

The European Parliament and the TTIP

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Background

Talks between the EU and US on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) could lead to the world's largest bilateral free-trade area. Increased market access and trading opportunities and the removal of unnecessary regulation and red tape could help boost economic growth and create jobs on both sides of the Atlantic. However, there are also concerns about possible adverse impacts.

As co-legislator on the EU's trade agreements, Parliament has taken on the responsibility of ensuring that the talks on TTIP are transparent and that the final outcome is a "good deal". As Parliament's TTIP-spokesperson and rapporteur, Bernd Lange (S&D, DE), puts it, "an agreement which respects European values stimulates sustainable growth and contributes to the well-being of all citizens".

As this is the most ambitious and wide-ranging trade deal the EU has ever negotiated, it could have an impact on many areas of EU public life. The recommendations to the Commission negotiators on the TTIP, approved in the International Trade Committee by 28 votes to 13 with no abstentions, still need to be endorsed by Parliament as a whole.

On 9 June, European Parliament President Martin Schulz decided to postpone the plenary vote on the Parliament's recommendations to the Commission on the TTIP, which had been scheduled for 10 June.

As a result of postponement, the report's 116 tabled amendments will be sent back to the Committee on International Trade (INTA) for consideration and vote on whether they are to be put to a plenary vote.

A TTIP deal, once drawn up by EU and US negotiators, would need the backing of the European Parliament and the EU Council to enter into force.

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Background

The role of the European Parliament

Once the talks are completed the deal has to have the consent of the European Parliament, as well as the backing of EU member countries, before it can enter into force. The negotiations are conducted by the EU Commission. The mandate for the negotiators – setting out what has to be achieved and safeguarded during the talks – is adopted by the EU Council. Although Parliament only has the power to monitor the talks process while it is under way, it has the political clout, as one of the two final co-legislators, to influence the direction of the talks and sound the alarm if it considers the talks are going in the wrong direction.

Parliament's [recommendations](#) to the European Commission for the TTIP talks will be debated and voted on by MEPs in plenary session on June 10. Parliament's recommendations, drafted by its International Trade Committee with contributions from 13 other committees, assess the key results of the talks after one and a half years and sets out Parliament's views on what needs to be achieved and safeguarded in the Commission's talks with the US in areas including agriculture, public procurement, data protection, energy, and labour rights.

Investor protection (ISDS) will be a key issue, with opinions split on whether Parliament should ask that the use of private arbitration to resolve disputes between investors and public authorities be excluded from the deal.

A TTIP deal, once drawn up by EU and US negotiators, would need the backing of the European Parliament and the EU Council to enter into force.

Background

TTIP talks opened up by the European Parliament

The trade negotiations currently under way between the EU and the United States are by far the most transparent trade negotiations ever conducted by the European Union. This is largely as a result of the demands made by Parliament, which showed back in 2012, when it rejected the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA, the controversial intellectual property protection agreement), that it understands its substantial powers in trade and is not afraid to use them. As co-legislator, it has charged itself with ensuring maximum transparency for the public during the talk's process and providing a platform for a public debate with EU businesses and citizens, so that important concerns and interests can be taken on board.

Background

How does Parliament ensure the democratic transparency of the TTIP talks?

A) Monitoring group briefings The EU Commission negotiators brief MEPs before and after each round of talks on its plans and the progress achieved. Parliament's TTIP monitoring group includes the trade committee chair, who is also Parliament's rapporteur on the deal and the shadow rapporteurs. The chairs and rapporteurs of the 14 other EP committees specializing in the areas potentially affected by the TTIP are also invited to join the meetings.

B) "Transparency initiative"

At the European Parliament's insistence, the European Commission agreed to publish [the EU position documents](#). It also decided to grant all MEPs access to the [restricted negotiating documents](#) with the use of a special "reading room". They are not allowed to share these documents publicly but they can get a real insight into the progress of the talks.

C) The mandate

Before the negotiations started in May 2013, Parliament, after consultations with EU stakeholders and citizens, [backed the opening of the talks](#) with conditions, containing both 'red lines' and 'offensive interests', that were taken into account in the negotiating mandate later adopted by the EU Council.

D) The "mid-term review"

The new Parliament is currently taking stock of the progress made so far after eighteen months of talks and following a change of legislators on both sides of the Atlantic. Nine rounds have been concluded so far.

Parliament's assessment will be contained in its recommendations to the EU negotiators, to be put to a plenary vote on 10 June. The International Trade Committee approved the draft recommendations on 28 May, by 28 votes to 13 with no abstentions. These recommendations reflect the opinions of the 14 other committees involved and compromise amendments tabled by MEPs. All the debates on the progress of the talks are taking place in public.

Scroll down to see the calendar of debates in all committees, see video recordings of debates already conducted and read the texts already adopted. To see how your MEP voted, see the list of roll-call votes [here](#).

E) Hearings

As part of its stock-taking exercise on the impact of the future deal on all areas of EU public policy, Parliament holds public hearings and workshops attended by experts, stakeholders in different fields, businesses and citizen activists.

You can follow the latest developments on the TTIP deal [@EP_Trade](#) and through the hashtags [#TTIP](#) and [#EPonTTIP](#).

