



9 October 2014

## **EPSU Firefighters Statement on TTIP**

In support of EPSU's resolution for the inclusion of binding social and environmental standards in the drafting of bilateral and multilateral European trade agreements

The EPSU firefighters' network notes with concern the ongoing negotiations between the EU and the US to agree a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the signing of the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic & Trade Agreement (CETA), two agreements that aim at an increased liberalisation of trade transactions, including in the field of services; and which remove policies aimed to protect workers, citizens, the environment and serve investors' rights to challenge domestic policies.

Firefighter unions believe that the primary purpose of TTIP and CETA is to extend corporate investor rights. The current negotiations also lack transparency and proper democratic oversight.

We remain unconvinced by official claims of job creation arising out of TTIP and CETA, and consider that the dangers to public services, workers' rights and environmental standards outweigh any potential trade benefits.

Therefore the EPSU Firefighters Network supports the EPSU Resolution for the inclusion of binding social and environmental standards in the drafting of bilateral and multilateral European trade agreements and will engage in action in support of it.

### **For the inclusion of binding social and environmental standards in the drafting of bilateral and multilateral European trade agreements (resolution 15 adopted at EPSU Congress 2014)**

1. Considering that, as a consequence of the repeated failure in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Doha Round multilateral trade negotiations, the European Union and its member states have for several years focused on free trade bilateral agreements (Economic Partnership Agreements) and bilateral investment agreements with third countries or regions.
2. Concerned that the implementation of many such agreements have led to a degradation of users' universal access and rights to public services in terms of quality, security, accessibility, and gender equality (which are common values sanctioned in Protocol 26 of the Lisbon Treaty on Services of General Interest) as a result of their liberalisation and privatization.
3. Concerned that free-trade agreements have in many cases resulted in the degradation of living and working conditions because of several simultaneous developments: the loss of jobs (as a direct consequence of privatisations and of increased competition), volatility of prices for food commodities, an increased control by foreign transnational corporations on

services and natural resources, the failure to recognise workers' rights and collective agreements.

4. Recording the high number of cases reported by trade unions and social movements in countries involved in such trade agreements that testify to a failure to respect the environment and populations, to evident failure to recognise economic, social and cultural human rights and well as trade union rights that ought to be applicable.
5. Observing that other negotiations are carried out next to bilateral negotiations between the EU and third countries in order to sign preferential trade agreements, namely,
  - first, resumed WTO multilateral official trade negotiations;
  - second, a new round of multilateral negotiations among 37 countries including the EU on trade in services, in the wake of the liberalisation process that started with the WTO GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) intending to further liberalise exchange and investment in the field of services, in all sectors and for all modes of supply, which will affect up to 90 % of public services;
  - third, the signing of the EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and of the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic & Trade Agreement, two agreements that aim at an increased liberalisation of trade transactions, including in the field of services; and which remove policies aimed to protect workers, citizens, the environment and serve investors' rights to challenge domestic policies.
6. Considering that the States ratifying such agreements give up their sovereignty to supranational trade regulations accompanied by economic penalties in case of noncompliance.
7. Considering the consequent risk that in the context of these multilateral agreements European law provisions (in particular article 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Protocol 26 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, or Lisbon Treaty) not be complied with.
8. Considering the already disastrous consequences that bilateral agreements between the EU and third countries have had on the latter's national laws in terms of protection of workers' and consumers' rights.
9. Considering the lack of transparency prevailing in the negotiations on these agreements, which are made public when they are already signed and only have to be ratified.
10. Considering the limited attention paid to impact assessments on social and environmental consequences (that were organised so late if at all that their results cannot possibly be taken into account).
11. Considering the danger the signing of such agreements represents for the populations if they are not contained by binding provisions and penalties in case of failure to meet the requirements of international conventions on human rights and workers' rights.
12. Considering that Protocol 26 of the Lisbon Treaty reminds the EU and its Member States of their shared responsibility in improving their public services in accordance with the provisions within this Protocol and with the horizontal social clause, according to which *'the definition and implementation of the Union's policies and actions must take into account the following social requirements: the promotion of a high level of employment;*

*the guarantee of adequate social protection; the fight against social exclusion; a high level of education, training and protection of human health.*

**Congress CALLS UPON and URGES the Executive Committee and all EPSU affiliates to**

Actively and unrelentingly campaign along with ETUC so as to :

- Start a democratic debate within member states about what is at stake in these trade agreements and how they threaten democracy, citizens' and workers' rights, and the preservation of quality public services.
- Demand the implementation of a transparent and democratic process to inform and consult citizens about bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations in which the EU is involved as soon as they are launched.
- Demand the effective implementation of existing legal provisions in primary European law, including in the context of multilateral negotiations, so as to maintain social safety nets and make sure that the autonomy and subsidiarity of member states granted in directives on public services be maintained in the face of possible international agreements.
- Use all provisions for consultation in the context of bilateral trade negotiations between the EU and third countries, as well as initiate and support any form of citizens' mobilisation calling for information, consultation, and an effective response to the risks such negotiations represent for basic social conquests sanctioned by EU Law and international conventions.
- Maintain a high level of involvement and mobilisation among social and citizens' movements so as to overturn the scale of priorities in the trade agreements between countries and/or regions in favour of socially and environmentally sustainable investments contributing to a human-oriented development.
- See to it that public services cannot be the target of liberalization measures in the context of the above mentioned agreements.
- Work to develop social and environmental standards in international law that oblige investors to adhere to minimum requirements.