

Newsletter September 2017



Petitions on TTIP and CETA - An ongoing European debate

Following a decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union to annul a prior Commission decision refusing to register the European Citizen's Initiative (ECI) "Stop TTIP", in July 2017 the Commission changed its position and decided to formally register the initiative. In this context, the PETI coordinators took the decision to open a debate on petitions pertaining to TTIP and other

aspects of EU trade policy, many of which were submitted in 2014 and remained open throughout the TTIP, CETA, TISA, and other EU trade negotiations.

Responding to concerns raised by petitioners during the PETI September meeting, representatives from the European Commission provided an updated state-of-play on TTIP, CETA, and a number of other EU trade agreements. The Commission recognised that as a result of sustained public pressure across the Union, there had been a "watershed moment" in terms of the Commission's approach to the publication of documents pertaining to trade negotiations.

As regards TTIP, while acknowledging a stall of negotiations following a change of policy within the new US administration and that the chances of re-opening negotiations remained "very, very slim", the Commission also reiterated Commissioner Malmström's position that any future re-visiting of TTIP would depend on strong assurances on common ground from US counterparts as regards a number of important areas and shared standards.

Noting the Commission's progress in engaging with citizens and civil society on EU trade issues, PETI nonetheless took the decision to keep the petitions open and send them to national parliaments, along with the official position of the European Parliament on the recent conclusion of CETA. The Committee also decided to send a letter to the Council in which it will urge the institution to follow the reforms undertaken by the Commission in terms of increasing transparency of EU negotiations.

Petitions on household chemicals - limiting the use and harmful effects of BpA, phtalates, and other restricted substances in the EU

The Committee discussed a number of petitions on household chemicals calling for restrictions or bans on their daily use, particularly by vulnerable groups such as children. In view of updated data and more recent scientific studies, the European Commission specified that new findings are underway on the risk profiles of certain household substances, in particular DEHP, BpA, and THP. The Commission assured the Committee that it is working on updating the regulatory framework on chemicals underpinned by REACH, paying special attention to the dangers of endocrine disruption with a view to lowering the prescriptions for daily intake limits and potentially imposing future bans. The Commission is proceeding in line with scientific assessments and opinions issued by the European Food Safety Authority and the European Environment Agency and is awaiting further conclusions from pending studies.



PETI activities in September:

- Fact-finding mission to Larnaca, Cyprus (20-21 Sept)

Upcoming PETI activities in October:

- Workshop on disabilities (12 Oct)

Petitions on animal testing - Of Mice and Men?



The Committee heard petitioners from Germany on the question of the continued relevance of animal testing in modern toxicology studies and other research on human health. Noting that “a mouse is not predictive of what happens

in rats” and that therefore “only people can predict what happens in people”, the petitioners urged the European Parliament to seriously examine the issue. The petitioners called for a scrapping of legislative requirements for animal testing, and for “bringing REACH into the 21st century”. Representatives of the European Commission agreed with the petitioners to an extent, recalling that the current EU regulatory framework already operates on a “last resort” principle as regards animal testing. The Commission also attested to the fact that its services are working closely with Member States to regulate update REACH, and that it remains a leading example of an innovative piece of legislation, combining scientific stringency with principled flexibility. The Commission concluded however that, as regards complex toxicological assessments, animal testing often remains a necessity, in line with the application of the precautionary principle under REACH.

Documents adopted in PETI:

- Opinion on Promoting the use of energy from renewable sources
- Opinion on the Implementation of the European Disability Strategy
- Opinion on the Revision of Regulation (EU) 211/2011 on the citizens’ initiative

Next PETI meeting: - 11-12 October 2017

See [agenda](#), [documents](#) and [live broadcast](#)

PETI Secretariat

peti-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu
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