

European Citizens' Initiative against the TTIP and CETA (as of 15.5.2014)

We are a coalition of citizens' organizations that is aiming to launch a European Citizens' Initiative on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) currently being negotiated between the EU and the USA, and the EU and Canada, respectively. The planned launch date for the ECI is September 2014.

1. Our Criticism

We criticize the lack of transparency of the negotiations, the lack of democratic participation in the development of the negotiation mandate and the lack of democratic control over the negotiations.

We fear that the proposed free-trade agreements between the EU and the USA and Canada serve the interests of corporations and not of citizens:

- they undermine democracy and the rule of law: The agreement allows foreign corporations to sue countries for punitive damages in secretive arbitration proceedings when countries pass laws that could reduce their profits.
- they open the door to privatization: The agreement will make it easier for corporations to earn profits from the public water supply and health and education systems.
- they endanger our health and environment: Practices that are legally allowed in the U.S. and Canada would be legally permitted also in the EU. This would clear the way for fracking and the production and import of genetically-modified food and hormone-treated meat. The agreement weakens animal welfare standards and small scale family farming and grants the agribusiness industry even more power.
- they undermine freedom: The agreements open the way for even more monitoring and surveillance of internet users. Excessive copyright regulations restrict free access to culture, education, and science.
- they are practically irreversible: Once agreed upon, the contracts are essentially no longer amendable by elected politicians as any change requires the agreement of all parties. No country could unilaterally decide to withdraw from the contract, as it is the EU which enters into the agreement.

2. The text of the ECI

Subject-matter: We invite the European Commission to recommend to the Council to repeal the negotiating mandate for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and not to conclude the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

Main objectives: We want to prevent TTIP and CETA in their currently planned form because they include investor-state dispute settlement and rules on regulatory cooperation that pose a threat to democracy and the rule of law. We want to prevent employment, social, environmental, privacy and consumer standards from being lowered and public services (such as water) and cultural assets from being deregulated in non-transparent negotiations. The ECI is not directed against trade agreements in general.

Explanation: An ECI must always lie within the framework of the powers of the European Commission. The final text will be decided by the ECI coalition.

3. Why an ECI?

The success of the ECI www.right2water.eu has shown that this instrument can be effective in practice. Right2Water succeeded in having water resources excluded from the EU directive on concessions.

4. How do we reach the minimum number of signatures?

In order for an ECI to be successful, at least 1 million signatures must be collected within one year and country-specific quorums (minimum number of signatures) must be achieved in at least 7 EU member states. As of mid-May 2014 around 60 organizations from 10 member states have announced their support for the ECI. It should be no problem to secure the quorums in Germany, Finland, Portugal, Luxembourg and the UK as large organizations in these countries are already part of the coalition (for example, Campact has already collected nearly half a million signatures against the TTIP in Germany and Austria). We are trying to build strong and effective campaign structures in as many member states as possible.

5. Contact information

Maritta Strasser, Campact e.V. strasser@campact.de T. +49 4231 95745

Annette Sawatzki, Campact e.V. sawatzki@campact.de T. +49 4231 957466

Michael Efler, Mehr Demokratie e.V. michael.efler@mehr-demokratie.de T. +49 30 42082370

Karl Bär, Umweltinstitut München e.V. kb@umweltinstitut.org T. +49 89 30774934