



EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement Joint ETUC/CLC Statement

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) have been following as closely as possible – given the scarcity of publicly available information- negotiations between the EU and Canada on a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement.

Considering the level of social and economic development in both the EU member states and Canada, any agreement is only acceptable if based on a high standard, setting a benchmark for future agreements worldwide, and certainly not undermining existing conditions. Therefore:

1. Labour rights must be enshrined in the body of the agreement and be subject to equivalent dispute settlement mechanisms as other issues covered by it, including enforcement. Labour rights must not be corroded by investor-rights provisions. Dispute resolution must be based upon an independent and transparent complaints process. The parties should commit to the ratification and the full and effective implementation of the core labour standards of the ILO, as an essential element of the agreement that shall not be undermined by either Party in the pursuit of trade advantage. Moreover, environmental protection and the respect of international environmental conventions should also be addressed. A robust monitoring mechanism should also be included in line with the joint ETUC/ITUC Statement of July 2007.¹
2. It is imperative that the failings of the NAFTA are not replicated, let alone aggravated, by any future CETA. This applies to investor rights in the first instance. We oppose the inclusion of an investor-state arbitration mechanism in the agreement. We concur with the European Parliament's assessment that "a state to state dispute settlement mechanism and the use of local judicial remedies are the most appropriate tools to address investment disputes".²
3. The ETUC and CLC are concerned that CETA will interfere with the right of governments to regulate in the public interest, protect public services, or create new public programs. Further, we are deeply concerned our respective governments may replace broad exemptions for public services with narrowly specified exemptions in trade and investment agreements. We are concerned that universal access, equal treatment, public administration, affordability and

¹ ETUC/ITUC, "Statement of Trade Union Demands Relating to Key Social Elements of "Sustainable Development" Chapters in European Union Negotiations on Free Trade Agreements (IFIs). Brussels, July 2007. http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/TLE_EN.pdf

² European Parliament, "EU-Canada Trade Relations", Strasbourg, Resolution 8 June 2011

sustainability of public services cannot be maintained through further liberalisation. Governments must retain the authority to favour public delivery of services, such as water treatment and distribution, without fear that such a policy would be considered a barrier to trade in services. The agreement should not include any commitment to open or liberalize public procurement at the subnational level, including at the municipal level. Local governments should have a clear and permanent exemption from the CETA so they can use public money in support of sustainable, local, economic development.

We ask to be heard by the appropriate committee of our Parliaments as part of the necessary consent procedure following the negotiations, as part of a general debate that must be held before any agreement is ratified. The public has the right to full disclosure, along with the right to meaningful and informed input into the negotiations.

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