Trans-Atlantic Trade & Investment Partnership

The Environmental Audit Committee published its report on the Environmental risks of the Trans-Atlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (Ninth Report, HC 857) on 10 March. We identified a number of concerns and potential risks for a range of environmental and public health protections.

Environmental standards to be subject to ‘mutual recognition’ under TTIP will need to be genuinely sufficiently similar so that protections are not weakened — it is important to avoid a ‘race to the bottom’ on regulations. We advocated that environmental groups and agencies be represented on the Regulatory Co-operation Council to bolster its ability to fully weigh environmental issues alongside the economic and trade considerations that might otherwise take precedence.

We did not believe that a compelling case has yet been made for the inclusion of an Investor-State Dispute Settlement regime in TTIP. If there is to be an ISDS, however, it must preserve the EU’s right to regulate. That means it will need to minimise the opportunity for producing a chilling effect on future regulation by being robustly framed to resist unwarranted litigation.

The potential impact of TTIP on developing countries needs to be addressed. They should be invited to take part in the negotiations, to allow their concerns to be fully addressed. Aid programmes will need to be targeted to help them to be able to continue to compete for their existing export markets.

We would be grateful if you would take our report into consideration as the TTIP negotiations continue. In the meantime, we would also appreciate your assessment of what mechanisms will be available for individual member states and their citizens to be consulted and engaged in the development of the prospective deal.

Joan Walley MP
Chair, Environmental Audit Committee