

## **19<sup>th</sup> UNI Europa Executive Committee Athens, 6 and 7 May 2014**

# **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP): UNI Europa Position and Approach**

## **1 Introduction**

---

TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership agreement) is a free trade agreement currently under negotiation between the EU and the USA. While it could produce economic opportunities on both sides of the Atlantic, it also provides challenges and threats to trade union and labour rights as well as to broader social, consumer and environmental rights.

UNI Europa addressed the issue of TTIP at its last two Management Committees (19.3.2014, 18.10.2013).

A workshop of affiliates was held in Brussels on 25.3.2014. Among participants were also representatives of two of UNI's US affiliates, CWA and UFCW, as well as of ETUC, ITUC, EFFAT and EPSU. The meeting discussed the viewpoints concerning TTIP regarding the challenges for workers and the approach that UNI Europa could be taking.

The document sets out UNI Europa's position on basic principles for the TTIP negotiations and further action.

## **2 Statement**

---

For UNI Europa, an international trade agreement, such as TTIP, must foremost improve the living and working conditions of people substantially.

TTIP, linking the two biggest economies in the world, would by default provide the blueprint for future trade agreements; thus it is of importance beyond the agreement itself.

UNI Europa insists that TTIP, if concluded, provides a global model for a trade agreement that is fair, sustainable and social as well as ensures competitiveness through quality rather than through social dumping. The world needs a wage increase now – and TTIP should contribute, not least by facilitating collective bargaining in an ever more globalised world.

The spirit of the TTIP negotiations today is however characterised by a traditional free trade agenda of liberalisation – curbing standards and de-regulating trade. A key focus is services

sectors. Consequently, UNI Europa is concerned as services workers will be particularly affected by TTIP.

While UNI Europa is in favour of creating closer economic cooperation with the USA, we regard the current negotiating process and negotiating mandate as neither transparent nor going in the direction we want.

**UNI Europa therefore demands an immediate suspension of the TTIP negotiations. They can only continue with a transparent negotiating mandate that will have been reformulated with the full involvement of trade unions and civil society as well as parliaments. Such a mandate must define clear redlines.**

For UNI Europa, the mandate and the TTIP agreement itself must in particular meet the following overall conditions to be acceptable:

- 1) TTIP must protect and indeed **strengthen social and labour rights**, including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. These rights should be explicitly guaranteed by the agreement and enforceable.
- 2) TTIP must be **without prejudice to the EU's social acquis**, to European social provisions enshrined in the EU Treaties (TFEU, Titles IX and X). Service providers must be obliged to respect social and labour law as well as collective agreements applicable in the host country.
- 3) TTIP must aim at achieving a high degree of regulatory coherence **without impinging on the democratically legitimised powers of public authorities** to (re)regulate or legislate, e.g. addressing detrimental effects of liberalisation or protecting social, consumer and environmental rights.
- 4) TTIP must explicitly **safeguard the public interest missions of services** and it must not be a tool for further liberalisation in such fields (including the finance, gaming, ICT, media and postal sectors). In particular, any liberalisation obligation must be clearly specified (e.g. through the positive list approach).
- 5) TTIP must **not include an investor-state-dispute-settlement mechanism (ISDS)**. Investor disputes must be dealt with by the ordinary court system. Beyond TTIP, UNI Europa is strongly of the view that any existing ISDS mechanisms by-passing the court system of the EU and member states must be abolished; this applies in particular to ISDSs between individual EU member states. **ISDS mechanisms have become quasi-kangaroo courts** biased against the public interest.
- 6) The EU must **fully involve trade unions and civil society in the TTIP negotiations**. The process must be transparent. Trade union opinions must be fully taken into account in the "Sustainability and Employment Impact Assessment".

UNI Europa is moreover in favour of using the TTIP agreement for promoting best practices in terms of social and labour rights on both sides of the Atlantic. A particular flagship initiative would be to use the TTIP agreement to extend coverage of European style workers involvement in transnational companies to all US/EU operations. Let us start with **creating trans-atlantic works councils**.

Within the context of this statement, UNI Europa fully supports the comprehensive position taken by the ETUC concerning TTIP in April 2013, including on the concerns of UNI Europa sectors and interprofessional groups (Annex 1).

### **3 Follow up**

---

To follow-up on the statement, UNI Europa:

1. will develop specific positions and take action on service related aspects of TTIP.

2. will continue feeding into the ETUC who takes the lead on TTIP for the entire European trade union movement.
3. will also work together with UNI Global Union, ETUC, ITUC, ETUFs and global unions as well as other European stakeholders to influence EU negotiators.
4. will continue cooperating with its affiliates and UNI US affiliates.
5. requests its sectors to look at the implication and potential effects of the TTIP agreement for their areas of work.
6. recommends its sectors to raise the issue of TTIP in their social dialogues.