Background

The procedure: recommendations for the TTIP negotiators in the making

Rapporteur		Vote committee /Links to (draft) reports	Plenary vote	
INTA	Bernd Lange (S&D, DE)	28/05 Draft report Amendments Roll call vote	10/06	
AFET	Francisco José Millán Mon (EPP, ES)	31/03 Final opinion		
DEVE	Arne Lietz (S&D, DE)	24/02 Final opinion		
ECON	Jeppe Kofod (S&D, DK)	27/03 Final opinion		
EMPL	Marian Harkin (ALDE, IE)	01/04 Final opinion		
ENVI	Bart Staes (Greens/EFA, BE)	16/04 Final opinion		
ITRE	Jerzy Buzek (EPP, PL)	25/03 Final opinion		
IMCO	Dita Charanzová (ALDE, CZ)	24/03 Final opinion		
TRAN	Wim van de Camp (EPP, NL)	24/02 No opinion		
JURI	Dietmar Köster (S&D, DE)	17/04 Final opinion		
AFCO	Esteban González Pons (EPP, ES)	16/04 Final opinion		
LIBE	Jan Philipp Albrecht (Greens/EFA, DE)	07/04 Final opinion		
AGRI	Paolo De Castro (S&D, IT), James Nicholson (ECR, UK)	16/04 Final opinion		
CULT	Helga Trüpel (Greens/EFA, DE)	17/04 Final opinion		
PETI	Jarosław Wałęsa (EPP, PL)	17/04 Final opinion		

Background

June plenary: Postponement of TTIP plenary vote and debate

- **9 June:** The EP plenary vote on the TTIP resolution is postponed on the basis of Rule 175 of the Rules of Procedure.
- **10 June:** MEPs decided by 183 votes in favour, 181 against, and 37 abstentions to also postpone the debate on TTIP on the basis of Rule 152. The new calendar is yet to be set.

On 9 June, European Parliament President [Martin Schulz](#) decided to postpone the plenary vote on the Parliament's recommendations to the Commission on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which had been scheduled for 10 June, on the basis of Rule 175 of the EP Rules of Procedure.

Rapporteur and chair of the International Trade Committee [Bernd Lange](#) (S&D, DE) said on postponement of the vote:

"We respect President Schulz's decision and will continue the work on the TTIP-resolution in the Trade Committee. We will use the additional time we gained to work towards reaching a stable majority for the TTIP-resolution. The EP can only come forward with a strong message for the TTIP negotiators if our resolution is supported by a broad majority".

President Schulz made a [statement](#) on the postponement, explaining that he took the decision "after consultations with group leaders and the rapporteur" to "advance the position of the European Parliament as a whole on a crucial issue".

"What we should have is a strong text by the European Parliament and what we should avoid is that Parliament adopts a resolution which is neither here or there, or, even worse, is not able to adopt a resolution" Schulz said.

As a result of postponement, the report's [116 tabled amendments](#) will be sent back to the Committee on International Trade (INTA) for consideration and vote on whether they are to be put to a plenary vote (scroll down for explanation of the procedure under "Rule 175").

In the meantime, negotiations between political groups will continue to take place in search for common ground on divisive issues presented in the TTIP talks.

On 10 June the debate on TTIP, initially scheduled for 08.00, was also postponed on the basis of Rule 152 in a vote 183 votes in favour, 181 against, and 37 abstentions. See the video recording of the vote and debate preceding it.

The new calendar is yet to be set. Before the TTIP report can return for the plenary vote, the committee on International Trade has to vote on whether the 116 plenary amendments and requests for split/separate votes will be put on plenary vote. Those amendments which do not obtain 10% of MEP support (in case of INTA it means 5 MEPs) will fall. The [resolution](#) text as approved by the International Trade Committee on 28 May will not be reopened, however.

Rule 175 was included in the official EP Rules of Procedure in 2002. It states that when more than 50 amendments are tabled in plenary, the EP President may refer the amendments back to the relevant committee in consultation with the chair of that committee. Up until now, Rule 175 has not been used often.

Examples:

In March 2013, Rule 175 was invoked by the EP President when he asked Parliament's Agriculture Committee to consider amendments tabled to proposals for the Common Agricultural Policy package, but the committee had been unsuccessful in reducing the number of amendments for plenary.

Background

In October 2013 use of Rule 175 was with the "Estrela report" on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee. In this case, Ashley Fox (ECR, UK) had requested that the EP President invoke Rule 175 and ask the committee to review the amendments, but the President put the question of whether Rule 175 should be used to a plenary vote. The report was finally referred back to the committee by a roll call vote.

Background

TTIP Public Hearings and Workshops

18 March 2015

INTA [hearing](#) "What's in it for the Europeans?"

24 February 2015

ITRE/INTA joint [hearing](#) "Impact of TTIP on ITRE policy area".

24 February 2015

JURI [hearing](#) on "Administrative procedures in the EU and US".

24 February 2015

IMCO/INTA joint [hearing](#) on "TTIP: Challenges and Opportunities for the Internal Market".

27 January 2015

JURI/INTA joint [hearing](#) held on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP): Regulatory Aspects and Investor-State Dispute Settlement/Arbitration ([Press release](#)).

2 December 2014

EMPL/INTA joint [hearing](#) held on Employment and social aspects of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

1 April 2014

INTA workshop held on Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions in the EU's International Investment Agreements, including TTIP. See [Proceedings of the Workshop](#) and [Studies](#) related to this workshop.

18 March 2014

ECON public [hearing](#) held on the TTIP and Financial Services Regulation.

17 March 2014

IMCO public [hearing](#) held on the Impact of the TTIP on the Internal Market.

11 February 2014

JURI public [hearing](#) held on Regulatory coherence and the implementation of EU law in the context of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

14 October 2013

INTA public [hearing](#) held on Trade and Economic Relations with the United States. Title: 'The regulatory part in the TTIP negotiations'.

30 May 2012

INTA [workshop](#) held on Transatlantic Economic Relations. Title: 'Two heads are better than one'.