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European and Canadian civil society groups call for rejection of CETA

November 28, 2016 [European and Canadian civil society groups call for rejection of CETA](#) 2016-11-29T10:55:25+00:00

Joint Statement : 455 European and Canadian civil society groups call for rejection of CETA

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November 2016

We, the undersigned civil society organisations from Canada and Europe, hereby express our deep concern about the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada. During the long process of the deal's negotiations and legal check, we repeatedly pointed out major problems with the CETA text. We provided concrete inputs, which could have triggered a shift towards a more transparent and democratic trade policy with the protection of the environment and people's fundamental rights at its core. But our concerns have not been addressed in the CETA as signed in October 2016. This is why we are stating our firm opposition to the ratification of the agreement.

Our objections are shared by a growing number of citizens on both sides of the Atlantic. A record 3.5 million people from all over Europe have signed a petition against CETA and its twin agreement, the EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.ⁱ Over 2,100 local and regional governments have declared themselves TTIP- and CETA-free.ⁱⁱ Constitutional challenges against CETA have been filed in Germany ⁱⁱⁱ and Canada ^{iv} and the legality of CETA's controversial privileges for foreign investors will likely be ruled on by the Court of Justice of the European Union.^v

On both sides of the Atlantic, farmers, trade unions, public health, consumer, environmental and digital rights groups, other NGOs, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have rejected the agreement.^{vi} In October 2016, concerns in four sub-federal Belgian governments about the agreement's

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negative impacts, and, in particular, its dangerous “investment court system”, nearly stopped their federal government from signing CETA.

Despite the controversy, the Canadian government and the EU institutions are trying to expedite CETA’s ratification. In Canada, legislation that would bring the agreement into force has already been introduced, without allowing time for any public consultation on the final agreement. The European Parliament also seems set to cut short its internal consultation processes, thereby limiting debate over ratifying the 1,600-page-long CETA text. After that, large parts of the agreement would be brought into force provisionally - long before the parliaments of all 28 EU member states have had their say.

To gain support for CETA ratification and allay concerns, numerous declarations have been attached to the text in the past months. But not a letter of the CETA text has been changed since its final version was published in early 2016. And despite the accompanying statements, including a EU-Canada “Joint Interpretative Instrument”, fundamental problems arising from the problematic CETA text remain, as experts have demonstrated.[vii](#)

We wish to highlight some of our fundamental concerns about the agreement as signed :

- CETA would empower thousands of corporations to sue governments over legitimate and non-discriminatory measures to protect people and the planet. Nothing in the agreement or the accompanying declarations would stop corporations from using CETA’s investor rights to bully decision-makers away from public interest regulation, for example to tackle climate change. CETA even leaves the door open to “compensating” corporations for unrealised future profits when a change in policy affects their investment. Far from “radically” reforming the investor-state dispute settlement process, CETA expands and entrenches it. [viii](#)
- CETA’s Investment Court System (ICS) grants highly enforceable rights to investors - but no corresponding obligations. It does not enable citizens, communities or trade unions to bring a claim when a company violates environmental, labour, health, safety, or other rules. It risks being incompatible with EU law as it establishes a parallel legal system, allowing investors to circumvent existing courts. The ICS is discriminatory because it grants rights to foreign investors that are neither available to citizens nor to domestic investors. [ix](#)
- In stark contrast to the rights for corporations, CETA’s provisions on labour rights and sustainable development cannot be effectively enforced through sanctions. They remain empty statements with no bearing on the dangers that other chapters in the agreement pose to workers’ rights, environmental protection and measures to mitigate climate change. [x](#)
- CETA severely limits governments’ ability to create, expand, and regulate public services and reverse failed liberalisations and privatisations. CETA is the first EU agreement which makes the liberalisation of services the rule and public interest regulation the exception. This threatens people’s access to high-quality services such as water, transport, social and health care, as well as attempts to provide public services in line with public interest goals. [xi](#)
- An independent study of CETA’s economic impacts predicts jobs would be lost in both Canada and Europe, economic growth would be slower than without the deal, and the rather small



