



Joint statement by BDA, BDI, DIHK, and ZDH on TTIP: An Opportunity for Employment and the Economy

9 November 2014

We support an ambitious and balanced trade and investment agreement between the United States and the European Union (EU). The United States is Germany's most important economic partner outside the EU. Removing barriers to trade and investment in the transatlantic market will both secure and create jobs in our companies. Hence, businesses and employees in Germany and Europe benefit from the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). We must make the most of this opportunity.

TTIP is a project that promises economic success. Furthermore, it is of strategic and geopolitical relevance: TTIP offers the EU and the United States the chance to shape the global trading system through the establishment of fair and sustainable rules. This could also benefit citizens in emerging and developing countries.

In line with the EU's negotiating mandate and recent assurances from the European Commission's President, TTIP will not weaken legislative provisions, or lower environmental standards, labour laws, or occupational safety and health standards, nor will it jeopardise cultural diversity. Rather, considerable costs could be avoided by eliminating tariffs and duties across the Atlantic, and no longer requiring duplicative product authorisations, test procedures, and conformity tests. These measures would benefit both businesses and consumers – without endangering existing levels of protection. In order to ensure this, we believe that a comparable level of protection is an absolute condition for the mutual recognition of rules and procedures.

Intensifying cooperation between the EU and the United States on the development of new standards and rules is essential in order to prevent new trade barriers. However, much like the European Parliament, the U.S. Congress, and the German Federal Parliament, we would not be prepared to endorse an agreement that reduces social standards, product safety, occupational requirements, or consumer and health protection. Furthermore, we must ensure that TTIP is negotiated in a way which neither undermines the regulatory sovereignty of states nor serves to circumvent the legislative function of parliaments.

Investment protection treaties and investor-state dispute settlement procedures have for many decades been established instruments for German companies to protect their foreign investments. The European Commission and the U.S. Administration could use the TTIP negotiations to identify deficits in existing investment protection treaties and dispute settlement procedures, and to implement reforms. Such a modern investment protection chapter is worth the effort: it can promote investment and serve as a benchmark for other agreements – without undermining the legal systems in the EU and the United States.

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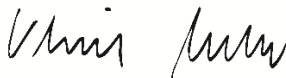
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TTIP must particularly facilitate trade for *Mittelstand* companies which suffer disproportionately from trade barriers and bureaucratic requirements due to limited resources. In this regard, a chapter on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which aims to improve access to information on regulatory requirements for exporters is just as important as the simplification of customs procedures and the creation of clear and transparent rules of origin. In addition, the overall agreement should take into account the European “think small first” principle whereby new provisions are consistently tested for their SME-friendliness and are framed to be as non-bureaucratic as possible.

German business will provide its expertise and experience to highlight the chances presented by TTIP. Jointly with political decision-makers and citizens, we want to engage in an open dialogue on deepening the transatlantic partnership in which not only the concerns of the population but also the opportunities of TTIP are discussed.

A solid community of values underpinned by a treaty between the EU and the United States is particularly desirable for economic, strategic, and political reasons. We will continue to work together towards achieving this goal. We call on the Federal German Government, the European Commission, and the U.S. Administration to conduct comprehensive and ambitious negotiations. Active information and transparency by the European Commission and the German Federal Government is of great importance to this end.



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