



# UNION SYNDICALE

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## EP plenary debate on 2 February 2016 on TiSA

For information, find below, the concluding words of Cecilia Malström (Commissioner), of Viviane Reding (rapporteur) and the press release of GUE/NGL.

Finally the President of Parliament, - after several interventions in plenary against sending back the report to INTA - , decided not to oppose the number of amendments and the report will go to the vote on Wednesday.

### **Cecilia Malmström, Member of the Commission.**

Mr President, thank you for this possibility to discuss this very important agreement that we are negotiating. TiSA is an opportunity to create a global playing field for trade in services. That has great potential for the economy globally but especially for Europe, because the European Union is quite open to other investment - but we need as well to ensure that our companies can also invest abroad. The GATS Agreement really needs to be updated in order to take into account the new global realities and create, as some of you said, the legal certainty that is so important to get this right. Because I absolutely agree, free trade is not something good *per se* ; free trade is a means to create jobs, goods and investment. But of course it needs to be surrounded by certain regulations and certain rules.

The aim is to make this a multilateral agreement. I fully share your concerns on this, and that is why the EU has been so eager to try to make the architecture as open and as inclusive as possible, so that gradually more countries will join, so that we can bring it under the premises of the WTO. It is a fact that the GATS Agreement does not contain obligations to sign up to the ILO, but that does not mean that we are not pushing for this. The European Union is always pushing for countries, in all kind of relations - including trade, of course - to sign up to the key WTO conventions, and we are continuing to do this as well.

Public services - audio-visual services - are always excluded in our agreements. That is very clear in the mandate we have from the Member States. It is very clear from what you have said today, but also earlier on this. Public services such as education, health, water supplies and audio-visual services are excluded. They do not need to be privatised, and if they are privatised there is nothing in this agreement, nor in TTIP or in any other agreement, that will prevent the local, regional or national level if there is a political decision to bring it back to the public sector if that is the political decision.

Also the right to regulate in a non-discriminatory way is not affected. Authorities on all levels can legislate on, for instance, environmental and health standards as they wish, and this will not change.

On transparency, as you have seen, we have really tried to make the EU contribution to this as transparent as possible. Most of the EU proposals, and a summary after each negotiation round, are on line. You as MEPs have access to all documents. But this is a negotiation that we lead together with 22 other countries, and there is no way we can legally publish the proposals of Peru, Australia, New Zealand, Turkey, Pakistan, etc. That has to be their decision. I deplore the fact that they have not chosen to be as transparent as we have, but we cannot publish this, and that is why sometimes proposals, even draft proposals from a given country, appear on the internet, leaked. That does not mean that they are actually part of the negotiation ; it is a proposal or a draft for one country. Many of these - you referred to some of them - have been immediately rejected by us and others as well. But we will continue to try to see if we can make this even more transparent and to make sure you are as included and as engaged as possible.

In the end you will, of course, like the Member States, have your say on this. We are negotiating TiSA based on the mandate given to us by 28 countries, and you also had your say on this when it started. I am very mindful of the concerns that you have expressed here - we are taking them on board and we will continue to do so - and of the concerns that that many people have outside this whole House. But I am also very mindful that we still have huge unemployment in this European Union, that millions of people are still without jobs, and TiSA and other trade agreements are a way to create jobs and investment and growth in Europe, which desperately needs it. So we need to find a balance there.

I think that with your input in the resolution, the debate we will have and the continued negotiations - as I said, there is a round as we talk this week, and we will debrief you from that immediately when it is over - jointly we can make this agreement that finds the right balance that so many of you are asking for, and I will be happy to continue to engage with you. Thank you Ms Reding for the fantastic work you have done to get such a broad majority, also all the other committees for your involvement in this, and the shadow rapporteurs.

### **Viviane Reding, rapporteure.**

Monsieur le Président, comme l'ont démontré la plupart des prises de position, le Parlement forme un front commun pour exiger une transparence pleine et entière, des règles commerciales plus justes, des ouvertures de marché plus réciproques, le droit à réguler et à sauvegarder et davantage de droits pour les consommateurs plus nombreux. Les principaux groupes politiques prennent les choses en main dans ce sens.

