



Opening Remarks at EP Debate on TTIP

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Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

TTIP is a broad negotiation. It covers traditional trade issues but also many others, like medical devices regulation, financial services or sustainable development. To get it right, we need the engagement of the whole of this Parliament.

This resolution is providing that engagement. The fact that 14 committees in addition to the International Trade Committee were active in drafting it proves that you are deeply engaged in the detail of this negotiation.

When President Juncker came here to present his agenda for this Commission last July, he made clear that TTIP was one of his core priorities.

This House at that time voted strongly in favour of his agenda.

Why?

First, because TTIP is an essential part of the Commission's strategy to open markets around the world. We are doing that not to benefit a small few but in order to create opportunities for the whole of Europe: the people of Europe the consumers of Europe, the entrepreneurs of Europe.

One in seven people in Europe have a job thanks to exports around the world. Those jobs are highly skilled and better paid than average. 4.7 million of them are linked to exports to the US. TTIP would help increase that number.

It would also make goods cheaper and more varied for consumers.

And it would help make our small and medium-sized companies more competitive. They would find it easier to export and get their imported components and raw materials more cheaply.

Those are solid economic advantages. We cannot afford to turn our backs on them, now or in the future.

Second, TTIP is also a strategic alliance with the country that most shares Europe's commitment to our core values and a high level of protection of people and of the environment in regulation.

We need an ally like that to shape the globalisation we see deepening before our eyes every day. We are more affected by economic and political decisions made in other countries than ever before.

And we particularly need an ally because we know that the strength of our voice in the world is, in relative terms, decreasing.

TTIP guarantees that partnership with America for the future. We cannot afford to turn our backs on that either.

There is, Honourable Members, as you know, an unprecedented debate about this agreement. That's a good thing. I respect people who have doubts and questions, across the continent and within this House. I take those concerns seriously and have engaged closely with national parliaments, with this Parliament, with NGOs, with civil society and other stakeholders to listen and to try to understand their concerns.

And I hope that all these people see the changes that we have made to take account of their views.

Since last November:

I have opened up these negotiations to unprecedented public scrutiny. I have put EU negotiating proposals on the internet and increased the access of Members of this Parliament and representatives of the Member States to the process. I have visited national parliaments to exchange and open channels. And I am happy to say that TTIP is the world's most transparent bilateral free trade negotiation.

We have also made clear where we stand on public services such as public health or water concessions. This is a concern I have heard very frequently. I have together with Ambassador Froman, the US Trade Representative, made a joint statement: The EU and the

US are now fully united around a crystal clear vision that nothing in TTIP will change the fact that only Member States choose how their public services should be organised.

We have also made clear where we stand on regulation: I've put our proposal on cooperating with the US online. And it says there will be no limitations on the power of this Parliament, of any national parliament or of Europe's governments. We want the benefits of shared expertise and we want opportunities for our people. That's all.

And I have made proposals for a deep reform of investment protection. The result is a completely new approach. We still want to foster job-creating investment. But we are proposing a new system that sets down the right to regulate in black and white. A new system that takes us away from the private arbitration tribunals of the past. Instead we want a future in which disputes are decided in an international investment court, by judges and with a right of appeal. TTIP will be a step towards that goal, not the final result. But it is an essential step, given the role of the US as a global investor.

And your resolution is a vital step in these negotiations. But it is certainly not the end of our conversation. The Commission will continue to be flexible to take account of your views.

Beyond investment, we also have important proposals to discuss on how best to protect labour and environmental rights and on digital commerce.

And there will be many more issues to debate over the course of these talks. They are far from over. These negotiations are far reaching and a lot of work is still needed.

I will continue to push the US on our offensive interests: including on public procurement, where we expect an ambitious proposal, but also on services, energy, and geographical indications just to mention a few examples.

And your resolution will provide a vital basis for that negotiation.

Having your priorities so clearly established helps the Commission explain why we need to tackle them in the final agreement.

So allow me to thank you for work...

... to look forward to the debate we are about to have.

... and to pledge my full cooperation with you as we jointly push for the result Europeans need:

A TTIP that leads to jobs, growth and investment while protecting our values and our democracies.

Thank you.