

Press release
24 March 2014

The US-EU Trade Agreement Proposals by the pharmaceutical industry undermine European public policy making and public health

Berlin/Brussels, Monday March 24 2014: A report released today by the Commons Network and civil society partners shows that the pharmaceutical industry's wish list for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is detrimental for public health, will increase the cost of medicines and undermines democratic processes. The TTIP is a trade and investment agreement currently being negotiated between the European Union and the USA.

“Big Pharma’s wish list is testimony of a blatant disregard for democratic processes and public policies.” Says Sophie Bloemen, Commons Network coordinator. *“Companies are seeking to expand the length of medicines patent monopolies, to undermine Member States’ regulations to contain costs of medicines and to roll back the recent moves by the European Medicines Agency’s (EMA) towards transparency on clinical trials data.”*

Their proposals come at a time when health systems are extra under pressure as a result of the financial crisis and when in some countries patients can no longer afford the medicines they need. *“These secret negotiations give the industry a unique chance to push their agenda”*.

One particular concern are the proposals to introduction of ‘investor-to-state-dispute mechanism’ that gives the pharmaceutical industry the right to sue governments over legitimate public policy decisions deemed harmful to their investments. This gives companies a legal mechanism to directly undermine government policies including those to protect public health. The tobacco industry for example has used such provisions to contest plain packaging requirements in Australia. One pharmaceutical company took Canada to court after the invalidation of patents on two of its products. *“We do not want to see this possibility enshrined in European law,”* says Bloemen.

The pharmaceutical industry is one of the strongest corporate lobby forces on both sides of the Atlantic. Bloemen adds: *“European governments should resist corporate demands that are not in the interest of the European public and undermine sound democratic public policy making. Instead it should keep Big Pharma at an arms length and promote the common good.”*

–END–

See report:

[A Civil Society Response to the Big Pharma wish list](#)

<http://commonsnetwork.eu/ttipbigpharmawishlist/>

Contact:

info@commonsnetwork.eu

Endorsing organisations

Commons Network: The Commons Network is a non-profit advocacy organization and think-tank that engages in policy formulation as well as public debate, promoting the public good through commons-based solutions. It promotes access to knowledge and other social as well as ecological causes, and is based in Berlin and Brussels. www.commonsnetwork.eu Contact: info@commons.network.eu or david@commonsnetwork.eu

MiEF. The Medicines in Europe Forum (MiEF) was launched in March 2002 and reaches 12 European Member States. It includes more than 70 member organisations representing the four key players on the health field, i.e. patient groups, family and consumer bodies, social security systems, and health professionals. Such a grouping is unique in the history of the European Union and is testament to the importance of European medicines policy. Contact: pierrechirac@aol.com

UAEM Europe: Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM) Europe is a student organization that works to improve access to medicines and health technologies for populations in resource-limited settings. UAEM Europe currently features 25 campus-based local chapters at major universities across Europe. More info: www.uaem-europe.org. Contact: mail@uaem-europe.org

HAI Europe. Health Action International (HAI) Europe is a non-profit, European network of consumers, public interest NGOs, health care providers, academics, media and individuals working to increase access to essential medicines and improve their rational use through research excellence and evidence-based advocacy. More info: www.haieurope.org. Contact: ancel.la@haieurope.org

ISDB. The International Society of Drug Bulletins, founded in 1986, is a worldwide network of bulletins and journals on drugs and therapeutics that are financially and intellectually independent of the pharmaceutical industry. Currently ISDB has about 80 members representing 41 countries around the world. More info: www.isdbweb.org. Contact: press@isdbweb.org.

Salud por Derecho is a human rights defense organization whose institutional purpose is to contribute effectively to the full realization of the right to health of all people in impoverished countries. Our mission is advocacy, awareness-raising and civil society engagement. www.saludpoderecho.org Contact: saludpoderecho@saludpoderecho.org