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income gains would go overwhelmingly to capital owners - not workers. As a result, inequality is expected to be higher under CETA than without the agreement. [xii](#)

- CETA makes Canada and the EU more vulnerable to financial crises by further liberalising financial markets and severely restricting reforms aimed at removing key causes of financial instability and ensuring better protection of consumers and the economy as a whole. [xiii](#)
- CETA would drive up Canadian prescription drug costs by at least Can\$850 million per year (€583 million). It would negatively impact fundamental rights, such as the right to privacy and data protection and limit the EU's and Canada's ability to roll back excessive intellectual property rights (IPR) that limit access to knowledge and innovation. Some of CETA's IPRs resemble closely the text of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), which was rejected by the European Parliament in 2012. [xiv](#)
- CETA's rules on regulatory cooperation and domestic regulation will put additional burdens on regulators and strengthen the role of corporate lobbyists in the policy-making process, potentially undermining much-needed public interest policy-making. [xv](#)
- On both sides of the Atlantic, CETA would expose farmers to competitive pressures that undermine their livelihoods with little gain to consumers; increase corporate control over seeds ; obstruct buy-local food policies ; and threaten high food processing and production standards, undermining efforts to boost sustainable agriculture. [xvi](#)
- Precautionary measures to protect consumers, public health and the environment could be challenged under CETA based on claims that they are overly burdensome, not "science based" or are disguised trade barriers. Nothing in the CETA text or accompanying declarations effectively protects the role of the precautionary principle in European regulatory policy, while some sections even refer to conflicting principles. [xvii](#)

CETA is the result of a largely secret negotiation process between the previous Canadian government and the previous European Commission. The final CETA text and accompanying declarations ignore almost all of the reasonable and very specific amendments proposed by civil society [xviii](#) to address the flaws of the agreement. The most recent attempts to re-open the negotiations, by the government of the Walloon region in Belgium, were blocked. Now, only a 'take it or leave it', yes or no vote on the 1,600-page agreement is possible.

We urge :

- the European Parliament, the Canadian Parliament, as well as national, provincial and regional parliaments, which have a say in the ratification, to defend the rights and interests of the people they represent against the threats posed by CETA by voting against the ratification of the agreement ;
- the many municipal and other regional and provincial governments that have raised concerns over CETA to make their voices heard in the ratification process ;
- these parties to begin a thorough, democratic consultation, including of civil society, on the foundations of a new, fair and sustainable trade agenda.

As it stands, CETA is not a progressive trade deal. It would be a mistake to adopt this treaty with its many worrying provisions as a model for agreements to come. CETA is a backward-looking and even more intrusive version of the old free trade agenda designed by and for the world's largest multinationals. We need a paradigm shift toward a transparent and inclusive trade policy founded on the needs of people and our planet. Ratifying CETA will take us many steps further away from this much needed change.

Signatories

International

Center for International Environmental Law, International

FIAN International, International

GRAIN, International

International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers'

Associations (IUF), International

IATP - Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, International

IOGT International, International

Public Services International (PSI), International

SumOfUs, International

ActionAid International, International

No Vox International, International

European organisations

ClientEarth, Europe

Compassion in World Farming, Europe

European Digital Rights (EDRi), Europe

European Environmental Bureau, Europe

European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), Europe

European Transport Workers' Federation, Europe

European Secretariat of the World March of Women, Europe

Federation of Young European Greens, Europe



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Friends of the Earth Europe, Europe
Green Budget Europe, Europe
Greenpeace, Europe
Seattle to Brussels network, Europe
The Health and Trade Network, Europe
UNI Europa, Europe

Canadian organisations

Breaking the Silence Maritime Guatemala Solidarity Network PEI Chapter, Canada
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Canada
Canadian Environmental Law Association, Canada
Canadian Health Coalition, Canada
Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Canada
Canadian Union of Public Employees, Canada
Citizens in Action, Canada
Common Frontiers, Canada
Cooper Institute, Canada
Coordination québécoise de la Marche mondiale des femmes, Canada, Quebec
Council of Canadians, Canada
Don't Frack PEI, Canada
Environmental Coalition of Prince Edward Island (ECO-PEI), Canada
Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ), Canada
Green Economy Network, Canada
Group of 78, Canada
MacKillop Centre for Social Justice, Canada
MiningWatch Canada, Canada
National Farmers Union, Canada
National Union of Public and General Employees, Canada
OpenMedia, Canada

