

Xmas EPSU update on trade developments

1. CETA – upcoming votes in the European Parliament (EP)

In the last update of 15 December we outlined the upcoming actions needed on CETA. We remind you that we translated the update into a number of languages – see the French, German, Spanish, Italian, Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Portuguese and Romanian now available on the web <http://www.epsu.org/article/update-ceta-december-2016-request-action>

Key votes in the EP on CETA are scheduled for :

- 12th January (ENVI)
- 24th January (INTA)
- 1st February (plenary).

Building on the positive outcome of the EP EMPL Committee that voted on 8 December not to support CETA, EPSU's Health and Social Services (HSS) Committee sent a letter to members on the ENVI Committee on 21 December asking them to support the critical Opinion that has been drafted on CETA. The HSS letter draws on recent EPSU studies and an resolution opposing CETA adopted by the Committee at its meeting in September this year – see <http://www.epsu.org/article/free-trade-agreements-health-and-social-services-are-not-for-trading> in EN-FR-DE-ES-RU-SV as well as a study “CETA and TTIP: Potential impacts on health and social services” which is available in EN (and summaries in EN-FR-DE-ES-IT) at <http://www.epsu.org/article/new-epsu-working-paper-ceta-and-ttip-potential-impacts-health-and-social-services>. This working paper analyses and explains in detail and with examples the potential impact of CETA and TTIP on issues such as:

- Hospital planning
- Staff-patient ratios
- Health and safety regulations
- Mutual recognition of professional qualifications
- Temporary stay of health professionals in another country
- Socially-responsible public procurement and
- Locking in of health and social service privatisations

You can find a link to the EPSU HSS Committee letter [here](#).

We draw your attention to an interesting article in the Canadian press explaining why maintaining the universality and inclusiveness of healthcare systems is so important to avoid ‘two-tier’ healthcare - see <http://vancouversun.com/opinion/opinion-australian-experience-shows-why-we-must-preserve-one-tier-medicare>

EPSU also wrote a joint letter on 22 December to the ENVI committee together with the European trade union federations UNI Europa, IndustryAll, EFFAT, ETF, EFBWW and EFJ. You can find a copy of the letter [here](#). The letter is important to show the common concerns of trade unions across the different sectors of the economy.

2. CETA day of action 21 January 2017

On 21 January a decentralised day of action on CETA will take place supported by a wide variety of organisations.

For more information see <http://stopceta.net/call-to-action-january-21/>. You can also find on the website the joint trade union and civil society joint letter (sent on 28 November and mentioned in the last update) that is available in many languages together with other resources and contacts. Actions are already planned in many Member States, including France, Ireland, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Belgium, Finland.

In case not yet seen, please find here the position of ETUC on CETA adopted in the ETUC Executive in December <https://www.etuc.org/documents/etuc-assessment-eu-canada-comprehensive-economic-and-trade-agreement-ceta#.WFPwY40ixYU>

For French readers to note is an interesting and critical report of the French Human Rights Committee http://www.cncdh.fr/sites/default/files/161215_avis_accords_comm._et_fin_et_droits_de_lhomme_format_a5.pdf.

3. Investment protection: what next after ISDS / ICS...?

The European Commission (EC) has launched a public consultation on the EU's current policy on investment dispute resolution and possible options for multilateral reform, including the establishment of a permanent Multilateral Investment Court. The results of this public consultation will feed into discussion on the options to engage in multilateral reform of the international investment dispute resolution system. The consultation runs until 15 March 2017. See http://trade.ec.europa.eu/consultations/index.cfm?consul_id=233.

To note, the European Court of Justice (CJEU) issued an opinion on 21 December considering the EU-Singapore trade and investment agreement to be a 'mixed' agreement, i.e., requiring ratification also by the Member States, not least because certain of its investment provisions. The CJEU press release in English is available at: <http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2016-12/cp160147en.pdf>. A definitive ruling will follow in the next months .

The future of investment protection is part of the current ETUC reflection on the future of EU trade and investment policy and demands for a more progressive approach. One of the other key aspects will be the future of the sustainable development parts of FTAs, in particular as regards labour rights.

A conference was organised on 6 December by the EC and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on the future of labour provisions in FTAs. The ILO presented research that stresses that the impact of labour provisions crucially depends on stakeholders' - including the social partners' - involvement, the transparency of trade negotiations and of implementation mechanisms and the coherence of trade-related labour provisions with respect to the "right to regulate" as well as ILO Standards. One interesting presentation on the EU-Moldova FTA also pointed to the need for trade unions to push for a broad 'decent work' agenda to be included if problems related to low wages, work intensification, supply-chains and access to social protection are to be effectively tackled.

For more details see [conference](#) website and the findings of the ILO's [Assessment of Labour Provisions in Trade and Investment Arrangements](#), and [Handbook of Labour Provisions in Trade Agreements](#).

The consultation should also be an opportunity to put pressure on the EC and Member States to engage in ongoing United Nations (UN) negotiations for a binding Treaty on multinational corporations and human rights. The Treaty would provide affected communities with legal

remedy if their rights are violated by actions of multinational corporations. See http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/26/9 and for background information <http://www.stopcorporateimpunity.org/binding-treaty-un-process/>

4. Latest on TiSA

The EC's latest report on negotiations <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/tisa/> and discussion during the last EC civil dialogue meeting on TiSA on 18 November indicated uncertainties about the future of the negotiations, not least due to the position of the new incoming US President¹.


The EC's Trade Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) that began in January 2014 is still ongoing. The [draft interim report](#) is now ready and available through the EC TiSA page and a meeting will take place to discuss the report on 13 January. More on this to follow.