La mondialisation et la numérisation de nos économies sont des faits. La question est donc la suivante : "Voulons-nous que l'Europe soit un continent hors taxes et le reste du monde un terrain de jeu sans foi ni loi ?". La réponse du Parlement doit être très claire : "Non, nous voulons écrire les règles du jeu aujourd'hui pour ne pas avoir à les subir demain. Nous voulons un accord qui protège nos entreprises et nos citoyens, et oui, nous voulons un changement de politique."

Depuis les élections européennes de 2014, un vent nouveau souffle sur la politique commerciale de l'Union européenne et, avec ce rapport, le Parlement s'apprête à hisser la grande voile. Si nos recommandations sont suivies, elles seront une source de croissance pour l'Europe, des gains de compétitivité pour nos entreprises, un filet de sécurité pour nos citoyens. J'appelle donc les politiques et les groupes à maintenir le fort soutien qu'ils ont démontré lors des travaux parlementaires. Seule une large majorité en plénière mènera à une prise en considération des demandes du Parlement européen.

Comme l'a dit le président de la commission du commerce international, en allemand : Ein klares Ja zum Text, ein klares Nein zu faulen Kompromissen. (*Un OUI retentissant au texte, un NON retentissant aux compromis non tenus.*)

## GUE/NGL Press release

### TiSA : Vote on the amendments & stop signing agreements that undermine the social values of Europe

During tonight's debate in the European Parliament on the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA), GUE/NGL MEPs called for amendments to the agreement to be voted on tomorrow despite efforts from President Schulz to postpone voting.

Greek MEP, **Stelios Kouloglou**, told the plenary : "The only ones who want agreements like the current version of TiSA are the multinational companies and their political representatives. They want deregulation, they want no rules, they want to undermine the states and small and medium enterprises, and they want to undermine labour standards and quality."

Referring to the amendments that have been proposed by various political groups within the Parliament, he added : "If the GATS agreement needs to be reformed, then let's bring it up to date. It is clear that the citizens of Europe want public services excluded from the TiSA agreement. Otherwise, we will see more privatisation in education and health. We are asking for governments to have the power to change their policies and their agreements and we are asking for protection of the environment and data privacy."

While GUE/NGL MEPs have proposed amendments to reduce the negative impacts of the agreement, Kouloglou expressed the group's ultimate position : "Even at this late stage, we are asking the European Parliament and the European Commission to withdraw from the negotiations as Uruguay did. This agreement is unnecessary for the European Union and unwanted by its citizens. It's time to stop signing agreements that undermine the social values of Europe."

GUE/NGL Coordinator on the Committee on International Trade, **Helmut Scholz**, addressed Commissioner Reding, the rapporteur for the report on TiSA, directly : "While I acknowledge that your report includes a number of our demands as a result of the mobilisation of civil society against TiSA, many of the demands put by trade unions, municipal governments and consumer organisations - which were included in the amendments proposed by our group - were not included in your compromise amendments."

"We are now calling on you to use only positive lists because what isn't debated explicitly isn't subject to market rules.

"In the voting list you've voted against almost every recommendation of the technical committees who are trying to protect consumers and producers. Where are red lines that the committees put forward ?

"Commissioner, I don't think this resolution is going to change the way the Commission handles the negotiations and that is why we are not going to be able to vote in favour."

Dutch MEP, **Anne-Marie Mineur**, added : "TiSA is the ugly little brother of TTIP and a number of other agreements. It's an example of how the EU does what multinational companies tell it to do. All of this of course runs counter to labour rights and against democracy in a lot of countries because TiSA is going to force a lot of countries to open up a lot of markets and force them to make a series of concessions which are simply not acceptable."

"Amendment 20 calls on the Commissioner to withdraw from the negotiations. If we genuinely want to protect public services, then TiSA is not a good thing and I will vote against it.

"I also draw to your attention to amendments 19, 20 and 48. This agreement has to be ratified by national governments and that is called for in an amendment. Furthermore, ILO standards must be binding," Mineur concluded.

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