

## TTIP - Trading away our rights [1]

### The Issue.

The [US/EU Free Trade agreement](#) [2] (which is also known as The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)) will be the biggest free trade agreement ever, if it is signed.

The EU and US are claiming that the deal could boost the EU's economy by [£120 billion](#) and the [US economy by £75 billion](#) [3] over 10 years. Negotiations started in July 2013 and still continue. If signed, it will have a massive impact on every man, woman and child in the UK, yet the details of it are being negotiated in secret and we aren't being properly consulted on what is being given away.



It's the secrecy around TTIP that is really worrying. When coupled with a number of leaks that seem to suggest that the treaty will grant corporations and business interests benefits at the expense of consumers and citizens, TTIP presents a real danger to society.

Recent reports suggest that the deal will end up focusing on non-conventional 'trade barriers' like cutting the regulations around fracking, Genetic Modification and finance whilst tightening laws that harm innovation and culture like copyright. The agreement could also bring worrying legal processes like '[Investor State Dispute Settlement](#) [4]' (ISDS) making it harder for governments to protect the interests of their citizens and legislate to protect the environment and workers. What is more it seems that alongside the harm, the benefits will be much lower than suggested.

# What you need to know.

## Secrecy

Apart from a few leaks and weak assurances from those involved in the negotiations, TTIP has been negotiated behind closed doors. The largest agreement of its kind ever attempted, and we have seen little public scrutiny and consultation. This means we will be told, the agreement brings massive benefits, but without the time to weigh up the negatives. We must be listened to now!

## Big Business

[ISDS](#) [4] means that investors can take legal action against the country hosting its investment, without the intervention of the government of the investor's home country. In short, corporations can sue national governments if any of the corporation's future profit making possibilities are affected by new laws or protections. As a result, new environmental and employment protections could come with a cost, paid directly to big business.

Similar agreements have already seen large corporates sue and win when governments have banned toxic additives, all on the basis that the maker of the toxic additive would lose money under the ban...

## Our NHS

Three principles have guided the [NHS since its beginning](#) [5]: That the NHS would meet the needs of everyone, that it be free at the point of delivery and that it be based on clinical need, not ability to pay.

These principles have already been weakened by [The Health and Social Care Act](#) [6] and would be eroded further under TTIP. The introduction of artificial competition in the NHS, with public providers deliberately placed at a disadvantage, is fragmenting the NHS and opening it up to competition law. It is turning healthcare into a market in which private companies can run rampant. In short, the NHS can now be seen as a commercial operation and that means it will be subject to free trade agreements like TTIP.

The US/EU trade deal will mean that the NHS will have to consider the rights of transnational organisations rather than focus on the care of patients. It would open the NHS up to large transnational health businesses and place severe restrictions on the ability of the UK's government to control costs of medicine and care. Worst of all, it would limit the ability of our Governments to regulate the transnational companies that will step in to take control of our NHS.

## Public Health

It's not just the NHS that could be harmed by TTIP. The impact of ISDS will create a chilling effect on governments, making them far more likely to hold back on introducing new public health regulations for fear that they might negatively affect international companies' future investment or profit opportunities.

## Food standards

Food standards are one area where the US claims that there are too many barriers for its producers in the EU. TTIP is intended to remove such barriers, but rather than raising standards it would likely be used to lower them. The deal would mean that foods that are deemed fine for human consumption in the US but are banned in the UK or EU could end up on our supermarket shelves. That could include:

- [Chlorine washed chicken](#) [7]
- [Beef and pork treated with growth hormones](#) [8]
- Increased use of [genetically modified material](#) [9] in our food

It may even lead to a reduction in labelling requirements to meet lower US standards, meaning that food sourced and processed in ways currently not permitted in the EU would not even be labelled as such.

# Internet Freedom

It is likely that TTIP will address copyright and patents and that the approach will be similar to the approaches the US has taken with other agreements, including TPP and ACTA [10]. That would make TTIP very dangerous to those who value a free and open Internet. There will be attempts to provide corporations with even more excessive copyright term limits, remove protections that promote interoperability and other elements that are anti-user but corporation-friendly. It is also possible that TTIP will again attempt to force Internet Service Providers to take on a role in law enforcement.

## Data Protection

Given the pro-business aspects of clauses like ISDS, the treaty could also do significant damage to the EU's data protection and privacy principles, subverting them where they harm the profit of large corporates.

## Climate Change

TTIP could also tie legislators' hands in dealing with climate change as incentives and regulations intended to reduce emissions and pollution are weakened. One of the most effective ways of reducing environmental harm of this sort is to stress the importance of locally sourced food, goods and energy and regulate where appropriate. Of course that would be seen as an unfair barrier and, again, lead to legal action by those whose bottom lines might be harmed.

A vast, secret, unaccountable free trade deal that aims to accelerate globalisation and limit regulation, whilst trumping national governments must be a great concern to anyone looking for solutions to the climate crisis. A specific issue would be the agreement's impact on UK and EU climate legislation, especially as it relates to Canadian and US plans to export tar sands oil to Europe.

## What we need to do

- Demand more openness when trade agreements are negotiated
- Require comprehensive access to information and public hearings
- Ensure that respect for self determination and privacy are included
- Require that the interests of citizens and small and medium-sized enterprises are be taken into account
- Stop TTIP in its current form

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### Links

[1] <http://legacy.pirateparty.org.uk/campaigns/issues/ttip-trading-away-our-rights>

[2] [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transatlantic\\_Trade\\_and\\_Investment\\_Partnership](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transatlantic_Trade_and_Investment_Partnership)

[3] <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/>

[4] [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Investor\\_State\\_Dispute\\_Settlement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Investor_State_Dispute_Settlement)

[5] <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/thenhs/about/Pages/nhscoreprinciples.aspx>

[6] <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/7/contents/enacted>

[7]

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1022821/Dirty-US-chicken-washed-chlorine-heading-British-shops-E-C-seeks-improve-relations-America.html>

[8] [http://www.preventcancer.com/consumers/general/hormones\\_meat.htm](http://www.preventcancer.com/consumers/general/hormones_meat.htm)

[9] [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetically\\_modified\\_food](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetically_modified_food)

[10] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ACTA>