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PEI Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy, Canada
PEI Federation of Labour, Canada
PEI Health Coalition, Canada
People's Health Movement Canada/Mouvement populaire pour la santé au Canada, Canada
PharmaWatch Canada, Canada
Prince Edward Island Food Security Network, Canada
Public Service Alliance of Canada, Canada
Save Our Seas and Shores, Canada
Seafarers International Union of Canada, Canada
Trade Justice Network, Canada
Unifor, Canada
United Steelworkers, Canada
Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux (APTS), Canada, Quebec
Alternatives, Canada, Quebec
AmiEs de la Terre Québec, Canada, Quebec
Association canadienne des avocats du mouvement syndical (ACAMS-CALL), Canada, Quebec
Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI), Canada, Quebec
Attac-Québec, Canada, Quebec
Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD), Canada, Quebec
Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ), Canada, Quebec
Centre international de solidarité ouvrière (CISO), Canada, Quebec
Centre justice et foi, Canada, Quebec
Chapitre montréalais du Conseil des Canadiens, Canada, Quebec
Coalition des associations de consommateurs du Québec (CACQ), Canada, Quebec
Coalition Solidarité Santé, Canada, Quebec
Collectif pour un Québec sans pauvreté, Canada, Quebec
Comité pour les droits humains en Amérique latine (CDHAL), Canada, Quebec
Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), Canada, Quebec
Conseil central du Montréal métropolitain (CCMM-CSN), Canada, Quebec
Eau Secours ! la coalition québécoise pour une gestion responsable de l'eau, Canada, Quebec
Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ), Canada, Quebec
Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ), Canada, Quebec
Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec (FECQ), Canada, Quebec
Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec (FIQ), Canada, Quebec
Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU), Canada, Quebec
Génération nationale, Canada, Quebec
L'R des centres de femmes du Québec, Canada, Quebec
L'Entraide missionnaire, Canada, Quebec
Ligue des droits et libertés, Canada, Quebec
Mouvement d'éducation populaire et d'action communautaire du Québec (MÉPACQ), Canada, Quebec
Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes (RQGE), Canada, Quebec
Réseau québécois sur l'intégration continentale (RQIC), Canada, Quebec
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Unifor Québec, Canada, Quebec

Union des consommateurs, Canada, Quebec

Union des employés et employées de service section locale 800 (UES 800), Canada, Quebec

Union paysanne, Canada, Quebec

EU member states

AK EUROPA, Austria

3 F Frederiksborg, Denmark

A contre-courant, Belgium

AB “Švyturys” trade union, Lithuania

ActiveWatch, Romania

ACV-CSC, Belgium

AEFJN, Belgium

Afrika Kontakt, Denmark

Aire, Spain

AITEC, France

AK Fracking Braunschweiger Land, Germany

Aktion gegen arbeitsunrecht (action against labour injustice), Germany

aktion21-austria, Austria

Alcohol Policy Youth Network, Slovenia

ALEBA – Association Luxembourgeoise des Employés de Banque et Assurance, Luxembourg

