

The Annual EU-US Trade Conference

The Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership

The Right Deal for Global Trade?

30th January 2014 . The Hotel . Brussels

Post Conference Report

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Thursday 30th January / Brussels

Welcoming over 250 delegates, Forum Europe's inaugural EU-US Trade conference, this year focusing on the TTIP negotiations, opened with a scene setting session and an examination of the macro-political and economic reasoning behind the TTIP project.

Keynote Session

Opening the conference, **Crin Antonescu**, *President of the Romanian Senate and Leader of the Romanian National Liberal Party (PNL)*, underlined that the TTIP presents huge political as well as economic opportunities to accelerate growth for the mutual benefit of the whole EU and the USA and to promote a shared liberal vision of governance and trade. He underlined the importance of transparency and communicating to European and US electorates the clear benefits of an agreement if it is to be adopted by the European Parliament and US Congress.



Addressing the conference, **Christian Ehler MEP**, *Chair of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with the United States*, underlined the overtly political nature of the project. He also warned against taking the negotiations hostage over the NSA scandal or



indeed over-stretching calls for transparency. He argued that failure to deliver an agreement would weaken both sides' positions in the world.



Ignacio Garcia Bercero, *Director in DG TRADE, European Commission and the EU's Chief Negotiator for the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership*, welcomed the general

support for the negotiations. The negotiations are progressing satisfactorily and have in 6 months of negotiations covered all major topics. The fourth round of negotiations will be held from 10th to 14th March. He also reiterated that the negotiations on data protection should be kept separate, and agreed that transparency will be key to maintaining public support.

Opening Plenary



Moderator **Paul Adamson**, *Senior European Policy Advisor at Covington & Burling and Editor-in-Chief of E!Sharp*, opened the session, which touched on many of the major issues, including ensuring

that TTIP benefits all Member States, that its benefits are communicated to citizens and that negotiations are conducted in a transparent manner. Antonescu believed that the economic benefits would be felt by all and that informing citizens is paramount. Ehler underlined the transparent nature of the talks so far and argued that

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the European Parliament is very well informed. Indeed, there was consensus that both the advantages and disadvantages of an agreement need to be examined publically. There needs to be an acceptance that there will be both winners and losers. Competition will increase but this will in general bring benefits to the common good.

Second Plenary Session

The second plenary panel session was opened by **Elena Bryan**, Senior Trade Representative based at the US



Mission to the EU, who emphasised that the respective EU and US leaders recognise that our economies need TTIP. She believes that a win-win situation for both sides is possible and one that would bring economic benefits without lowering high levels of protection (social, environmental, etc).

Thomas Boué, Director, Government Affairs EMEA and BSA | *The Software Alliance*, presenting a report by his organisation, noted that TTIP makes complete sense in



the context of the digital economy. Developing common regulations on cloud computing and data analytics will be essential. It is vitally important to avoid new trade barriers that could stunt the growth-

inducing power of these new technologies. For this, international dialogue is crucial.

Peter Vicary-Smith, Chief Executive of *Which?* and President of BEUC, focused on the economic impact on individual consumers. He expressed concern that not enough work has been done



on demonstrating how TTIP will directly benefit individuals as consumers. More work is needed to illustrate how a deal will open up markets and pass on the benefits.

According to **Tod Cohen**, Vice President and Deputy General Counsel of Global Government Relations at eBay Inc. wanted to see more emphasis placed on the SME/micro



business and consumer side in the TTIP discussions. He underlined the real job creation potential of SMEs and microfirms and noted that to really drive growth, an agreement would have to have SMEs at its core.

Vital Moreira MEP, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade, recalled the important powers that the Lisbon Treaty had given to the European Parliament on trade matters. He argued that pressure and analysis from the European Parliament had brought unprecedented levels of transparency to the discussions. He believes that there is a strong majority in the European Parliament for the agreement despite concerns over privacy and investment rules. He also believes that this majority will be maintained in the next Parliament.



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The round of questions that followed was dominated by the perceived levels of transparency and data protection. Bercero reiterated once again that whilst important, the discussions on privacy should be kept outside the scope of TTIP. Vicary-Smith agreed and underlined that the level of transparency in these negotiations is unprecedented. Cohen underlined his support for a broader approach to the negotiations encompassing a strong SME thread, and reiterated the need to communicate and explain the benefits to all.



During the afternoon, delegates split off into sector specific **breakout sessions**. These covered:

- ▶ Digital & ICT
- ▶ Agriculture & Food
- ▶ SMEs
- ▶ Chemicals
- ▶ Transport & Automotive
- ▶ Pharmaceuticals & Health
- ▶ Energy & Raw Materials

The final plenary wrap up session was moderated by **Andrea Renda**, *Senior Research Fellow at CEPS* and featured **Elena Bryan** from *USEU/USTR* and **Ignacio Garcia Bercero** from the *European Commission*.



This was a final opportunity to put questions to the panel members and to hear the key themes that emerged from the breakout sessions.



This report was kindly compiled by Strategis Communications.

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