

## Canadian unions reject CETA and express solidarity with European protest demonstrations



(16 September 2016) The Canadian public service and industrial unions have asked the Canadian government not to sign the trade agreement between the EU and Canada (CETA).

The opposition to this agreement is growing on both sides of the Atlantic as the implications for workers, the environment, consumers and municipalities become clear. The Canadian unions echo concerns expressed by EPSU and other organisations: It threatens public services, health care and jobs. Key demands for the Canadian unions are:

**Remove all investor rights rules.**

- There is no need to bypass our public court system and use extra-judicial arbitration that favours corporations. CETA's proposed Investor Court System is not a real improvement on flawed investor-state dispute resolution systems in NAFTA and other trade deals.

**Protect public services from privatization.**

- CETA puts our public services at risk by making it harder to reverse failed privatizations or expand public services in the future.

**Stop pharmaceutical patent extensions.**

- CETA's patent protection provisions could increase the annual cost of pharmaceuticals in our health care system by \$1 billion or more.

**Protect procurement across services and sectors.**

- Currently, any government service or sector not explicitly excluded is swept into CETA. This limits the rights of provinces, municipalities, and other entities to get the most out of their procurement spending by favouring local goods and services.

**Include a real mechanism for enforcing labour rights.**

Currently, violations of labour rights are not subject to any meaningful sanction – a marked contrast from the provisions that address the rights of investors.

The unions also say: “There have been suggestions that CETA could still be modified to address the many defects listed above. We do not believe this is realistic. “These changes cannot be made before the scheduled ratification before the European Parliament on October 21st because the changes must be made in the body of the agreement, not in a non-binding side agreement, letter or statement” said Larry Brown, President of the National Union of Public and General Workers. “Moreover, we do not believe that the agreement can be ratified and then amended later because large parts of CETA will likely be applied provisionally and thus will go into effect immediately. National ratification votes may take months or years. The current text is unacceptable, and this agreement must be defeated” said Stan Pickthall, General Vice President of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

“We stand with European workers and members of civil society mobilizing in Germany, Austria, Belgium and elsewhere to resist CETA, which has many of the same dangerous provisions as TTIP. Overwhelming European opposition is blocking this trade deal with the U.S., and opponents recognize that CETA is simply TTIP through the back door,” added Linda Silas, President of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, who will be addressing no-to-CETA and TTIP rallies in Germany

The Joint Canadian Trade union statement on CETA is available in [English](#), [French](#) and [German](#)

For a recent study on the impact on working people:

[http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/policy\\_research/ceta\\_simulations.html](http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/policy_research/ceta_simulations.html)

For information on the position of EPSU and European unions:

<http://www.epsu.org/article/unions-are-mobilizing-no-ceta-bad-deal-workers-and-people>

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