Alliance D19-20, Belgium

Alliance for Cancer Prevention, United Kingdom

Amis de la Terre, France

AMPOS – Association of Professional Musicians of Symphonic Orchestras, Spain

An Cláíomh Glas, Ireland

An Taisce, Ireland

Animalia, Finland

ANSOL - Associação Nacional para o Software Livre, Portugal

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ASAMBLEA FRACKING NO MERINDADES NORTE DE BURGOS, Spain
ASiA- Associació Salut i Agroecologia, Spain
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AVALOT - Joves de la UGT de Catalunya-, Spain
Balkani Wildlife Society, Bulgaria
Baloldali Alternatíva Egyesülés, Hungary
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Bio-Lëtzebuerg, Luxembourg
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Both ENDS, The Netherlands
Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland (BUND), Friends of the Earth Germany, Germany
Bündnis TTIP Stoppen, Austria
Campact e.V., Germany
Campagna Stop TTIP Italia, Italy
Campaign against Climate Change, United Kingdom
Campaña #NoalTTIP, Spain
Cancer Prevention & Education Society, United Kingdom
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ECOAR))), Spain Galicia
Ecocity, Greece
Ecologistas en Acción, Spain
Economistas Sin Fronteras, Spain
EH TTIP/CETA Ez Kanpaina, Spain, Basque Country
Ekologistak Martxan, Spain, Basque Country
ELA (Basque Workers Solidarity), Spain, Basque Country
Emmaus Aurinkotehdas, Finland
End Ecocide On Earth, Austria
Entrepueblos/entrepobles/entrepobos/herriarte, Spain
Environmental Planning and Education Network, Hungary
Estonian Society for Nature Conservation, Estonia
European Anti Poverty Network Ireland, Ireland
“Europe and We” Association, Bulgaria
EWHN, European Work Hazards Network Denmark, Denmark
Fairtrade Lëtzebuerg, Luxembourg
Fairwatch, Italy
Fauna Alapítvány, Hungary
Fédération Artisans du Monde, France
Federation of Independent Trade Unions in Education (FSIE), Romania
Federation Syndicale Unitaire (FSU), France
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FENPROF, Portugal
FIAN Deutschland, Germany
FIAN Österreich, Austria
FIAN Sweden, Sweden
FÍIS NUA, Ireland
FNCTTFEL, Luxembourg
Focus, association for sustainable development, Slovenia
Fondation COPERNIC, France
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Gen-ethisches Netzwerk, Germany
GENUK, Gemeinnütziges Netzwerk für Umweltkranke e.V., Germany
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GMO Free Bulgaria, Bulgaria
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Green institute, Greece
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Hungarian Network of Social Forum, Hungary
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INKOTA-netzwerk e.V., Germany
Inspi-Ráció Egyesület, Hungary
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Institute of Global Responsibility (IGO), Poland
Instytut Spraw Obywatelskich INSPRO, Poland
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Intersindical Valenciana, Spain País Valencià
Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Ireland
Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers Association, ICOSA, Ireland
Iuridicum Remedium, z. s., Czech Republic
Joves d'Esquerra Verda, Spain
Karl Marx Society, Hungary
Kauno regiono energetinių įmonių jungtinė darbininkų profsąjunga, Lithuania
Keep Ireland Fracking Free, Ireland
Kehys - The Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU, Finland
KMU gegen TTIP, Austria
Közép-dunántúli Biokultúra Egyesület, Hungary, Europe
Kulturrat Österreich, Austria
La Casa Azul del Occidente, Spain
Les Amis de la Terre, Belgium
Letterbreen and Mullaghdu Community, United Kingdom
Links Ecologisch Forum (LEF), Belgium
Lithuanian Industry Trade Union Federation, Lithuania
Lithuanian Seafarers' Union, Lithuania
Lithuanian Trade Union of Health Care Employees, Lithuania
LobbyControl, Germany
LRT darbuotojų profesinė sąjunga, Lithuania
Luonto-Liitto / The Finnish Nature League, Finland
Magosfa Foundation, Hungary
Magyar Antifasiszta Liga, Hungary
Mandate Trade Union, Ireland
Marchas de la Dignidad-Madrid, Spain
Marea Blanca de Ponent i Pirineus, Spain Catalonia
Mareas ciudadanas, Spain
May Day, Denmark
Mediterranean Antinuclear Watch (MANW), Greece



