

Bernd Lange on the EU-US trade deal: “a ship in troubled waters”

In June 2013 the EU and the US launched negotiations on the world’s largest free-trade agreement to date. It was promised that the agreement would lead to faster growth and more jobs but after seven rounds of negotiations many issues remain unresolved. We spoke to German S&D member Bernd Lange, chair of the international trade committee, who is drafting a report which will assess the results of the TTIP talks and express the Parliament's views on the main issues of a potential agreement.

You say that this report should contribute to a fresh start of the negotiations, how?

The ship is in troubled waters and we do need a fresh start for Parliament to approve an agreement. First, we need absolute transparency in order to be able to communicate with the public and address their fears. Also we need an assessment of what has been already done. We came to an understanding that in some areas such as the chemical industry we won’t be able to reach an agreement. Finally we need to address the most controversial issues such as ISDS . [ISDS: the Investor-state dispute settlement system which allows companies to sue governments for lost profits in offshore arbitration courts.]

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) has sparked a wave of criticism and fears from the public, ranging from an invasion of chlorinated chickens and the scrapping of geographical indicators such as parmesan cheese to the privatisation of public services. Are such fears justified?

The problem is that the mandate was not published right at the start and this lack of transparency has raised many unjustified fears such as the chlorinated chickens' issue. Some fears are real however. The protection of geographical indicators needs to be negotiated for example. In the future I would like to be sure that parmesan cheese comes from Parma and that Black Forest ham is from the Black Forest and not from Ontario.

How should the EU address the concerns of third countries affected by TTIP, such as Turkey and Mexico, which have free trade agreements with the EU and the US respectively?

We have to make sure that their interests are taken into account and that they are included in the negotiations.

Are you optimistic that we can finish negotiations by the end of this year?

That depends on the US.

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[Bernd Lange \(S&D, Germany\)](#)

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Bernd Lange, chair of the international trade committee