



Technical barriers to trade (TBTs) in TTIP

Reducing barriers to EU-US trade from differences in things like labelling or safety testing

In this chapter, we want to:

- improve the way the EU and the US work together on technical requirements for products
- reduce unnecessary repetition and costs of procedures in place for checking products
- facilitate access to information on rules applicable to products

Reasons for negotiating technical barriers to trade

Technical requirements exist in all sectors of the economy. They affect most products we buy. Examples are:

- safety of toys
- safety and energy efficiency of domestic appliances.

These technical requirements can be created by mandatory technical regulations and voluntary standards that determine a product's:

- size and shape
- design
- labelling, marking and packaging
- function and performance.

When these requirements can obstruct trade, we call them Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT). The specific procedures used to check whether a product complies with these requirements are also covered by the definition of TBT.

These so-called 'conformity assessment procedures' can include:

- product testing
- inspection
- certification.

Governments usually introduce such technical requirements in the public interest. For example, to protect:

- human health and safety
- animal and plant life and health
- the environment
- consumers from deceptive practices.

Even though the EU and US often share similar aims when they introduce their technical regulations, actual standards and procedures for checking products sometimes differ widely. This can create unnecessary obstacles to trade, i.e. TBTs.

EU goals

In this part of the agreement, we want to:

- be able to use international standards (such as those agreed in the International Organization for Standardization-ISO) to make it easier to export to the US; such standards are widely used in the EU and around the world
- eliminate or at least reduce unnecessarily duplicative or burdensome procedures for checking products

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- ensure easy access to information on regulations and standards that apply to goods in the US and the EU
 - improve cooperation between EU and US standardisation bodies when they draw up new standards; this will help reduce differences and they might even be able to agree on common standards
 - get more transparency in the US system on standards.

Sensitive or controversial issues

The technical requirements and procedures for checking products in the EU and the US are fundamentally different. Government and firms on both sides of the Atlantic have invested a lot in running and developing their systems. We need to take this into account.