

JASMONTAITE Inga

From: Simo Karetie <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 31 October 2014 15:16
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Subject: [EOWEB] TTIP Consultation
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To Public consultation OI/10/2014
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Language you would like to receive an answer in en - English

Part 2 - Data

To Public consultation OI/10/2014
Subject TTIP Consultation
Content

EK response to EU Ombudsman Public Consultation on Transparency of TTIP

1 Q1 Please give us your views on what concrete measures the Commission could take to make the TTIP negotiations more transparent. Where, specifically, do you see room for improvement? (We would ask you to be as concrete as possible in your replies and also to consider the feasibility of your suggestions, in light of the timeframe of the negotiations. It would be most helpful if you could prioritise your suggestions.)

The Commission, together with the Member States and business organisations could strengthen the dialogue with SME's. They are expected to benefit most from TTIP but clearly lack the capacity to be closely involved in the trade negotiation process or to clarify all the legal and technical details and requirements for market access and therefore to take full advantage of EU trade agreements. The Commission has useful tools for SME's collected and available at EU small business portal, mainly informational ones, useful databases like Market Access Database and trade promotion tools. However, the establishment of a SME help desk focused on trade policy could be considered. Such a help desk could serve as a contact point for companies, collect information and give advice on market access issues. It would deal with trade barriers, trade negotiation processes, challenges in public procurement, fulfilling standards requirements etc. This would benefit the negotiation processes, enforcement of the agreements as well as the real and effective market access results for SME's. It would be a timely initiative now when TTIP process is shaping the business environment for SME's in a long term and the interest towards US market has increased. A commission help-desk for companies would strengthen continuous, long-term commitment to improve access of SME's to global markets. More broad based success of our SME's in global markets is key to our economic growth and wellbeing.

More attention should be paid to transform the often very technical content and complex terminology of trade agreements to common language explanations and summaries that are more understandable for people that are not directly involved in the trade negotiations. Communication also with SME's needs to be in understandable, to the point and in a concise format.

We welcome the publication of TTIP mandate. Amount on non-confidential information should be increased and publicly available. All stakeholders need to be provided opportunities to be heard during the process as well as access to non-confidential information.

Increased dialogue with the national parliaments at the preparatory phase and during the negotiations might have a positive impact on understanding, support and approval of trade agreements and their poli-

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Kilpailukyky ja kasvu/Kaupppolitiikka ja
kansainvälistyminen
Simo Karetie

30.10.2014

2 (2)

cy objectives as well as to their ratification, in case also the national parliaments have a role in it.

Q2 Please provide examples of best practice that you have encountered in this area (for example, in particular Commission Directorates-General or other international organisations) that you believe could be applied throughout the Commission.

The activities taken by the Commission as well as the member states already to increase transparency have been outstanding and TTIP has become by far the most transparent and inclusive process so far in the history of trade negotiations. Ample amount of opportunities have been provided for stakeholders to present their views have been provided, vast amount of information has been delivered through a number of means and participation to public discussion has been on a unprecedented level. However, we fully support new, concrete measures in this area as proposed in answer to Q1.

Digital technologies could provide effective solutions for dissemination of both confidential and non-confidential information as well as for collecting feedback on a constant basis and in a flexible format in addition to more specific consultations.

2 Q3 Please explain how, in your view, greater transparency might affect the outcome of the negotiation

Active public discussion is an essential part of decision making process in democratic societies. This discussion and the public interest to engage in discussion has been facilitated through increased transparency. Transparency and dialogue should aim broader understanding of the long term impact of trade and investment opening, objectives of trade agreements and their potential benefits and essentially, the systemic importance of TTIP and the high level of rules and standards it will set.

Broader understanding will create trust and lead to broader public support which is essential for the political support and leadership to accelerate the negotiations. However, increased transparency can't mean that the view of the ones who make most noise should be approved. Openness should not lead to risk aversion, to a situation in which all difficult or controversial issues are put off the table. All decisions need to be based on thorough analysis of facts, and balancing of costs and benefits.

Transparency and broad based discussion will also raise interest among companies, especially SME's, to look into the opportunities provided by the US market and TTIP negotiations. This creates opportunities for increased dialogue (ref Q1) and as a result, better outcome for the European economy.

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