

Hazards 2016 Campaign Meeting on TTIP/CETA & other toxic 'trade treaties'

CETA Briefing TUC August 2015 **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement- CETA** - between EU and Canada.

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/TUC%20CETA%20briefing%20for%20web.pdf>

Transatlantic Trade and Partnership Agreement, TTIP, between EU and USA. See my powerpoint prepared pre Brexit:

<https://www.dropbox.com/home?preview=EWHN+28.5.16+TTIP.pptx> this includes lots of links to information sources.

All the warnings in this still apply for CETA and also for any post Brexit vote trade deals that Tories will want to negotiate- they will not be fairer or better and are likely to be even worse than TTIP/CETA and will undoubtedly be based upon the same political ideology and the same clauses/chapters, unless we can put pressure on them. See recent George Monbiot article in Guardian

'Sovereignty? This government will sell us to the highest

bidder' <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jul/27/sovereignty-corporations-liam-fox-eu>

George Monbiot 7.9.16: The transatlantic trade deal TTIP may be dead, but something even worse is coming

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/06/transatlantic-trade-partnership-ttip-canada-eu>

Hugh Robertson, TUC Health and Safety Officer in another meeting and his opening plenary presentation, identified Trade Treaties as the biggest threat to health and safety. He says

"Threats from trade deals include:

- Dependent to future arrangements with the EU
- Britain will have to negotiate its own trade deals
- Trade deals can contain clauses with implications for health and safety and workers' rights.
- ISDS (Investor State Dispute Settlement) provisions
- Privatisation of public services
- Harmonisation or assessment of regulations.
- Give greater status to international labour standards
- Trade deals can also lead to fall in workers safety abroad"

All the new 'trade treaties' are dangerous to workers' health and safety, workers' rights, the protection of consumers public health, food safety, the environment and action against climate change.

This is because they are all about enhancing the profits and powers of Transnational Corporations/Big Corporation at the expense of workers, consumers and citizens in all the countries that are concerned. They are really about Corporations/ investors rights, not trade; they are called 'game changers' by lobbyist as they are intended to fix the terms of global trade to the advantage of corporations to maximise profits, and they do this by forcing the conditions of workers, citizens and the environment down and so are a Race to the Bottom as it is those standards/regulations in the country with the lowest standards that Corporations want implemented.

They do this via:

- ISDS-Investor State Dispute Settlement clauses - ISDSs
- Privatisation
- Giving power to corporations over democratic systems
- Control of regulatory processes by mechanisms such as:
- regulatory co-operation,
- harmonisation,

- deregulation - cutting existing protective regulations and standards and ensuring that new ones are not implemented as they are only assessed on their 'burden to business' not their positive enhancement of workplace health and safety, public, consumer and environmental health.

They are sold as being way out of the recession caused by banking crisis – more jobs and cash, growth etc. However even positive assessments say very small gains for very big risks and up to 1million jobs will be lost! Negative assessments show grave threats especially from ISDSs, massive transfer of wealth and power from poor to rich, from workers to capital. See powerpoint for details.

Investor State Dispute Settlements- ISDSs

Allow foreign investors to challenge regulations in another country if they can be interpreted as breaching their right to 'fair and equitable treatment', in practice this means their 'right' to be able to make a profit

- Versions of ISDS are found in many trade agreements including proposed TTIP and CETA
- Have been used to challenge minimum wage and tobacco safety laws.
- Also mean collective agreements can be challenged.
- Safety regulations are equally at risk.
- At EU level, supported by European Commission and government in UK (and others such as Denmark, Sweden and Italy), but some in France and Germany have expressed concern.
- Massive campaigning against ISDS across EU via European Citizens Initiative, ECI, led by NGOs.

See the Power Point presentation which summarises this with examples:

Privatisation of public services

- Some trade agreements like TTIP and CETA state only specific listed services are exempted from market liberalisation commitments – eg France has specifically excluded it's audio visual sector.
- UK has not tried to list all the services associated with health care and other public services under TTIP so it potentially opens up sectors like the NHS to competition from countries like US
- State run public services are safer and more heavily unionised and we know that in health, transport and education that safety standards are lower when services are privatised.

Impact on regulations

- Some trade agreements allow another country to challenge any regulation that can be regarded as discriminatory or a 'barrier' to foreign businesses
- Some US companies already looking to get US to challenge REACH (EU Registration and Evaluation of Chemical Hazards which denies markets to chemicals that do most harm such as carcinogens, teratogens and mutagens) if TTIP is approved.
- Others require all countries to assess all new regulations to ensure that they are not a burden to foreign investors.
- Most countries outside the EU have lower safety standards. Countries like US, Australia, China may challenge any new regulations we want to establish to protect workers.

