



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

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## **TTIP: Strengthening our Values**

Wrocław Global Forum 2014

**Wrocław, 6 June 2014**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very happy to be here with you to discuss the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

That may sound like a platitude, not only because so many speeches begin with a declaration like that, but also because some of you might know that as EU Trade Commissioner I have to give lots of speeches on this topic.

In fact, of all the issues I work on, this is the one that most people are interested in.

So that means lots of invitations to speak about. And if I'm frank – and I'm known for being frank – I would be happy to give fewer of them.

But even if it sounds like a platitude, it is not.

I am very happy to discuss this topic here in Wrocław today. And for two good reasons.

The first reason becomes clear when you look at the attendance list for this Global Forum. We have government representatives, we have researchers and have university officials.

But we also have many business people drawn from the thriving economy of this city. Companies from Poland, from other parts of the European Union and from across the Atlantic are all working together and in parallel to do business – of course – but also to improve local people's quality of life in the process.

There could be no better illustration of what we are trying to do with the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

These companies are examples of how transatlantic trade – at 2 billion euros a day – and investment – which has reached stocks of more than 3 trillion euro overall – is already strong.

The reason it is strong is because it is supported by many bridges.

Some of these are physical – like the thousands of communications cables, flight paths and shipping routes that allow information and people, goods and services to travel freely from America to Europe.

But others, just as important, exist only in the form of written words that govern our behaviour.

To give the best example, the rules of the World Trade Organisation mean that both the European Union and the United States are committed to economic openness.

What we are doing now with TTIP is widening that bridge of rules. We are adding extra lanes so that more prosperity can travel between our economies – in the form of goods, services and investment.

We will do that in many different ways: removing tariffs and barriers to services trade, making regulations more compatible, expanding public procurement opportunities, protecting investments and creating a true transatlantic market for energy.

Our aim is to expand opportunities for people like the citizens of Poland. We want them to continue to benefit from existing investment and trade, and we want them to think bigger – to look even more to the US as a market for Polish business services, car parts or food.

And not just directly. We have to remember that Poland's huge exports to Germany – for instance – very often end up being sold on the US market once they are incorporated in German products.

Polish exporters helped this country keep growing during the crisis. They have shown they can take on the world. TTIP will help them do that – and make the whole country more prosperous as a result.

However, some of you may know – and here let me also be frank – that many people have doubts about this deal.

They believe that to get these gains with the United States we will have to sacrifice some of the core principles of European society.

They say that in order to get this deal the European Union will have to abandon our commitment to high levels of protection for people's health and safety, or the environment of financial stability.

They say that we will have to change our laws on genetically modified food. Or that we want to weaken the tough regulation of banks that we just put in place after the crisis.

They say all this... even when both sides have made very clear that we have no intention of lowering protections.

There are some who say that the European Union and the United States are prepared to give total dominion to multinational corporations through investor to state dispute settlement, even when we have explained that our objective on investment is quite the opposite. We are not starting from scratch here. Poland, for example, is one of several Member States that already has a bilateral investment treaty with the US. Poland also has more than 30 other agreements like this and EU Member States overall have about 1400 of them.

What we are trying to do in TTIP is to start updating all of these agreements to include stronger safeguards that will help avoid frivolous cases and ensure that we protect our right to regulate, while continuing to encourage job-creating investment.

And there are some who say that these negotiations are undemocratic and opaque, even when the European Commission publishes its negotiating positions, consults with stakeholders, and seeks the counsel of the European Parliament, all with the strong support of the EU governments in the Council, and even when it is written in black and white in the Treaty of Lisbon that no deal can pass without the approval of both those bodies.

Let me be clear: I welcome this debate. Detailed public discussion can only lead to better policies. And it is a core part of our democracy.

But it brings me to the second reason I am glad to be here with you. Because on Wednesday we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the fall of communism:

- A day that commemorates the democratic revolutions of 1989 that transformed our whole continent.
- A day that marked the beginning of the return journey of this country and ten others from the communist bloc to the heart of the European project.
- But also a day that reminds us of the deep well of values that we share with the United States.

Those values include open markets, democracy, and the respect for the individual that is the basis for the entire edifice of regulation on both sides of the Atlantic.

And Europe and the United States are among the very small number of places in the world that respect all of these values. On all of these points we share so much more than on what we differ – we only need to look beyond our noses to see that.

And strengthening, not weakening, those shared values is what this agreement is all about.

Because though we are the two largest economies in the world, the world is not static.

The great fact of our time is that new economic powers - on our own continent and all around the world - are emerging. Let me be clear: Those new powers are very welcome:

Just as the West's prosperity, through globalisation, has fuelled their rise, their prosperity is creating opportunities for us.

But the best way to make sure that mutually reinforcing process continues is by making sure that we have an international system – political and economic – that remains committed to open markets, democracy and respect for the individual.

But Europe and America's capacity to do that is gradually falling – along with our share of the world economy.

So we need to maximise our influence by sticking together, and leading by example.

Sticking together has been the focus of President Obama's visit to Poland, Brussels and France this week. He naturally emphasised Poland's important place in the Transatlantic Alliance. And, also naturally, its security dimension.

But TTIP can also help. How?

- By finding ways to make our regulations on products like cars and medicines more compatible – showing in the process that global rules on issues like this are possible.
- Or by uniting our approaches to the way labour rights and the rules on environmental protection can best be supported by trade.
- And by establishing the principle that we are all better off when energy and raw materials are traded along market principles. In fact, given today's foreign policy challenges, removing the legal uncertainty that undermines transatlantic trade in energy would be perhaps the strongest way this deal would support our alliance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I do not for a moment pretend that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership will change the world as much as that election of May 1989 or the fall of the wall in Berlin six months later.

But I do assert that by creating new economic opportunities, and by strengthening shared Atlantic values in a changing world, it will change people's lives for the better.

And I will continue to make every effort to convince people of that fact.

But that is not a task for me alone, or for the European Commission alone. It is the responsibility of everyone in this room – government representative, or academic, businessperson or activist – who wants a prosperous and stable future for Europe.

I hope, therefore, that I can count on your help.

Shortly before becoming Poland's first post-Communist Prime Minister, the late Tadeusz Mazowiecki was asked on American television about what he saw as his greatest task. He answered that it was to convince people that things can be better.

We know that events did not follow a straight line from 1989 to where we are today. There were many ups and downs. But the countless Polish people who brought this country forward over the last twenty-five years rose to meet those challenges.

And when I look around this room, and when any of us looks across the whole European continent, there can be no doubt things did get better, much better indeed.

This agreement presents us with the same challenge today.

We must also rise to meet it.

Thank you for your attention.