

Dear Dyfed,

Please feel free to share the information below with your colleagues...

Thank you for your email regarding the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

I would like to reassure you that, contrary to what you may have been told, the European Parliament is not about to vote on any agreement. The negotiations started in June last year, and negotiators are aiming to conclude the deal by the end of 2015. This, however, is highly unlikely due to the complexity of the negotiations. The agreement might not even be presented before the European Parliament in the course of the current term (2014-2019).

As it stands, the EU and the US have not yet started to draft the TTIP. The exploratory phase of the negotiations, in which both sides exchanged ideas without any formal commitment, was only concluded last week. Currently, there is no text available for us - or indeed anyone - to formulate an informed opinion on the TTIP. Negotiators have not yet agreed any proposals on public services or Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), nor have they agreed on any of the proposals that could potentially benefit UK companies and consumers, such as removing the barriers that prevent UK SMEs exporting to the US.

We are nonetheless paying close attention to TTIP. Although the European Parliament has no formal powers in the negotiations, as they are exclusively conducted by the European Commission, it does have the power to veto the final text. This allows us to influence the process in warning the Commission that we will not support any agreement that fails to address our specific concerns.

As Labour MEPs, we have made it clear that we will oppose any deal that endangers the NHS or prevent a future Labour government from bringing the NHS back into public administration. On this matter, the current UK government can easily obtain the exclusion of the NHS from any future deal, and we must keep pressing it to do so. We will also not support any deal that in any way limits the sovereignty of the British people and the autonomy of its elected representatives, in particular through flawed ISDS mechanisms.

Rest assured that I, together with my Labour colleagues in the European Parliament, share your concerns over TTIP and will continue to push the Commission towards a deal that truly benefits all UK citizens.

Kind regards,  
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