

Stop TTIP beyond October 2015 (draft, 5.10.2015)

Background

As you all know, Stop TTIP was formed as a Europe-wide alliance to carry out a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) against TTIP and CETA. We are more than 500 supporting organisations strong, collected >3 million signatures so far and reached the country quorum in 22 EU Member States. On 6 October, our self-organised ECI completes its year of signature collection. What happens beyond October is the question we'd like to discuss with you.

Why continue our alliance?

Stop TTIP has achieved a lot within its first year. Yet, neither TTIP nor CETA are defeated. In fact, the crucial conflict is still very much ahead of us. We feel it would be wrong to dismantle the structures we've built in the past year and a half at this stage. Moreover, we'd have to delete hundreds of thousands of email contacts of people that said they want to be kept informed as well as close down our very successful social media channels. The alternative is to maintain the campaign momentum and build an even stronger resistance against TTIP and CETA. *The latter is what we propose to do.*

Activities we have started that will continue beyond October

- We didn't just carry out a self-organised ECI. We're also challenging the European Commission in the European Court of Justice (ECJ) for rejecting us as an official ECI. This court case is ongoing and won't be decided until later this year or early 2016. We will follow up on the ECJ's decision with appropriate reactions and activities.
- Independent of the ECJ's decision, we will continue to demand from the European Commission to treat us like an official ECI, i.e. answer our demands in an official written reply and organise a public hearing in the European Parliament. To achieve the latter, we will also try alternative paths via the EP's Petition Committee, the European Ombudsman or EP groups that might support us.
- We are coordinating a legal statement by European lawyers, judges and legal professionals on ISDS. This statement is currently being written and is scheduled to launch in autumn/winter. We will use this contribution from the law community to increase the pressure on European institutions to give up on ISDS.

New proposed activities

a) Continue the signature collection beyond October

1. The self-organised ECI will run until the end of its 12-month period on 6 October 2015, and we will mark the total number of signatures at that date so that we can use the figure in our publicity, in our comparisons with other ECIs and in our presentation to the institutions of the EU.

2. The national platforms that have formed to fight against TTIP and CETA will continue to collect signatures on the same text after 6 October 2015, but we will then give it a new name (European Initiative) so that we differentiate it from the self-organised ECI.

3. We will continue to use exactly the same text of the statement so that we can legitimately count all the signatures collected so far towards the growing total.
4. We will not continue to communicate the achievement of country quora after 6 October 2015.

b) A pledge campaign to target the European Parliament and national parliaments

The aim of this action would be to continue putting pressure on parliaments to reject TTIP and CETA when it comes to a vote. Even though none of the two agreements will most likely be voted on in the next six month (CETA potentially in 2016), we have to ensure that our elected representatives don't forget this is an issue of great concern to their constituents. This is particularly important for CETA as many Members of Parliament have not been forced to position themselves yet (the resolution was only on TTIP and there hasn't been any debate on CETA in this EP period yet). We'll also have to put attention to national parliaments because they should put pressure onto their government with regards to their position in the European Council vote and will eventually have to ratify the agreements, too.

We could pose a (small) number of questions, initially to MEPs that aim to force them to clarify their position on TTIP and CETA. The European Parliament (EP) recently voted on a TTIP resolution that we cannot be content with. Nevertheless, it contains passages that we can work with and remind MEPs to stick to their own words. For instance, we could ask those MEPs that voted in favour of the compromise amendment on ISDS whether their position means they'd reject CETA if it came to ratification. MEPs also said that they don't want the power of parliaments to be diminished. Hence, another question could be whether this means that the MEP will vote against any agreement that contains regulatory cooperation and so on. The questions could later be adapted or changed completely when the political situation changes, for instance once a date has been set for a parliamentary or Council vote on CETA.

In order to get MEPs to answer, we'd ask our supporters to write emails, letters but also call their MEPs office, visit them and when they do, to document it (photo/video or write a short personal summary). Documentation would be uploaded to our website, shared in social media and used for follow-up visits/interactions with the MEP. We'd ask people to "adopt" or "watch" a certain MEP in their vicinity and ensure to monitor this MEPs position on our questions. If MEPs don't want to answer, citizens could organise appointed Twitter storms, call-ins and even sit-ins in front of the MEPs office. There'd be plenty of scope for escalation and people would be empowered to demand their elected representatives to take a stance on this important issue. There's also the option of encouraging interaction between the MEPs and citizens in some way.

As an extension of the pledge campaign, we're looking at ways to also address national parliaments. This will have to be developed in close coordination with national anti-TTIP alliances. We'd aim to develop a tool (software) that would allow national alliances to formulate their own questions, fill in the details of their national MPs and host the tool on a website of their choice.

Possible approximate time schedule:

Preparation: Mid October till early 2016 (formulate questions to MEPs; make a data-base of MEPs in their position to be able to ask targeted questions depending on their previous voting behaviour; formulate requirements for the online tool and commission a programmer; redesign the Stop TTIP website to prepare for the new activity)

Launch: February/March 2016 at the earliest or later if a moment of political significance crystallises

These ideas shall be discussed with other European NGOs, especially those involved in the campaign on the recent EP resolution on TTIP in order to reach a consensus about a common action on approaching MEPs during the next months and years. A working group will be established in October.

c.) CETA

We propose to intensify our efforts to communicate the dangers of CETA more strongly over the coming months and built capacities within the campaign to work on CETA. Together with our partners we're preparing an action guide for activists that want to work on CETA.

d.) Support referenda/citizen initiatives on TTIP/CETA in Member States

According to a study it's possible to hold referenda on the ratification of CETA and TTIP in 14 EU Member States. We'd like to support national anti-TTIP alliances to demand or initiate such referenda where possible. We will analyze the political situation in each member state. If other elements of direct democracy (e.g. citizen initiatives) exist on various political levels, we aim to support initiatives that would like to make use of these. It could only be implemented if the ratification on the european union side will be finished and the member states have to ratify the treaty (mixed agreement). It should not divert resources from the fight to stop the negotiations on TTIP. This is a midterm strategy that needs a proper preparation.

Proposed working structure

We would like to put the running of the campaign into the hands of a renewed working structure. We propose that national Stop-TTIP alliances appoint representatives to join an international campaign committee (similar to our existing international call). More than just one person from one country could be part of that committee. The international campaign committee appoints a smaller committee that steer the work of the campaign (steering committee). In terms of resources, our coordination office in Berlin with two campaigners is funded until the end of February. The proposed activities need new funding, that will have to be raised over the next couple of months after concluding the discussion about our future activities.