

Ambassador Michael Froman

United States Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508
USA

23 March 2015

**Urgent call to release documents in the
Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)**

Dear Ambassador Froman,

In January 2015, the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD) addressed a letter to you and Commissioner Malmström, asking for increased transparency in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).¹ We welcomed at this occasion the useful steps taken by the EU to share its proposals with the general public. We trust that this more open approach by the EU is useful, not only for EU stakeholders, but also for US ones.

We are very surprised by your absence of response to our letter and concerns. Waiving our concerns by boilerplate arguments referring to the fact that these negotiations are the most transparent in history is not an acceptable response to legitimate requests for democratic accountability. More transparency than before does not imply that a process is transparent enough.

We will not repeat in this letter all the good reasons why such openness is needed in the context of these trade negotiations. The fact that the EU institutions responded favourably to our concerns, shared by many other stakeholders, is sufficient proof that these concerns are legitimate.

Therefore, we urge you to seriously consider again the repeated and multi-stakeholder requests, both in the EU and in the US, for more transparency, even more as elected policy makers on both sides of the Atlantic have voiced the same requests.

For TTIP to have a chance to succeed, it is key that it is negotiated openly, with involvement of civil society. This agreement reaches far beyond traditional trade facilitation issues, which calls for democratic debates before its provisions are agreed on. Public opinion cannot accept secret talks in an era where information is the main asset of our societies and markets.

¹ <http://tacd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/TACD-letter-to-Froman-and-Malmstr%C3%B6m.pdf>.

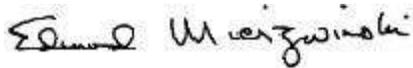
Consequently, we repeat our request for the US to share its negotiating texts and proposals, and to liaise with the EU with a view of a combined publication of the consolidated texts. We respectfully bring to your attention Commissioner Malmström's timely response to our January letter, in which she acknowledged that "consolidated" documents would contribute to enhancing transparency.²

In publishing the legal texts, the US would lift a major barrier to a more constructive debate on TTIP. What is kept secret and accessible to just a few generates suspicion and distrust and can lead to failure. We call on you to have the vision to contribute to a more positive discussion by sharing the documents that underlie the negotiations.

We strongly believe that any other approach on behalf of the US would be counter-productive and would lead to massive opposition to the treaty. To use a metaphor often used by your team: a poker game with only one party putting its cards on the table is fundamentally flawed.

We are at the disposal of your team for any detailed follow up on the implementation of enhanced transparency principles.

Yours sincerely,



Ed Mierzwinski
Consumer Programme Director, U.S. PIRG
US Co-Chair of TACD



Monique Goyens
Director General, BEUC
EU Co-Chair of TACD

On behalf of the TACD Steering Committee:

Rhoda Karpatkin, Consumers Union **Benedicte Federspiel**, Danish Consumer Council
Rob Weissman, Public Citizen **David Miguel Ortega**, OCU
Susan Grant, Consumer Federation of America **Gerjan Huis in 't Veld**, Consumentenbond

Cc: Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner for Trade

² <http://tacd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Commissioner-Malmstroem-reply.pdf>.