

# Health, environment and climate are not negotiable

More than 100 *Civil society organisations demand a stop to trade talks that will further endanger EU rules on health and the environment and aggravate the climate crisis. A change of course is needed.*



We have followed the recent talks between the European Commission and the US authorities on a new trade agreement with disbelief and disappointment. It has become clear that the Commission is prepared to accommodate Trump's demands for a reduction of EU food safety levels, to the detriment of public health, animal welfare and the environment, and also undermining EU commitments on climate change.

Fear of threats made by the US President to impose high tariffs on European cars cannot be an excuse for retreating on basic public interest. The apparent paradigm shift within the Commission, emerging after months of negotiating behind closed doors and largely shielded from public scrutiny, is highly alarming. We call on governments and parliamentarians in the

EU to push the Commission to alter its course. It must be made clear to the US Administration that our public health and environmental protection levels are not for sale.

Pressure from US trade negotiators on the EU to lower standards is nothing new. Recent statements made by US Agricultural Secretary Perdue stated that any deal would depend on concessions from the EU to allow meat rinsed with acid or chlorine, or treated with hormones, pesticide residues in food and feed, or the dismantling of protective rules on GMOs.

What is new is the response from the EU. When a comprehensive free trade agreement (TTIP) was negotiated with the US previously, the Commission claimed it would not lower standards. But recent statements by Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan about the current talks show a different approach. He has spoken of “a long list of regulatory barriers in agriculture” that could be “resolved” in an agreement.

These “regulatory barriers” are in place for good reasons: We have rules on pesticides and chemical hormones in meat to protect our health and the environment. We have restrictions on GMOs to protect biodiversity and consumers. We have restrictions on meat treated with chlorine or acid to protect animal welfare and food safety. EU citizens’ commitment to a precautionary approach was strongly confirmed during the public debate on TTIP – a trade agreement that would not have survived a democratic vote within the EU had it included concessions on the scale now demanded by the US.

We believe the Commission is putting the goals of the ‘European Green Deal’ at risk. This comprehensive strategy covers several elements now targeted by the US. For instance, according to the strategy the EU must work “to reduce significantly the use and risk of chemical pesticides”. Repeated calls from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) to support sustainable agriculture add further strength to this commitment. Yet, the Commission has not rejected US demands to lower ambitions in this area, and thus risks lending support to the most polluting kind of agriculture. Moreover, given that the conciliatory approach of the Commission is an attempt to protect the export from the EU of notoriously climate-damaging cars, the promise of the European Green Deal to bring about a greener approach to agriculture and trade now seems to be undermined by the Commission itself.

Furthermore, the Commission does not even have a mandate to conduct negotiations on these matters. The mandate adopted in April 2019 leaves no space for negotiations on food and other safety standards. Trade Commissioner Hogan has said that he is “trying to look at ways where through regulatory cooperation we might be able to look at non-tariff barriers as a way of bringing agriculture issues on the table”. This suggests that the Trade Commissioner wants to establish a long-term, discreet dialogue behind the scenes to find ways to accommodate US demands, for which he has the support of some member states. That must not be allowed to happen. It would undermine EU laws and procedures agreed to decades ago, it is not within the current mandate, and it should not be in a new one.

In light of the above, we call on European governments in the Council of the EU and parliamentarians to ensure that our concerns regarding the protection of labour rights and the environment, transparency and the involvement of civil society are honoured. Our elected representatives must call for an overhaul of the current trade talks with the US. The EU must make unequivocally clear to the US Administration that our public health and environmental protection levels are not for sale, that we will not succumb to threats, and that trade policy must put people, the environment and the climate first.

## Signatories

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Attac Austria  | Austria        |
| Katholische ArbeitnehmerInnen Bewegung Österreich  | Austria        |
| Allianz gerechtes Handeln  | Austria        |
| transform!at   | Austria        |
| <a href="#">Aufstehn.at</a> - Verein zur Förderung zivilgesellschaftlicher Partizipation | Austria        |
| Center for Encounter and Active Non-Violence   | Austria        |
| GLOBAL 2000 - Friends of the Earth Austria   | Austria        |
| Evangelische Kirche Hallein  | Austria        |
| Anders Handeln   | Austria        |
| ELA  | Basque Country |
| CNE  | Belgium        |
| vzw Climaxi  | Belgium        |
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| CNE   | Belgium |
| Entraide et Fraternité                              | Belgium |
| MAP   | Belgium |
| 11.11.11  | Belgium |
| European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) | Belgium |
| CNCD-11.11.11                                       | Belgium |
| Mouvement d'Action Paysanne                         | Belgium |
| Global Aktion                                       | Denmark |
| ClientEarth   | Europe  |
| Africa Europe Faith & Justice Network               | Europe  |
| Corporate Europe Observatory                        | Europe  |
| Slow Food Europe                                    | Europe  |
| Seattle to Brussels Network                         | Europe  |
| European Environmental Bureau                       | Europe  |
| Friends of the Earth Europe                         | Europe  |
| Banana Link   | France  |
| AAF-PSo   | France  |
| Comité Pauvreté et politique                        | France  |
| Emmaüs International                                | France  |
| confederation paysanne                              | France  |
| réseau Roosevelt IDF                                | France  |
| FRANCE NATURE ENVIRONNEMENT                         | France  |
| Fédération Artisans du Monde                        | France  |
| alofa tuvalu  | France  |
| Comemrce Équitable France                           | France  |
| Sherpa  | France  |
| Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network France      | France  |
| Réseau Foi & Justice Afrique Europe antenne France  | France  |
| Veblen Institute                                    | France  |
| Attac France  | France  |
| Aitec   | France  |
| Collectif stop tafta                                | France  |
| Amis de la Terre France                             | France  |

