

MISSION REPORT

Subject: Mission to Malta for Conference: "The Impact of TTIP in Malta: Benefits and Challenges" 9 March, 2015

Participants: Art. 4.1b TRADE

I travelled to Malta to represent the Commission at a conference organised by the Employers Group of the European Economic and Social Committee. The event was business-focused (though other civil society speakers had been invited). Main speakers were the Maltese Economy Minister, the President of the Malta Chamber of Commerce, the US Ambassador and the head of the EESC Employers' Group. I spoke on a panel with a US State Department official, and focused on the benefits of TTIP for SMEs. A second panel contained a range of business association representatives and EESC employers group members.

The speakers and audience was overwhelmingly supportive of the initiative based on standard argumentation - economic & strategic, and the issues raised were about making sure benefits were there for SMEs as well: e.g. rules of origin, access to finance, data flows (also important for SMEs) and the strategic dimension - global regulatory alignment would be a huge benefit for SMEs.

Some concern from the representative of the French textiles industry about different approaches to defining SMEs in the US and whether US SMEs would therefore benefit more from the SME chapter. Also interest in seeing a package of accompanying measures for SMEs. Some individual companies - one a small English language school & one a larger pharma firm also gave examples of how they had expanded in the US. The pharma firm confirmed the GSP example we regularly use in communications around TTIP.

Programme attached. Link to EESC's own report here: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.group-1-new-news.35028>

Art. 4.1b