



Press Release

Delegations to the on-going negotiations over the free trade pact between the United States and European Union, the so-called Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or TTIP, jointly reiterate their commitment to negotiating an agreement that is economically beneficial to both sides, while meeting the highest standards of transparency and environmental and social sustainability.

Protestors block US-EU Trade Pact Negotiations

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Brussels - Delegates to the on-going negotiations over a transatlantic trade and investment pact between the United States and the European Union were surprised today when their meetings were disrupted by boisterous protests outside Berlaymont, the seat of the Commission of the European Union. Delegates seeking to begin the third round of negotiations, in which the sides were to exchange position papers for the various sectors involved, were met by large groups of protestors who aired a wide range of grievances and who blocked access to the building. Delegates waited for nearly an hour while police attempted to secure passage to the building. Eventually the delegates returned to their respective offices and postponed the meetings by a day. Several were visibly frustrated by the protests.

“This is simply an overreaction by a small group of uninformed interest groups,” said one delegate, who asked to remain anonymous because she was not authorized to speak to the press. Adam Hillside, spokesperson for the US Trade Representative, attempted to sound a more sympathetic tone. “The US and European publics deserve to have a say in this watershed agreement. After all, it is for their benefits that we’re trying to move this forward. So we welcome a dialogue with all stakeholders and we hear their concerns.” The tactics of blocking negotiations, however, he argued was counter-productive. “Preventing us from meeting, preventing us from expressing the concerns of our respective constituents to the other side, is not the best way to ensure a more transparent process. We have held meetings with civil society representatives with each round and those meetings have been respectful and



productive. So we strongly encourage those who are interested in shaping the outcome of this historic agreement to attend those fora and express their concerns there.”

Protestors remained skeptical. Gillian Sotero, who seemed to be a provisional leader of the protest, said: “The TTIP is simply an attempt to deepen the reach of the wealthiest into the pockets of the poor and institutionalize that robbery through binding agreements. It takes power away from democratically elected officials and gives control over the world’s most important trade and investment relationship to a handful of unaccountable, neoliberal technocrats.” Environmental groups, anti-poverty coalitions, and democracy advocates comprised the bulk of those blocking Berlaymont. “Ultimately,” said one young woman holding a sign that read “F--- your Frankenfoods”, this agreement aims to let multinational corporations determine what goes into our soil, our air, and our bodies. We don’t believe that’s fair or smart. We demand a more sustainable economic system.”

While attempting to assure protestors that their right to protest would be respected, officials organizing the meeting expected said that stronger police presence tomorrow would ensure the continuation of talks.