Some recent TiSA articles:

- TiSA and public health <http://www.peoplesworld.org/article/five-ways-the-trade-in-services-agreement-threatens-public-health-and-environment/>
- Exchanges between incumbent US President Trump the IT industry, see <https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2016-12-14/trump-tells-tech-titans-he-s-here-to-help-you-folks-do-well>

5. Developments regarding the negotiation of the EU-Tunisia DCFTA

EPSU took part in an exchange with civil society organized by the EC on 13 December. This meeting provided an opportunity for civil society organisations to be briefed regarding developments with the EU-Tunisia Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) that was launched in 2015. Unfortunately it was not possible for Tunisian civil society organisations to join the meeting by video link as had been planned.

The EU has adopted a joint Communication [“Strengthening EU support for Tunisia”](#)  that outlines a number of areas where EU will support reforms in Tunisia, including a civil service reform strategy and public finance and taxation, ‘including moving towards a simpler and more equitable system’. The EC's DG Trade website on EU Tunisia has a number of related documents <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/tunisia/>

The EC has a consultation on the DCFTA – see the questionnaire on the DCFTA that runs until February 2017 http://trade.ec.europa.eu/consultations/index.cfm?consul_id=225. There is also and ‘ex post’ evaluation being planned next year on the EU Tunisian Association Agreement (and other EU agreements with the euro med region) that dates from 1995. While detailed analysis is not yet available about the impact of the Association Agreement (that mainly concerns industrial tariffs) statistics show positive benefits, including on employment.

To note, the ITUC, ETUC and ActionAid are co-organising this half-day event on January 24

¹ To note, the US AFL-CIO circulated an interesting article <http://www.aflcio.org/Blog/Political-Action-Legislation/6-Ways-We-Could-Improve-NAFTA-for-Working-People> on how the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) could be improved for working people.

'Can the EU better support job creation in developing countries?' The [EU trade strategy](#) (2015) includes important commitments towards partner countries in the global South, in particular to better assess the impact of trade policy on human rights and the recognition that global supply chains should be managed responsibly.

6. EU–Korea FTA

On 16 December the EU Domestic Advisory Group (DAG) for the EU-Korea FTA called on the EC to open labour consultations on trade union rights pursuant to the EU-Korea FTA.) EPSU is one of the four trade union representatives on the DAG which also includes business and civil society members. The annex to the letter sets out a long list of issues in South Korea regarding workers rights that the Dag has consistently been raising. See the letter and annex on the EPSU website at <http://www.epsu.org/article/eu-domestic-advisory-group-dag-calls-european-commission-open-labour-consultations-trade-0>

The letter points out that the existing institutional mechanisms established in the FTA have failed to result so far in any meaningful progress. On the contrary, as detailed in the accompanying annexes to the letter the situation in South Korea is deteriorating. The EC is currently evaluating the implementation of the EU-Korea FTA. EPSU participated recently in a meeting organised with the consultants preparing a report. We stressed that the evaluation of the EU-Korea FTA should also include an assessment for the effectiveness of the agreement's institutional mechanisms.²

Together with other DAG members EPSU has also fed in proposals EP report about the EU-Korea FTA drawn up by Joachim Schuster, the MEP (S&D).

Workers in Korea are facing difficult times. The rampant violation of trade union rights by the government include reprisals, dismissals and even the incarceration of trade union leaders and members. PSI, EPSU and other union federations have been working throughout the year on many solidarity actions and campaigns to support them. An overview is available on the PSI website <http://www.world-psi.org/en/violation-workers-rights-korea-general-strike-30-november-0>

For more info on the EU DAG see <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.external-relations-international-trade-monitoring-korea-dag>

7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and global 2030 agenda

On 20 December the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC) which is the 'think tank' part of the EC organised a High Level Policy Summit on "Europe's Response to Sustainability Challenges – Delivering the 2030 Agenda"

The Summit is a follow-up to the European Commission's [Communication on the Sustainable Development Goals](#), presented on 22 November. This Communication lays out how EU policies and the Commission's 10 political priorities contribute to implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also sets out how the EU will meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the future. See for more information:

- [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)

² The EU survey preparing the evaluation and can be accessed via the following link: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/EUKoreaFTAPublicConsultation>. More information can be found on the evaluation webpage: <http://www.eukorea-eval.com/consultation/>

- [Sustainable Development: EU priorities](#)
- [European Commission 10 Political Priorities](#)
- [European Political Strategy Centre \(EPSC\)](#)

Much of the discussion related to how the EU could itself implement the SDGs. One proposal suggested that SDG goals should be referenced in policy and funding decisions.

The EC Communication on the SDGs notes that 70% of the world's population is living in countries where inequalities have increased over the last two decades. A presentation in the conference also showed how within Europe traditional west / east divisions are shifting.

The message about inequality is also picked up in the ILO's recent [Global Wage Report 2016/2017](#) that shows that global real wage growth has fallen from 1.6% in 2012 to 0.9% in 2015, excluding China. Last year, wages grew by 1.9% in the European Union, whereas wage growth among developed G20 countries rose to 1.7%, the highest rate of the last 10 years. A quarter of the total wages in Europe goes to the [top 10% earners](#). Still in Europe, wage dispersion within enterprises accounts for about half of all wage inequality, and the [highest paying enterprises have the most unequal wages](#)³. The top 1% in these companies earns 120 times higher pay than the bottom 1%.

The ETUC's first assessment of the EC Communication is available here <https://www.etuc.org/press/etuc-statement-sustainable-european-future#.WFz0f6QyM8>

³ To note, the ETUC has launched a campaign on pay <https://www.etuc.org/press/2017-year-pay-rise#.WFzqaf6QyM8>