



Trade MEPs urge Council to launch trade and investment talks with US

Committees Committee on International Trade [25-04-2013 - 15:30]

The EU Council of Ministers should authorize the start of Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) talks with the US in June, say International Trade Committee MEPs in a resolution voted on Thursday. The negotiating mandate should include public procurement and financial services, but exclude culture, they add.

"I am pleased that a broad majority in this committee backs my view that these talks must start as soon as possible so as to exploit the political momentum and tap the jobs and growth potential of a better integrated transatlantic market. We stress that the outcome must not prejudice the Union's fundamental values", said rapporteur Vital Moreira (S&D, PT) after the resolution was adopted with 23 votes in favour, 5 against and 1 abstention.

Focus on EU economic interests: procurement, transport, services

To deliver growth and jobs for the EU, a transatlantic deal would have to offer new opportunities to EU firms, for example by ensuring "full access to public procurement markets" and removing restrictions on EU service suppliers (e.g. on foreign ownership of US airlines), say MEPs. Financial services must also be included in the talks, with a view to fostering prudential convergence between the EU and US financial regulatory systems, they add.

MEPs also call on the US to lift its EU beef import ban, as a "trust-building measure".

Culture, IPRs, private data, public health and GMOs

An amendment calling for cultural and audiovisual services, including on-line ones, to be excluded from the negotiating mandate was adopted by 14 votes to 11, with 5 abstentions.

The text calls for strong protection in "clearly defined areas of intellectual property rights, including geographical indications" and a "high level of protection of personal data".

US-EU differences over GMOs, cloning and consumer health must not undermine the EU "precautionary principle", it adds.

Involve stakeholders

The text calls on the European Commission, which will negotiate the TTIP on the EU's behalf, also to talk to the widest possible range of stakeholders, so that various interests can be taken into account.

Next steps

The resolution is to be debated and put to vote by Parliament as a whole in May. EU member states are expected to authorize Commission to start the talks in June.

Press release

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