

Joint Statement on Public Services

Brussels, 20 March 2015

Ambassador Froman and Commissioner Malmström discussed the important role public services play in the United States and the European Union.

They confirmed that U.S. and EU trade agreements do not prevent governments, at any level, from providing or supporting services in areas such as water, education, health, and social services.

Furthermore, no EU or U.S. trade agreement requires governments to privatize any service, or prevents governments from expanding the range of services they supply to the public. Moreover, these agreements do not prevent governments from providing public services previously supplied by private service suppliers; contracting a public service to private providers does not mean that it becomes irreversibly part of the commercial sector.

Ambassador Froman and Commissioner Malmström also noted the important complementary role of the private sector in these areas. Private sector activities can improve the availability and diversity of services, to the benefit of people in the United States and the European Union. Defining the appropriate balance between public and private services is up to the discretion of each government.

Finally, Ambassador Froman and Commissioner Malmström also confirmed that EU and US trade agreements do not impede governments' ability to adopt or maintain regulations to ensure the high quality of services and to protect important public interest objectives, such as the protection of health, safety, or the environment.

The United States and the European Union are following this same approach in TTIP and TiSA.