

TTIP: What Lies Beneath

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TTIP: a threat to animal welfare and rights

Animal rights defenders need to speak up says Florent Marcellesi, EQUO's European Parliament spokesman & Lluvia Rojo, actress and member of EQUO Animal Rights

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We now know that the free trade agreement between the European Union and the United States known as TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) will effectively roll out the red carpet to multinational corporations, offering them an open invitation to fundamentally alter EU and US law-making processes, with a *carte blanche* to evade or erode Europe's workers' rights, social, environmental and health protections. But how will this affect animals? Little or nothing has been said thus far about how TTIP will affect animal welfare. Yet it is an extremely important subject as TTIP has the potential to severely endanger Europe's animal welfare protections which regulate our animals' quality of life, health, and rights.



Firstly, because TTIP's main purpose is to reduce and remove non-tariff barriers (NTBs, which include sanitary and safety regulation) differences between the EU and the USA, there is little or no chance animal welfare protections will be raised. At the same time there is a clear threat that standards that regulate animal quality of life face being lowered or significantly undermined.

EU vs US: big differences in animal welfare regulation

The present state of animal welfare regulation in the EU is certainly not ideal, but it is definitely much more advanced than that of its counterpart in the USA, at least from an anthropocentric perspective. The EU presently regulates the protection and living conditions of animals from "farm to plate", which is to say that every phase of production (breeding, transport, slaughter) falls under EU regulation. This regulation prohibits the use of growth hormones, while the use of antibiotics and genetically-modified (GMO) ingredients in animal feed is strictly limited. Similarly, since 2013, the use of animal-testing for cosmetics products is illegal, as is the import of non-EU products tested on animals, and there is an EU directive (2010/63/EU, commonly referred to as "The 3 R's") calling for EU members to "replace, reduce, and refine" the use of animals for scientific purposes/experimentation.

While the EU now recognises animal welfare as a fundamental right (Treaty of Lisbon, 2009), US federal law is not very advanced at all. In the USA there are no federal laws governing the conditions of animals during the breeding process, there only exists a standard for the slaughtering and packaging of food-animals. The vast majority of US states actually allow animals to be confined in spaces that restrict their ability to even turn around.

Even more disturbing from an EU perspective, is the fact that the US federal government, much like many multinational corporations, actively supports the widespread use and consumption of genetically-modified foods for both humans and animals, accepts animal-testing for both cosmetic and cleaning products, and accepts animal-cloning for human consumption. Already some of the Commission's proposals to ban or restrict certain aspects of these practices, especially around the sale of products from clones descendants, have been watered-down in anticipation of TTIP. Finally, the US Federal Animal Welfare Act doesn't actually apply to chicken or other birds, fish, or rodents (which account for the majority of animal subjects used in the laboratory), and the US law regulating the transportation of animals has not been meaningfully modified since 1873!

What agribusiness lobbies want

Meanwhile, the agribusiness and meat lobbies have a clear objective: TTIP negotiations need to provide US and other non-EU businesses with a way of circumventing the current European Union consumer health laws. For example, the US National Pork Producers Council (the NPPC) has stated that the final TTIP agreement must not force US producers to comply with the EU sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards, which include animal welfare, consumer health, the use of GMOs, cloning, sustainability, etc.

The NCCP, along with 46 other agribusiness lobbies, have insisted that TTIP must specifically deregulate non-tariff barriers (NTBs) between the US and the EU because the European Union's SPS standards place "unjustifiable restrictions on production methods" that would "negatively affect exports of U.S. meat, poultry and dairy products, as well as fresh fruits." They also claim that current EU standards "impose arbitrary

sustainability requirements” on US feedstock, and that they are “inconsistent with WTO rules” because they are of an overly precautionous and non-scientific basis.

But let us consider the National Pork Producers Council for a moment. The NPPC promotes the wide use of ractopamine for pigs, a drug which is added to pig-food in order to increase muscle mass and therefore market-price, in the US, which has been linked to cardiovascular problems in pigs and humans and is currently banned in over 150 countries, including the EU, China, and Russia.

Given the powerful influence and level of control that multinational corporations have succeeded in attaining in prior negotiations, everything indicates that:

1. If there is regulatory convergence under TTIP, Europe’s animal welfare policies and regulations will be drastically degraded, as it is unimaginable that corporations with US-based production systems would raise all of their standards to that of the European Union. Moreover, the EU’s initial negotiation stance on Jan. 8, 2015) did not inspire much confidence in the first place: while one stated goal is “preserving each Party’s right to protect human, animal or plant life and health in its territory,” the next goal is to “ensure that the Parties’ sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures do not create unnecessary barriers to trade”. There has already been a dangerous precedent- CETA, the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement currently in its final approval stages and considered by many to the modern-day “Trojan Horse” for TTIP, makes only one insignificant, non-binding mention of animal welfare.
2. If TTIP gets approved without regulatory convergence, multinational corporations will begin “dumping” animal-based products, moving production to locations with much looser animal welfare provisions in order to lower production costs.
3. In either case, even if European-made products continue to comply with the current animal welfare regulations, it will become much easier for the American products which do not guarantee the conscientious production of animal materials to find their way into European kitchens and bathrooms.

From an animal rights perspective, TTIP leaves no room for doubt: it will hasten the steady commercialisation of living beings.

The clear objective of this treaty is to expand commerce and investment between the EU and the USA by increasing the consumption of animal products (mainly meat, eggs, and milk). From an ethical perspective, this frenetic consumption is unsustainable, with over 60 trillion land-animals and marine animals sacrificed each year alone to meet global consumption. As Matthieu Ricard explained, we are currently witnessing a veritable “animal genocide,” characterised by the devaluation of victims as they are mass-extermiated, along with dissimulation, desensitization, and social denial of the act being committed, among other things.

Meanwhile, the TTIP proposal has neither questioned the sustainability or morality of using hundreds of billions of animals as mere products for human consumption (in the form of food, clothing, experimentation, or entertainment) nor mentioned any reduction in the consumption of products derived from animals. And of course none of the negotiators – American or European – have suggested including an animal rights or an environmental representative in the Investor-State Dispute Settlement resolution process (the controversial ISDS). In other words, nobody involved in TTIP has paid any attention to “the voiceless”, and nobody is defending their interests or even their basic rights of existence. This lack of attention is, however, a useful tactic to gloss over the fact that TTIP will be a giant qualitative leap towards the commercialisation of European life in general, and animal life in particular.

In light of all this, the people and organisations that defend animal welfare and animal rights need to send the message loud and clear: STOP TTIP! We wholeheartedly join the European public awareness campaign to block the enactment of this dangerous treaty, and we will continue the daily fight to ensure that animals attain the social and political representation they deserve.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:



- Learn more about how TTIP threatens animal welfare at <http://freetradekillsanimals.org/ttip>
- Contact your Representatives and urge them to publicly commit to vote against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the equally dangerous Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). You can find out who represents you at <http://gjae.org/leg> or by calling (718) 218-4523.
- To learn more and find out how you can help stop TTIP and TPP, contact Global Justice for Animals and the Environment at (718) 218-4523 or by emailing info@freetradekillsanimals.org. Visit our website at <http://freetradekillsanimals.org>.