

## **EU AmChams Call for Increased Focus on Member State Engagement on TTIP at EU Trade Ministers Meeting in Riga**

*We believe Member States should further engage with civil society and communicate to citizens the potential benefits of a transatlantic trade and investment agreement*

We, the undersigned 20 American Chambers of Commerce (AmChams) in the EU, welcome the discussion on more efficient Member State engagement on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement at the Informal Meeting of EU Trade Ministers in Riga, Latvia, on 24-25 March, 2015. We call for EU ministers to further explore tangible steps to increase engagement with civil society and enhance the domestic debate on TTIP.

National governments have a key role to play in contributing to the EU-wide debate on TTIP. Efficient EU Member State engagement with the public on the benefits of a transatlantic agreement will allay stakeholder concerns on transparency, dispel myths that currently persist in the domestic and EU-wide debate, and ultimately lead to the emergence of a broad, fact-based discussion at all levels.

At the EU Trade Ministers meeting, ministers should identify concrete measures for Member States to:

- Communicate the benefits of TTIP to their citizens and SMEs;
- Highlight measures already taken by Member States to increase transparency in the negotiation process, as well as next steps; and
- Improve dialogue with stakeholders at all levels on the key issues surrounding the debate, including by confronting the sensitive issues that are key to the agreement.

Member States should highlight to citizens the efforts already made on transparency, such as in the recent decision to make the negotiating mandate public. EU governments should also look to explain the scope and limitations of TTIP, as well as the negotiating process. Member States have collectively given the European Commission the mandate to negotiate with the United States on their behalf and are being kept informed of its progress in regular meetings with the European Commission. It is important that this information finds its way back to the Member States.

As a part of such an information campaign, EU governments should continue to hold regular and active public consultations with domestic stakeholders across the board on key issues that concern TTIP. They should find ways of communicating more efficiently the potential benefits a TTIP agreement can bring; such as greater consumer choice, a more efficient business environment for local economies including specific gains for SMEs, and the strengthening of EU-US ties at a time of geopolitical uncertainty in Europe.

Member States should build on the positive efforts of the European Commission to implement a “fresh start” to TTIP negotiations – one based on increased transparency and improved civil dialogue to dispel concerns that are based on misconceptions. To maximise TTIP’s potential, EU countries must confront head-on the sensitive issues essential to an ambitious and comprehensive agreement. Only a comprehensive EU-wide approach to TTIP based on transparency, active stakeholder engagement and a commitment to high standards will produce an agreement that delivers the greatest value to EU citizens.

We agree with the letter sent by the 14 EU Member States to Commissioner Malmström of 21 October 2014 that Europe and its governments need to think big and demonstrate clear leadership if we are to generate the growth that we badly need.

The undersigned AmChams are ready and committed to engage with their respective governments and with all domestic stakeholders to advance the debate on TTIP in the coming months.

**Undersigned American Chambers of Commerce**



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The American Chamber of Commerce in Belgium



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The American Chamber of Commerce in Bulgaria



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