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| BLOOM Association   | France            |
| Committee in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples of the Americas (CSIA-Nitassinan) | France            |
| Youth and Environment Europe  | France            |
| Confederation paysanne 24   | France - Dordogne |
| CONFEDERACIÓN INTERSINDICAL GALEGA (CIG)  | Galizia           |
| PowerShift e.V.   | Germany           |
| Campact   | Germany           |
| BUND KG Bonn  | Germany           |
| Kölner Bündnis für gerechten Welthandel   | Germany           |
| Zukunftskonvent   | Germany           |
| Forum Umwelt & Entwicklung  | Germany           |
| Bonner Bündnis gegen TTIP & Co - für solidarischen Welthandel                     | Germany           |
| Arbeitskreis Freihandelsfalle von Attac München                                   | Germany           |
| Berliner Wassertisch  | Germany           |
| foodwatch international   | Germany           |
| Sozial- und Schuldnerberatung   | Germany           |
| Greenpeace  | Global            |
| Naturefriends   | Greece            |
| Towards Sustainability Association  | Hungary           |
| Clean Air Action Group  | Hungary           |
| Zöldövezet Társulás Környezetvédelmi Egyesület                                    | Hungary           |
| Green Circle of Pécs  | Hungary           |
| Fauna Alapítvány  | Hungary           |
| New Hempage jdoo  | Hungary           |
| Eletfa Environmental Protection Association                                       | Hungary           |
| Civilek a Mecsekért Mozgalom  | Hungary           |
| Environmental Planning and Education Network                                      | Hungary           |
| Ararát Teremtésvédelmi Munkacsoport (Ararat Care for Creation Workgroup)          | Hungary           |
| FEDERATION OF UNITED TRADE UNIONS IN THE ELECTRIC ENERGY INDUSTRY                 | Hungary           |
| Szombathely-Herény K. Cs. S Egyesület   | Hungary           |
| Védegylet Egyesület   | Hungary           |

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| Tanácsadók a Fenntartható Fejlődésért                           | Hungary       |
| Vision Association  | Hungary       |
| Holocén Természetvédelmi Egyesület                              | Hungary       |
| Közép-magyarországi Zöld Kör                                    | Hungary       |
| REFLEX Környezetvédő Egyesület                                  | Hungary       |
| Magyarországi Éghajlatvédelmi Szövetség                         | Hungary       |
| Karátson Gábor Kör  | Hungary       |
| Magyar Természetvédők Szövetsége / Friends of the Earth Hungary | Hungary       |
| Heroes of Responsible Dining Foundation                         | Hungary       |
| Csalán Egyesület  | Hungary       |
| Gyermekláncfű Kézműves, Oktatási és Környezetnevelési Egyesület | Hungary       |
| Fényszaruik Baráti Egyesülete                                   | Hungary       |
| Zöld Akció Egyesület (Green Action)                             | Hungary       |
| Magosfa Foundation  | Hungary       |
| Profilantrop Association  | Hungary       |
| GRAIN   | international |
| Good Energies Alliance Ireland                                  | Ireland       |
| Feasta: the Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability      | Ireland       |
| Irish Seed Savers Association CLG                               | Ireland       |
| Fracking Free Clare   | Ireland       |
| An Cláíomh Glas   | Ireland       |
| An Taisce - the National Trust for Ireland                      | Ireland       |
| Fairwatch   | Italy         |
| Stop TTIP/CETA Italia   | Italy         |
| transform! italia   | Italy         |
| Latvian Fund for Nature   | Latvia        |
| Mouvement Ecologique asbl                                       | Luxembourg    |
| Both ENDS   | Netherlands   |
| Transnational Institute   | Netherlands   |
| We&waste  | Poland        |
| Instytut Globalnej Odpowiedzialności (IGO)                      | Poland        |
| Stowarzyszenie Rozruch  | Poland        |

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| Pro-Terra Foundation  | Poland          |
| TROCA- Plataforma por um Comércio Internacional Justo             | Portugal        |
| ZERO - Association for the Sustainability of the Earth System     | Portugal        |
| CEPTA   | Slovakia        |
| SOSNA   | Slovakia        |
| Umanotera   | Slovenia        |
| Focus Association for Sustainable Development                     | Slovenia        |
| ASiA-Associació Salut i Agroecologia                              | Spain           |
| Campanya Catalunya No als Tractats de Comerç i Inversió           | Spain           |
| Campaña No a los Tratados de Comercio e Inversión                 | Spain           |
| Ecoogistas en Acción  | Spain           |
| Coag (Coordinadora de Organizaciones de Agricultores y Ganaderos) | Spain           |
| CONFEDERACIÓN GENERAL DEL TRABAJO(CGT)                            | Spain           |
| Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy                        | U.S. and Europe |