Standards

- Standards are not regulations but are agreed between private/commercial international standards organisations through ISO.
- Mainly manufacturers or consultants - No or little trade union (or employer involvement)
- Covers a range of safety issues including machinery, PPE, but also organisation and management.
- Current proposal for one on health and safety .
- Trade agreements can embed standards in trade arrangements which could make it impossible for UK to implement stricter regulations.

Read more in Hazards Magazine on how International Standards can undermine health and safety: ["The International Organisation for Standardisation \(ISO\)decided in 2013 to proceed with its own international standard for an Occupational Health and Safety Management System – ISO 45001 Standards underpinning safety management at work should be a good](#)

thing, right? Right – but only if they are good ones. And the draft standard cooked up by a British Standards Institute chaired international committee, warns Sharan Burrow of the global union confederation ITUC, is far from good”

<http://www.hazards.org/standards/deviation.htm>; <http://www.hazards.org/standards/brutishstandards.htm>

Impact on workers abroad

- Most trade deals state that International Labour Organisation, ILO, core conventions must be respected or ratified (as in CETA but not TTIP), including H&S but there is no mechanism for enforcement
- No country has adopted all ILO standards on H&S and many only a handful e.g. USA,
- Most trade agreements only list core standards (but not H&S or working time).
- ILO H&S standards are well below those of EU.
- Even core standards (freedom of association, freedom from forced labour, child labour etc) are not followed as no powers of enforcement or inspection
- Free trade agreements mean that it is not just work that gets moved overseas but risk.
- Countries join in a race to the bottom.

Present trade deals

- TTIP- EU with US. May not be finalised before Brexit. Strong opposition from politicians, unions and civil society, particularly in Germany, France, Austria and Greece.
- CETA – EU with Canada. (worse than TTIP) Waiting for ratification by EU. **Will cover UK** as signed before Brexit and will allow a back door for USA corporations to sue UK. Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Germany may oppose.
- Trade in Services Agreement, TiSA – EU with most industrial countries except China. Includes requirements that all regulations are assessed for “burden” and opening up of public services. **A very dangerous treaty**
- Existing bilateral investment treaties – UK with other countries. Some, like Hong Kong, include ISDS (used by China).
- Trans Pacific Partnership Treaty, TPP- between USA and Pacific countries is completed but awaits ratification in USA.
- New Trade deals if we leave the single market. UK with any country or the EU. May or may not include ISDS and market liberalisation commitments which affect public services.
- Where no trade deals – World Trade Organisation, WTO, rules apply.
- Most trade deals say that ILO standards must be upheld **but no mechanism for enforcement.**

Everything is under threat with CETA and other post BREXIT trade deal that may be negotiated. But specific regulations that employers/corporations want to get rid of include Safety Reps Regs and TU rights, Chemical Regulations such as REACH and COSHH, Working Time Regs, Personal Protective Equipment Regulations and Display Screen Equipment Regulations.

Now we have voted to leave EU, we will not be party to signing TTIP but CETA will apply and Post Brexit Tory Government is very pro CETA and TTIP and most likely to attempt to negotiate deals hostile to workers' rights:
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jul/27/sovereignty-corporations-liam-fox-eu>

What should we be do? Group suggestions were:

Campaign against any proposals in trade agreements that undermine rights to health and safety, support TUC campaign on protecting workers rights and **Scrap CETA- do not sign it do not ratify it!** But to gain support to do this we need:

1. To explain what CETA means
2. More information , need to start a 'national conversation'/ discussion
3. Clear direction
4. Bring CETA up at work, in TU Branch meetings pass motions to Region to National
5. Major TUC Campaign ETUC, ITIC etc against ratification of CETA when it comes to European Parliament, EP, in Autumn, and against any implementation before ratification by EP and UK Parliament
6. Support from Political parties Labour, Greens
7. Hazards Campaign to work with Hazards Magazine on a centre spread– a pull out with draft motions
8. Lobby MPs, MEPs, Cllr
9. Need to make clear the threats to democracy, workers, citizen etc rights
10. Grass roots campaigns: Educate, Organise, Agitate - Demand that protection for workers is included in any trade deals; continue H&S organising campaign; Renew campaign for UK to ratify all ILO labour conventions, including on H&S
11. Fair Trade Mandate- the criteria we want in any Trade Treaty that is negotiated on our behalf
12. Demand a referendum on CETA!

See Ceta Check: <https://stop-ttip.org/cetacheck/>