

**Speech given by Bernadette Ségol, ETUC General Secretary  
Italian Presidency  
A dialogue on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership  
14 October 2014, Rome**

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Mr the President-in-Office of the Council,  
Ministers,  
Members of the European Parliament,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you, Mr Calenda, for your kind invitation to address this Dialogue on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

The European Trade Union Confederation – which brings together Europe’s national trade union confederations including the 3 Italian organisations CGIL, CISL and UIL - welcomes an open, and ongoing, debate on TTIP. The discussions can no longer be restricted to trade officials negotiating behind closed doors. We welcome your successful call for the negotiating mandate to be published. This is a good step towards transparency, though more needs to be done. We also welcome Ms Malmström’s commitment towards that objective.

I feel a heavy responsibility, having been asked to speak not only on behalf of the European trade union Movement, but also for Europe’s diverse civil society.

I will not be able to express all their messages and capture all their nuances. There are many. And they should all be listened-to. I hope you will involve all stakeholders – at national as well as European level – in further discussions.

There are massive, mounting concerns among Europe’s workers, and citizens, that European standards, our regulatory process, our public services and our democratic governance will be undermined by TTIP.

We are told that this isn’t so. We have noted the declarations of the negotiators after the seventh round in Washington, particularly about safeguarding standards and public services. They are obviously hearing our concerns.

But this is not a question of presentation, of communication, as appears to be the belief among many TTIP proponents. They will need to try harder to act on the concerns, and be seen to do so.

You, Mr President, have denounced the anti-Americanism that underlies some of these attitudes. There may be some truth in this.

But not from us. European and American trade unionists -we and the AFL-CIO- are united in supporting a new deal between the EU and US – but only IF it promotes workers’ rights, generates quality jobs, upholds public services and procurement, democratic decision making and international conventions.

A new approach is imperative.

It should create decent jobs. We are still waiting for evidence on jobs, and where. The Commission's figures for TTIP-driven growth are unconvincing. And we need compensatory measures for the losers.

Mr De Gucht originally hoped to tie up this deal by the end of this year. I salute Belgian surrealism but hope that Ms Malmström will be more inclined to social realism.

The previous session considered "the value of a possible interim agreement". The suggestion of the Presidency of the Council that TTIP's ambitions be scaled down – at least for an interim period – deserves serious consideration. We note that the Chair of the EP International Trade Committee, Berndt Lange, is also advocating a restricted TTIP agenda.

For a start, the Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanism should be dropped. This is not a seminar on ISDS and I will not go into the ins and outs of that discussion. But we really must ask why, in our democracies, do foreign investors need special protections. What is wrong with our courts?

We are told that this is really to do with future dealings with China. I warn you to be careful what you wish for. I expect that it will be the Chinese who will insist on having ISDS. And their companies, backed by their state authorities, will have no compunction in taking our governments to arbitration to try to profit from our democratic decision making. Unlike European companies which dare not even use existing Trade Defence Instruments against China. And we all know why.

It seems that Ms Malmström has an open mind. We hope she will listen to us or even, on this occasion, to the right-wing Cato Institute that says that ISDS should be ditched. And that applies not only to TTIP but to CETA also.

Then, public services should be left out. We hear repeated assurances that they are not in TTIP. In that case, why can't commitments be simply offered in a positive list so that all can see what is being put on the table? Nowadays "trust me" cuts no ice. And the excuse we hear from the USTR that negative lists are necessary to enable swifter decision-making only heighten our concerns.

President, we are pro trade. For fair trade that benefits the people. We're happy to talk.

We are open to discussions about lowering tariffs. Of course, TTIP is not primarily focussed on eliminating tariffs, which on average are low, but the large scale of transatlantic trade means that even a small change can have a very significant effect.

We are open to lifting "behind the border" barriers, so long as they are truly technical and do not impinge on our collective preferences. Red tape for you can mean a red line for us.

We are told that regulatory coherence doesn't mean deregulation. But the other day the US Ambassador to the EU was lauding the REFIT programme as a way for companies to influence regulation. We don't need the US to tell us how to go forward on this. And demands by US companies further to enter our legislative processes are out of order.

But we do believe that the EU and US can and should work together to set high social and environmental standards that the world would have to follow to enter our markets.

Going for the high road surely is a win-win proposition.

Those standards include labour standards, as set down in conventions of the International Labour Organisation.

TTIP must show the way in including enforceable provisions – linked to the dispute settlement procedures - to ensure that basic rights are respected at all levels of government. Though the US has not ratified the relevant ILO conventions, it is bound to respect them through its membership of the ILO and we need progress on this. And the US is actually in advance of Europe in including enforcement in its trade agreements.

Together we can build on our respective provisions on labour rights and work for a proper enforcement of investor responsibilities.

We are well aware of the geopolitical dimension of TTIP. So far as labour rights are concerned, we are looking towards a “gold standard” that can set an example for all trade deals.

We, and AFL-CIO, want an agreement that

- is negotiated in the public interest, not for vested interests;
- does not privatise the gains of trade and socialise the losses.

These are our tests.

Meet them and TTIP will have our full support.