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MedSOS, Greece
Meer Democratie, The Netherlands
Mehr Demokratie, Germany
Mercy International Association, Ireland
Milieudefensie, The Netherlands
MOC, Belgium
Moral Cerdit Association, Hungary
Mouvement Ecologique, Luxembourg
Mouvement politique des objecteurs de croissance (mpOC), Belgium
Mouvement Rural de Jeunesse Chretienne, France
Mouvement Utopia, France
Movement for Just Society (Gibanje za pravično družbo- GPD), Slovenia
MTVSZ / Friends of the Earth Hungary, Hungary
Mundubat, Spain Basque Country
Nacion humana universal, Spain
National Justice and Peace Network, United Kingdom
Naturefriends Greece, Greece
NaturFreunde Deutschlands, Germany
New Wind Association, Finland
No Transat !, Belgique / Belgium
NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark, Denmark
Non ao TTIP Galiza, Spain Galicia
ÖBV - Via Campesina Austria, Austria
ÖGB - Austrian Trade Union Federation, Austria
OGM dangers, France
Oikos - Cooperação e Desenvolvimento, Portugal
OMAL, Spain
Open Cages, Lithuania
Organisation des producteurs de lait, France
Padrines i Padrins Flautes de Mallorca, Spain
Paz con Dignidad, Spain
PCS, United Kingdom

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PEAH - Policies for Equitable Access to Health, Italy
Pénzügyi Szervezetek Lakossági Figyelője Egyesület, Hungary
People Before Profit, United Kingdom
People's Front, Hungary
Peoples Movement, Ireland
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Finland, Finland
Plataforma Algarve Loivre de Petróleo, Portugal
Plataforma Não ao Tratado Transatlântico, Portugal
Plataforma no al TTIP Sevilla, Spain
Plataforma pel Dret a Decidir del País Valencià, Spain País Valencià
Plataforma STOP CETA Ponent i Pirineus, Spain
Plateforme Stop CETA & TTIP, Luxembourg
Platform Aarde Boer Consument, The Netherlands
Polyán Egyesület, Hungary
PowerShift e.V., Germany
Presentation Interprovincial Justice Desk, Ireland and the UK
Procés Constituent, Spain (Catalonia)
Protestival, Slovenia
Quercus - Associação Nacional de Conservação da Natureza, Portugal
Quintessenz - Verein zur Wiederherstellung der Bürgerrechte im Informationszeitalter, Austria
Red andaluzá no al TTIP, Spain
Réseau Semences Paysannes, France
Rettet den Regenwald, Germany
Right2Water Campaign Ireland, Ireland
Skiftet, Sweden
Slow Food Ireland, Ireland
Slow Food Italy, Italy
Social movement for Sustainable Development of Slovenia – TRS (Drštvo Gibanje TRS9), Slovenia
Social Justice Ireland , Ireland
Sociedad cultural gijonesa, Spain
Solidary Bulgaria, Bulgaria
SOM ENERGIA, Spain
Som lo que Sembrem, Spain Catalonia
STEI Intersindical, Spain Balearic Islands
Stop CETA Alliance Ireland, Ireland
STOP Desahucios Hernani, Spain
Stop TAFTA Luxembourg, Luxembourg
StopTTIP uk, United Kingdom
STOP TTIP CETA TiSA Greece, Greece
Stowarzyszenie Ekologiczne EKO-UNIA, Poland
Students against TTIP UK, United Kingdom
Susivienijimas ŽALI.LT, Lithuania
Sustainable Water Network, Ireland
SZAB, Hungary



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Technical Engineering and Electrical Union, Ireland
The Barn Owl Foundation, Hungary
The Danish Ecological Council, Denmark
The Environmental Pillar, Ireland
The Irish Food Writers' Guild, Ireland
The Irish Wildlife Trust, Ireland
Tid til fred - aktiv mod krig, Denmark
Towards Sustainability Association, Hungary
Trade Justice Movement, United Kingdom
Trade union of Lithuanian food producers, Lithuania
Trades Union Congress, United Kingdom
transform ! italia, Italy
Transitie Nederland, The Netherlands
Transnational Institute (TNI), The Netherlands
Trócaire, Ireland
TTIP and Agriculture coalition, The Netherlands
TTIP Network Finland, Finland
TTIPunfairHandelbar, Germany
UAB Siaulių energetikos statyba profesinė sąjunga, Lithuania
UFISC, France
UGT (Unión General de Trabajadores), Spain
UGT de Catalunya, Spain
UGT LLEIDA, Spain – Lleida Catalonia
ULC Union Luxembourgeoise des Consommateurs nouvelle a.s.b.l., Luxembourg
Umanotera, Slovenia
Umweltinstitut München e.V., Germany
Unconditional Basic Income Europe, Belgium
Unión Sindical Obrera (USO), Spain
Union Syndicale Fédérale, Europe
Union syndicale Solidaires, France
UnternehmensGrün e.V., Germany
USTEA (Unión de Sindicatos de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores en Andalucía), Spain

