Re: EU and US negotiations on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

Dear [Name]

You are part of the European Commission team that has recently started negotiations on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) or Transatlantic Free-Trade Agreement (TAFTA). The agreement is being promoted as the response to the current economic and financial crisis. Yet the focus of the negotiations on obtaining regulatory convergence, instead of tackling tariffs (which are already very low) is questioning such an objective.

Friends of the Earth Europe is highly concerned about the threats that the TTIP – if concluded - might pose to environment, consumer, or social standards and safeguards. We expect that the negotiations will mainly be used by powerful industry groups to get rid of regulations hindering their profits, at the expense of citizens' well-being and the protection of the environment. Moreover the inclusion of additional rights for companies, through the introduction of an investor-to-state dispute settlement mechanism, also risks limiting the abilities of governments and local authorities to regulate in the future in the interests of the public, and acting as a regulatory deterrent based on the potential financial burden attached to legal threats. Investors should not get ISDS rights to challenge democratically agreed policies and standards that are in the public interest.

In particular because the scale of this agreement is likely to make it a reference for future trade agreements between the EU and the US respectively with third parties, we are calling on you to carefully consider our concerns in the upcoming negotiation process. Civil society will be monitoring it closely and will assess the results based on both process and content. We urge you to commit to make citizens' and environment protection prevail over commercial interests. A transatlantic partnership should only be agreed if it results in higher standards for the environment, safety and consumer protection and if the ability of governments to make new legislation is not weakened.
You will find here enclosed several documents released by Friends of the Earth Europe on 7th October 2013:

- Our position paper ‘Trading away our future? Briefing on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)’
- Our briefing ‘The risks of including an investor-to-state dispute settlement in transatlantic trade talks’

We hope these will be useful in your tasks in the upcoming rounds of negotiations. We look forward to further exchanges on this issue and remain fully available for further questions you might have, including through a face-to-face meeting.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

Magda Stoczkiewicz,
Director
Friends of the Earth Europe

Contact: