

Tonio Borg
Member of the European Commission

Karel De Gucht
Member of the European Commission

Brussels, 14 DEC. 2012
Ares S(2012) 1572117

Dear Ms Goyens and Mr Mierzwinski,

We would like to thank you for the letter of 18 October regarding the discussions related to food, animal and plant standards and the need to involve consumers and stakeholders in the discussions between the EU and the U.S. We would like in the first place to clarify that there is no EU-US Interim Agreement, as indicated in the heading of the letter.

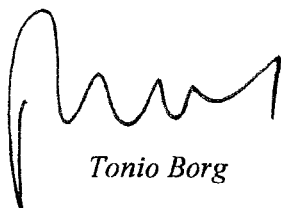
During their 28 November 2011 Summit meeting, U.S. and EU leaders established the High Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth and tasked it to identify policies and measures to increase trade and investment to support mutually beneficial job creation, economic growth and competitiveness, working closely with public and private sector stakeholder groups, and drawing on existing dialogues and mechanisms, as appropriate.

Joint deep analysis then started on a wide range of potential areas and possible options and the preliminary conclusions were presented in the interim report of the EU-US High Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth (published on 19 June 2012).

"Regulatory Issues and Non-Tariff Barriers" are under exploration and there is a shared desire to enhance the compatibility of regulations and standards as well as to cooperate for the development of future rules of common concerns. This exercise is however being done on the understanding that any of the parties will not lower standards and regulations. Therefore the high level of protection of EU consumers will remain as it is now. We would also like to underline that the sanitary and phytosanitary import requirements, including those related to food safety are not subject to negotiation with third countries and therefore they are fully applied to imports into the EU.

Finally, we would like to indicate that for the sake of transparency, the European Commission maintains a Civil Society Dialogue consisting of regular meetings between civil society and European Commission officials to discuss aspects of Europe's trade policy. We would like to invite you to participate in these regular meetings and to share with us any concern regarding the EU-US High Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth.

Yours sincerely,



Tonio Borg



Karel De Gucht

Ms. Monique Goyens
Mr. Ed Mierzwinski
TACD Secretariat
24 Highbury Crescent
London N5 1RX,
UK