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Utopia, Slovakia
Vaistinių darbuotojų profesinė sąjunga, Lithuania
Védegylet Egyesület, Hungary
Vida, Austria
Visnyeszéplaki Faluvédő és Közművelődési Egyesület, Hungary
Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment, Ireland
Vrijsschrift, The Netherlands
War on Want, United Kingdom
WEED - World Economy, Ecology & Development, Germany
Wicklow (Eire)&Friends Against TTIP/CETA, Ireland
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Netherlands, The Netherlands
World March of Women(WMW) - Cordination CATALONIA, Spain Catalonia
wwoof italia, Italy
XminY het actiefionds, The Netherlands
Young Friends of the Earth Cyprus, Cyprus
Za Zemiata, Friends of the Earth Bulgaria, Bulgaria
ZDRUŽENJE ZA EKONOMSKO DEMOKRACIJO, Slovenia
Zelena akcija / Friends of the Earth Croatia, Croatia
ZERO - Association for the Sustainability of the Earth System, Portugal
Zivilcourage Innviertel, Austria
Zöld Akció Egyesület (Green Action), Hungary
Zold Volgyert Egyesulet, Hungary

[i](#) Interactive map of the [European initiative against TTIP and CETA](#)

[ii](#) [TTIP and CETA free zones in Europe](#)

[iii](#) [Information on the constitutional challenge against CETA at Germany's constitutional court](#)

[iv](#) [Constitutional challenge against CETA at the Federal Court of Canada](#)

[v](#) See, for example: [Investment Court System in CETA to be judged by the ECJ](#)

[vi](#) See, for example: [Civil society groups call on European governments to reject the CETA agreement](#); [Joint Canadian Trade Union statement on CETA](#); [Small and medium-sized enterprise from across Europe call on European governments to reject the CETA agreement](#)

[vii](#) See, for example: [The Great CETA swindle](#); [The EU-Canada Joint Interpretive Declaration/Instrument on the CETA](#); [CETA to be signed unchanged, but less likely to be ratified after Wallonian resistance](#)

[viii](#) See, for example: [CETA – Trading away democracy](#)



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ix See, for example: [The Zombie ISDS. Rebranded as ICS, rights for corporations to sue states refuse to die](#)

x See, for example: “Labour rights”, in: [Making sense of CETA](#)

xi See, for example: [CETA and Public Services](#)

xii [CETA without blinders: how cutting ‘trade costs and more’ will cause unemployment, inequality and welfare losses](#)

xiii See, for example: “The financial services chapter: Inflating bank profits at the expense of citizens”, in [Making sense of CETA](#)

xiv See, for example: [ACTA-CETA similarities](#); Trade and Privacy: [Complicated bedfellows? How to achieve data protection-proof free trade agreements?](#); and “Patents, copyright and innovation” and “Canada-specific concerns”, in [Making sense of CETA](#)

xv See, for example: “Limiting how and what government regulates” and “More cooperation for less regulation”, in [Making sense of CETA](#); and [CIEL letter to Minister-President Magnette](#)

xvi See, for example: “CETA’s threat to agricultural markets and food quality”, in [Making sense of CETA](#)

xvii [CETA, TTIP and the EU precautionary principle](#)

xviii For examples of specific amendments put forward by trade unions and environmental organisations, see: [Protocol on Dispute Settlement and Institutional Mechanisms for the trade and sustainable development and trade and labour provisions](#); [Understanding on the Provision of Public Services and Procurement](#); [Protocol on Investment Protection](#); [Understanding on the Precautionary Principle](#) ; [BUND proposals for amendments on public services, the precautionary principle and the promotion of renewable energy](#)

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