

TISA: New Trade Deal Could Be Even Greater Threat to Public Services Than TTIP

By [Global Justice Now](#)

Global Research, September 02, 2016

[Defend Democracy Press](#) 1 September 2016

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

- *Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) could lock in privatisation and increase ability of big business to call the shots on health, education and basic utilities*
- *Rights of some migrant workers could regress to system similar to Saudi Arabia and Qatar*
- *UK likely to emulate Norway signing up as individual nation post-Brexit*

A global trade deal currently being negotiated in secret and involving 50 different countries could prove to be a serious threat to public services according to [a briefing published today](#) by campaign group Global Justice Now.

The Trade In Services Agreement (TISA) is a proposed international trade treaty between 23 parties, including the European Union and the United States. Unlike most trade deals, TISA is about services, not goods. The briefing argues that this means it will affect areas like labour rights, banking regulation and whether public services like electricity and water are run for public good or private benefit.

Nick Dearden the director of [Global Justice Now](#) said:

“This deal is a threat to the very concept of public services. It is a turbo-charged privatisation pact, based on the idea that, rather than serving the public interest, governments must step out of the way and allow corporations to ‘get on with it’. Of particular concern, we fear TISA will include clauses that will prevent governments taking public control of strategic services, and inhibit regulation of the very banks that created the financial crash. TISA will also affect countries that haven’t even had the opportunity to develop decent public services like Pakistan. No wonder Uruguay has already walked away from the talks. We urge MEPs to tell the European Union to do the same.

“Millions of people across the EU voiced their opposition to toxic trade deals like TTIP and TISA. A broad coalition of trade unions, civil society groups and progressive politicians are coming together to make sure that we put a stop to TISA as well as TTIP – both of them enormous corporate power grabs at the expense of democracy.”

The briefing, [A blueprint for global privatisation](#) argues that:

- TISA would lock in privatisation of public services. TISA contains mechanisms, such as ‘ratchet’ and ‘standstill’ clauses, that make it much harder to reverse privatisations and will allow greater market access for foreign companies;
- TISA would be terrible for the climate. TISA entrenches the idea of technological

neutrality on energy policy. This could stop countries favouring renewables over coal, oil and gas;

- TISA will mean more casino capitalism. TISA will undermine efforts to regulate the financial sector and avoid another crisis;
- TISA threatens online privacy. TISA promises to hand much more power to the likes of Google and Microsoft to move personal data across borders to countries with lax data protection laws;
- TISA will be especially damaging to countries in the global south. TISA includes countries like Pakistan that could be hindered in developing public services. It also poses a threat to countries outside TISA, because, once approved, rich countries will seek to impose TISA-style measures globally through the WTO;
- TISA could mean a rollback on the rights of migrant workers. Proposals being negotiated under TISA mean that some migrant workers may end up being categorised as 'independent service suppliers' and will consequently not have rights to things like the minimum wage or be allowed to join a union. Workers' presence in a country could also be tied to their employer. This form of indentured labour is in effect in countries like Saudi Arabia and Qatar and has resulted in horrific working conditions under unscrupulous employers.

Nick Dearden added:

"Many people were persuaded to leave the EU on the grounds they would be 'taking back control' of our economic policy. But if we sign up to TISA, our ability to control our economy – to regulate, to protect public services, to fight climate change – are all massively reduced. In effect, we would be handing large swathes of policy making to big business.

"Two of the biggest challenges facing society right now are dealing with the climate crisis and trying to tame the unruly banks and financial markets that have caused so much damage to the global economy. What's being proposed under TISA would massively restrict the ability of governments to take action on either front, at a time when flexible and effective policy intervention is so badly needed."

[Download the briefing.](#)

Global Justice Now is a democratic social justice organisation working as part of a global movement to challenge the powerful and create a more just and equal world. We mobilise people in the UK for change, and act in solidarity with those fighting injustice, particularly in the global south.

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