



European Commission - Statement

This U.S.-EU joint statement's overall tone and specific worrying buzz words reflect the agenda that had been pushed by the largest U.S. and European banks, agribusinesses and other powerful industry groups in the [Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership \(TTIP\)](#) talks undertaken during the previous administration.

Joint U.S.-EU Statement following President Juncker's visit to the White House

Washington, 25 July 2018

We met today in Washington, D.C. to launch a new phase in the relationship between the United States and the European Union – a phase of close friendship, of strong trade relations in which both of us will win, of working better together for global security and prosperity, and of fighting jointly against terrorism.

The United States and the European Union together count more than 830 million citizens and more than 50 percent of global GDP. If we team up, we can make our planet a better, more secure, and more prosperous place.

Already today, the United States and the European Union have a \$1 trillion bilateral trade relationship – the largest economic relationship in the world. We want to further strengthen this trade relationship to the benefit of all American and European citizens.

This is why we agreed today, first of all, to work together toward zero tariffs, **zero non-tariff barriers**, and zero subsidies on non-auto industrial goods. We will also work to **reduce barriers and increase trade in services, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, medical products**, as well as soybeans.

This will open markets for farmers and workers, increase investment, and lead to greater prosperity in both the United States and the European Union. It will also make trade fairer and more reciprocal.

Secondly, we agreed today to strengthen our strategic cooperation with respect to energy. The European Union wants to **import more liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the United States** to diversify its energy supply.

Thirdly, we agreed today to launch a close **dialogue on standards in order to ease trade, reduce bureaucratic obstacles, and slash costs**.

Fourthly, we agreed today to join forces to protect American and European companies better from unfair global trade practices. We will therefore work closely together with like-minded partners to reform the WTO and to address unfair trading practices, including intellectual property theft, forced technology transfer, industrial subsidies, distortions created by state owned enterprises, and overcapacity.

We decided to **set up immediately an Executive Working Group of our closest advisors to carry this joint agenda forward**. In addition, it will identify short-term measures to facilitate commercial exchanges and assess existing tariff measures. While we are working on this, we will not go against the spirit of this agreement, unless either party terminates the negotiations.

We also want to resolve the steel and aluminum tariff issues and retaliatory tariffs.

“Non-tariff barriers” is trade-speak for any domestic policy or regulation that can affect multinational corporations’ ability to move goods or services across borders. Many consumer, health, or environmental safeguards we rely on to protect people and the environment are considered “non-tariff barriers” by business interests. Given that, does inclusion of this clause mean that the goal of these negotiations will be zero domestic safeguards on either side of the Atlantic?

This is all very worrying. For instance, the U.S. chemical industry sought to use TTIP to [undermine Europe's superior chemical safety regime \(known as REACH\)](#), which is much more robust in protecting the public from unsafe chemicals than the broken U.S. policy. Meanwhile, [European pharmaceutical manufacturers](#) called for the U.S. FDA to relinquish its current responsibility to independently approve the safety of medicines sold in the United States. This language suggests that this dangerous industry wishlist may be revived.

This raises alarm bells. What is the mandate of this “Executive Working Group”? Will there be any mechanisms to ensure that it is democratically accountable on both sides of the Atlantic. What are the nature of the “negotiations” it is undertaking?

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Increasing exports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the U.S. to Europe would create more market incentives for LNG companies [to increase the environmentally destructive practice of fracking](#) across the U.S., even when many U.S. states have already or are considering banning the controversial practice altogether.

This sounds suspiciously like a revival of the problematic and highly undemocratic “regulatory cooperation” agenda from TTIP. While cooperation among regulators is not inherently a bad idea, it IS very dangerous for such cooperation to happen in the context of trade negotiations that have explicitly prioritized reducing costs for businesses over any protection of consumers or the environment.