

Rethink TTIP – democracy going astray

A position paper addressing politicians, men, women, children and all the population to rethink the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Adopted by the General Assembly of MIJARC Europe on the 27th of July 2014

Currently the governments of the European Union and the United States discuss an Agreement about a widespread Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

We as MIJARC demand that the negotiation process as it is now is reformed in order to represent the diversity of the civil society. Instead of nontransparent negotiations we need a democratic public process to establish a social, economic and ecological mandate. In order to achieve this, all information and documents concerning the negotiations have to be provided to the public and the parliaments. The massive impact of international companies has to step back behind the interests of the whole civil society. In contribution to the challenges of the future all aspects have to be reviewed by an independent commission. Social, economic and environmental sustainability must be the basis of every future trade agreement.

The mutual approval of low standards in the food production and the lack of customs duties would lead to a significant stronger competition of products in the market. Those products with the higher ecological and social standards would probably not be able to win the competition and price war. Creeping decrease of local products in favor of goods out a less regulated production processes would be most likely. We would have to anticipate a further economic degeneration of rural areas and as a consequence the loss of perspectives for rural population. We see the danger that in the medium term and in the long run, there will be a lowering of our hard-fought standards the European side.

Furthermore there are again discussions about widespread investment protection in the context of TTIP. This investment protection would enable companies to sue States for economical discrimination of foreign investors in the course of existing standards before a (private) arbitral tribunal. Concerns would have a similar legal status as states and would be able to annual national legal systems and standards. Currently the arbitral tribunal conducted by private lawyers, acts mostly nontransparent in closed sessions and without the possibility of appellate proceedings. That is why the EU plans considerable improvements – besides others taking over the costs by investors in case of lawsuit fail, a transparent procedure and the possibility of appellate proceedings. Nevertheless this agreement hinders the continuity of EU standards in a fair trade zone, restricts the sovereignty of states and opens doors for a creeping decrease of local products.

The benchmark of the negotiations must not be the compromise between two unequal standards through mutual acceptance; rather the highest possible standards have to be the basis of negotiations in the sense of a sustainable development.

We demand a clear legal protection, transparent negotiations, commitment to and preservation of higher social and ecological standards as well as the reinforcement and sustainable protection of regional economic cycles.

Due to the not calculable risks in the area of food production and security, the precarious future viability of rural areas within the European Union and the currently undemocratic way of negotiation in the frame of the free-trade agreement, we pronounce an immediate stop of the negotiations about TIPP as it is now, until our demands are met.