



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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EU-US trade negotiators explore ways to help SMEs take advantage of TTIP, as fourth round of talks ends in Brussels

The EU's Chief Negotiator of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), Ignacio Garcia Bercero, today confirmed that he and his US counterpart, Dan Mullaney, were committed to exploring how make it easier for smaller firms to take advantage of the gains from the TTIP. His comments came as EU and US officials ended a fourth round of week-long negotiations on an EU-US trade and investment agreement.

Commenting, Mr Garcia Bercero added that a chapter targeting small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) would be *'a first for the European Union. It shows just how seriously we're taking the issue. Smaller firms employ the vast majority of people in both the EU and the US. They account for two out of every three private sector jobs in the EU. And they're the backbone of our economies, accounting for 99% of all businesses in the EU. TTIP would help them expand – generating jobs and growth on both sides of the Atlantic.'*

The EU and US also published today a [document focusing on smaller firms](#) - how they could benefit from the agreement, and how the two sides plan to help those firms do so.

This fourth round of talks came just a few weeks after EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht met his US counterpart, Ambassador Mike Froman, to review progress so far in the negotiations. In addition to SMEs, EU and US negotiating teams spent the week discussing all three pillars of a future agreement - market access, the regulatory cluster and so-called 'rules' issues.

Steady progress in all three negotiating areas

Market access – here negotiators discussed three core elements - tariffs, trade in services and public procurement. On tariffs the EU and US had already had an initial exchange of offers. On services and public procurement, negotiators examined how to move towards exchanging offers.

Regulation - negotiators were joined by a broad cross-section of experts and regulators from both sides to discuss:

- regulatory coherence and increasing regulatory compatibility;
- technical barriers to trade (TBTs), on which both sides had already made written proposals;
- sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures – preparing the ground for written proposals in due course.

The EU and the US also continued to explore ways of achieving greater regulatory compatibility in certain key industries: pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, medical devices, automotive, and chemicals.

Rules – discussions included three areas where negotiators are developing innovative approaches:

- sustainable development, labour and the environment - to build on what is already covered by existing EU and US trade deals;
- trade in energy and raw materials - an area in which the EU wishes to include an agreed framework in TTIP;
- customs and trade facilitation - simplifying and streamlining procedures, especially important, since lengthy, complex customs clearance rules hit smaller firms the hardest and can deter entrepreneurs from selling overseas.

A full day spent with stakeholders

The European Commission is determined to listen to and get feedback from everyone with a stake in the outcome of these negotiations. We are constantly seeking to improve the way we do this – and will continue to do so. For example, in February we launched the TTIP Advisory Group, comprising experts from trade unions, industry, and consumer and environmental groups.

As part of these efforts, the EU also hosted two events on Wednesday 12 March with civil society during this fourth round. Negotiators interacted with and listened to 90 different presenters representing business, consumer, labour and environmental groups. The presentations enabled stakeholders to engage directly and in detail with negotiators, who in turn gained invaluable insights into the issues covered.

Later in the same day, the EU and US Chief Negotiators met with over 300 stakeholders for two hours. They set out their view on the current status of the talks and next steps, and answered questions.

Next steps

Both the EU and US Chief Negotiators reaffirmed their commitment to making steady progress in all areas of the negotiations throughout 2014. They also agreed to hold a further round of talks in Washington before the summer. The European Commission will confirm the dates as soon as these have been fixed on our [dedicated TTIP webpages](#).

Background

Talks on a future EU-US trade deal started in July 2013 and are set to continue throughout 2014.

An EU-US trade agreement would cut businesses' costs and generate enough growth and jobs to boost the EU economy by up to €120 bn. And it would do so whilst respecting both sides' environmental, labour and consumer protection standards (see this [memo \(13/211\)](#) for more details).

It would also give consumers access to a wider range of high-quality products and services than ever before.

The US is already the EU's number one export market. A new pact would offer still further opportunities to EU companies to export to the US - and encourage US firms to invest even more in Europe than they do now. By doing so, it would help generate the taxes that fund public services across the EU, from healthcare to pensions.

The agreement could benefit the rest of the world, too. Studies suggest it would give economies across Latin America, Africa and Asia a boost of up to €100 bn a year. And help to strengthen global trade related disciplines.

Find out more

Visit the EU's [dedicated webpages](#) for updates and background information about the EU-US trade negotiations now underway.

[Learn more](#) about how EU and US small- and medium-sized companies could benefit from an agreement:

http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2014/march/tradoc_152266.pdf

And follow the EU's negotiating team on Twitter: [@EU TTIP team](#).

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