



Trade

Purpose of brief:

- To inform EB-148 of activities and in trade since EB-147; and
- To inform EB-148 of proposed action in trade for 2016.

Relates to:

- ✓ EB-147 trade brief

Background: Following resolutions from Congress 2012, PSI has established itself as a global labour leader in the fight against unfair trade agreements. PSI Executive Board and Steering Committee determined PSI focus will be the threats trade agreements pose to public services and the shift of power from democratic governments to corporations; and prioritised PSI's work on the Trade In Services Agreement (TISA), Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and agreements between EU and other countries. SC-19 passed policy opposing the TPP shortly after its text was released. <http://www.world-psi.org/en/race-sign-tpa-highlights-growing-public-anger>. PSI has continued to invest in the valuable partnership with FES, resulting in financial support increasing each year since 2014. In 2015, it totalled 93,000€, and in 2016, it rose to 145,000€.

Discussion:

Since EB-147, PSI has had considerable success shifting the policy debate in global labour forums, facilitating national campaigns and influencing government.

Developments in TISA

Perhaps the most significant positive development was that on 07/09/2015, Uruguay President Tabaré Vázquez announced that Uruguay would withdraw from the TISA negotiations. This was in no small part due to the efforts of PSI, its affiliates and allies. Following this announcement, Paraguay also left the negotiations. Paraguay is now the third country to do so.

PSI affiliates from Uruguay attended the TISA Summit in Geneva in 2014 to hear about the effects of TISA on public services and committed to take action. PSI convened an FES-sponsored meeting in Uruguay on 12/05/2015 to bring together private and public sector unions against TISA. Uruguay's national labour union federation, PIT-CNT, then called for the country's withdrawal as one of its demands during a one-day national strike on 06/08/2015. They were particularly worried that TISA would limit the government's ability to regulate. The local campaign has specifically attributed the success to the quality of the information that has allowed them to lobby. Results such as these show the effect PSI can have when working with its allies on sustained, well informed campaigning and lobbying. See:

<http://www.world-psi.org/en/uruguay-abandons-tisa-negotiations-victory-psi-affiliates>

Investor State Dispute Resolution (ISDS)

In a sign that European governments are increasingly nervous about public opposition to these trade agreements, the European Commission undertook a consultation on the highly controversial ISDS clauses proposed for TTIP and CETA. Trade unions and civil society organised information and responses to these consultations resulting in a record 150,000 people responding with over 97% rejecting the ISDS. This prompted EU trade chief, Cecilia Malmström, to say that ISDS has become "the most toxic acronym in Europe". In Autumn 2015, the EU released a revised proposal renamed the Investment Court System (ICS) which dealt with some of the most blatant abuse of procedure but continued with the fundamentals that allow foreign multinational corporations to sue

governments for democratic actions taken in the public interest. PSI has commissioned research to explain the problems with the new ICS proposal.

TPP

The release of the secret TPP text after seven years of negotiation provided an opportunity to expose the specific problems with the agreement. The TPP threatens democracy, development, public services and in particular public healthcare including the inclusion of ISDS. PSI issued a statement explaining these threats, circulated information to affiliates, supported country action and urged all affiliates to take action to oppose the TPP. <http://www.world-psi.org/en/issue/tpp>. Actions have occurred in many countries from Australia and New Zealand to Chile.

<http://www.world-psi.org/en/trade-unions-and-social-organizations-say-chile-better-without-tppa>

Building capacity to fight

PSI, FES and Our World Is Not for Sale Network (OWINFS) held a three-day technical training for 25 affiliates, GUFs, national union centres, civil society and private sector unions on how to read and analyse trade in services agreements, to build capacity and assist in lobbying. The training was taught by Professor Jane Kelsey and was filmed. PSI has started the production of union training material based on the film and materials so to further build union capacity. This work was also important in bringing other GUFs into the fight. Participants in this workshop have been active in spreading the opposition including drafting a successful resolution against TISA that passed ETUC Congress, ensuring that GUFs such as the ITF, UniGlobal, EI and national union centres like the TUC, UK, and DGB, Germany, have taken strong and active positions in opposition.

Since EB-147 PSI has also:

- Organised national campaign meetings in Costa Rica, Peru and Panama. Colombia and Uruguay meetings were held earlier in 2015;
- Commissioned research on market access commitments under TISA for Latin American countries (Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama, Peru) to be used in campaigning and lobbying;
- Commented on the largest ever leak of trade documents when Wikileaks leaked more than 10 TISA negotiating texts: <https://wikileaks.org/tisa/>;
- Released an analysis of the leaked TISA text on the Energy Related Services Annex to coincide with COP21;
- Participated in a panel discussion and delivered a closing keynote address at the Financing Democracy Summit in Ottawa on the importance of fighting trade agreements. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75eBYjVAMMs>;
- Held a seminar at the WTO Forum on the Trade in Services Agreement;
- Participated in forums in Moscow, Berlin and Brussels on the effect of trade agreements on public services including lobbying the USA TTIP negotiators and staff of German MEPs.

PSI activity for 2016 will include country meetings in Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Indonesia and Mauritius and a regional co-ordination meeting in Latin America. PSI will also continue the market access research, produce country briefings and policy briefings and further campaign activity. Importantly in 2016, a trade organiser will be hired in Latin America.

Due to understaffing we have been unable to cover all the planned activities and to fulfil all the commitments with FES. Our work plan for 2016 will accommodate this.

Budget implications: Nil

Next steps:

- Recruit trade organiser;
- Implement programme of work agreed with FES;
- Hold country meetings.

It is recommended that EB-148:

1. **NOTE this brief;**
2. **NOTE PSI opposition to the ICS.**

YES / NO
YES / NO