

Shale Gas Fracking, GMO, Poverty, Bankruptcy: Stop the Corporate Plunder, Flush the TTIP Agreement, Campaign for an “Alternative Trade Mandate”

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Region: [Europe](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Biotechnology and GMO](#), [Global Economy](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP – previously known as TAFTA, Trans-Atlantic Free Trade Agreement) is a trade agreement that is presently being negotiated between the European Union and the United States.

There is growing concern that the negotiations could result in the opening of the floodgates for genetically modified organisms and shale gas (fracking) in Europe, the threatening of digital and labour rights and the empowering of corporations to legally challenge a wide range of regulations which they dislike. The negotiations are shrouded in secrecy and, while striving to give the appearance of somehow being democratic, effectively constitute part of the ongoing corporate hijack of democracy and the further restructuring of economies in favour of elite interests (1,2,3,4,5,6).

A European alliance of over 50 civil society organizations (7) are in the process of launching the ‘Alternative Mandate’ pledge campaign (8), calling on European Parliament election candidates to make EU trade and investment policy serve people and the planet, not just the profit of a few large corporations.

Lyda Fernanda Forero of the Transnational Institute, a member of the Alternative Trade Mandate Alliance says:

“The EU’s current trade and investment policy is a recipe for disaster for people around the world. The EU is leading an aggressive agenda to open markets for global agri-business. This is wiping out small farmers and is a major cause of hunger. Excessive investor rights take away much needed policy space. We need to break away from this corporate driven agenda.”

The online pledge campaign will run in six EU languages (EN, FR, ES, DE, GR, HU) and will enable activists and citizens to ask candidates to pledge in support of a paradigm shift in EU trade and investment policy. The website will monitor which candidates have supported different parts of the pledge.

MEP candidates will be asked to support measures that enable people to control their own local food systems as well as core labour standards and human rights’ assessments of EU trade and investment policy. Candidates will also be asked to oppose the controversial

investor-state dispute settlement mechanism and to call on the European Commission to immediately publish all texts from trade and investment negotiations with third countries such as, for example, the United States.

Sergi Corbalán, executive director of the Fair Trade Advocacy Office, a member of the Alternative Trade Mandate Alliance:

“EU trade deals are negotiated behind closed doors in the interests of a few rich corporations. People who are affected by these deals, both in the EU and abroad, are not consulted. We need MEPs to stand up for an open and democratic EU trade policy-making process which is controlled by the people of Europe and their elected representatives, rather than being driven by unelected technocrats and corporate lobby groups.”

The pledge campaign is the result of a four-year process of public workshops held all over Europe during which the Alternative Trade Mandate was developed; it is a 20-page civil society proposal to democratise EU trade and investment policy and put environmental protection as well as human and labour rights at its heart (9). Some MEPs have already supported the proposal via video messages (10).

Amélie Canonne, co-ordinator of the Alternative Trade Mandate Alliance:

“At a time of multiple global crises, the European Parliament needs MEPs who will support trade rules that work for people and the planet. We need MEPs who will bring trade deals out of the shadows and into the light. We call on MEP candidates to stand up for democratic trade and investment rules that serve people, the economy and the environment at large – not just the profit interests of a few.”

Notes:

1) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-us-eu-transatlantic-free-trade-agreement-tafta-big-business-corporate-power-grab/5352885>

2) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-eu-india-free-trade-agreement-corporate-driven-neocolonial-plunder/5338049>

3) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/us-eu-transatlantic-free-trade-agreement-more-secrecy-and-more-duplicity-revealed/5369272>

4) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/free-trade-agreements-the-bypassing-of-democracy-to-institute-economic-plunder/5354197>

5) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-us-eu-transatlantic-free-trade-agreement-tafta-big-business-corporate-power-grab/5352885>

6) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-eu-india-free-trade-agreement-india-up-for-sale-to-western-corporate-capital/5332214>

7) Current members of the Alternative Trade Mandate Alliance are: Afrika Kontakt (Denmark), Arbeitsgemeinschaft Bäuerliche Landwirtschaft (Germany), AITEC (France), Alternative Trade

Network (Greece), Attac Austria, Attac France, Attac Germany, Attac Hungary, Attac Spain, Bothends (Netherlands), CAWN, CNCD (Belgium), Colibri (Germany), Comhlamh (Ireland), Commission of Filipino migrant workers (Netherlands), Corporate Europe Observatory (Belgium), Ecologistas en Accion (Spain), European Milkboard, Fair Trade Advocacy Office (Belgium), Fairwatch (Italy), FDCL (Germany), FIAN Germany, Food & Water Europe, Germanwatch (Germany), GMB (UK), Misereor (Germany), No Patents on Life! (Germany), Oxfam Germany, Philippinenbuero (Germany), Platform Aarde Boer Consument (Earth, Farmer, Consumer – Netherlands), Platform of Filipino Migrant Organisations in Europe, PowerShift (Germany), Seattle to Brussels Network, SOMO (Netherlands), Terra Nuova (Italy), Trade Justice Movement (UK), Transnational Institute (Netherlands), Trocaire (Ireland), Vedegylet (Hungary), War on Want (UK), WEED (Germany), World Development Movement (UK), Za Zemiata (Bulgaria), 11.11.11. (Belgium)

Supporter organisations: ActionAid Netherlands, Africa Roots Movement (Netherlands), Afrikagrupperna (Sweden), Africa-Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN), Afrikagrupperna (Sweden), ASEED Europe, Attac Denmark, CEE Bankwatch Network (headquartered in the Czech Republic), Clean Clothes Campaign Netherlands, Confédération paysanne (France), Dutch section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF – Netherlands), European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), FAIR TRADE HELLA (Greece), FIOM-CGIL (Metalworkers Federation – Italy), FIAN Netherlands, FNV Netherlands, France Amérique Latine (France), Friends of the Earth Europe, Glropolis (Czech Republic), Hegoa (Spain), Indian Committee of the Netherlands, Milieu Defensie (Netherlands), National Peace and Justice Network (UK), OIKOS (Netherlands), Philippinenbüro (Germany), Platform Aarde Boer Consumer (Netherlands), Platform for an economy based on sustainability and solidarity (Netherlands), Respect Network in Europe, STRO (Netherlands), Supermacht (Netherlands), Traidcraft (UK), Transnational Migrant Platform (TMP), TRUSTED Migrants (Netherlands), La Via Campesina Europe, Wemos (Netherlands), XminY (Netherlands)

8) Visit the pledge campaign website at: www.alternativetrademandate.org

9) Download the Alternative Trade Mandate in English

(http://www.alternativetrademandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Trade-time_for_a_new_vision-JAN14-PRINT.pdf), Spanish

(http://www.alternativetrademandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Time_for_a_new_vision-ES-JAN14-PRINT.pdf), French

(http://www.alternativetrademandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Time_for_a_new_vision-FR-PRINT.pdf) and Dutch

(http://www.alternativetrademandate.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Time_for_a_new_vision-NL-PRINT.pdf)

10) Why support the Alternative Trade Mandate? Responses from trade justice activists, <http://www.alternativetrademandate.org/why-supporting-the-alternative-trade-mandate-so-me-responses-in-video/>

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