"The lack of transparency is almost total. We do not know if our public services, environmental and social standards and public services are traded away."* Leaked documents indicate that the voices of millions that opposed CETA, TTIP and TISA have not been respected.

We are concerned that the Japanese Government is not signing core ILO Conventions that protect working people against unscrupulous employers and the vagaries of exploitative trade. With CETA being discussed in national parliaments, the European Commission is giving the signal that nothing has changed. All the declarations of good intentions were to veil that underneath these trade agreements are about increasing profits for corporations. They do nothing to strengthen workers' rights, promote the sustainable development goals, improve the quality of public services or address climate change."

You can read the full text of the statement here: [English](#) - [Japanese](#)

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