

Small and medium-sized enterprise from across Europe call on European governments to reject the CETA agreement

Press Release

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SME against CETA/TTIP initiatives from Germany, Austria and the Netherlands call on the EU's trade ministers to reject the signature of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with Canada [1]. The trade ministers are gathering in Bratislava today to discuss the ratification of the CETA agreement.

The agreement is highly controversial and has met with criticism and resistance from a uniquely broad range of forces - besides citizens, municipalities, NGOs and others, several thousands of SMEs also oppose the trade deals [2]. SMEs argue that CETA's overall economic benefits will be minimal yet will cost Europe the freedom to regulate in favour of environmentally and socially sustainable production. They reject the notion that SMEs will be foremost amongst the beneficiaries of CETA [3].

Martina Römmelt-Fella, of Fella Maschinenbau GmbH, and co-initiator of the German 'KMU gegen TTIP' initiative said: *"CETA weakens small and medium sized companies not only in Germany but also in Europa and puts innovative and future-oriented businesses at a disadvantage. The risks of CETA cannot be reduced by adding "clarifications". That is why we, as SMEs, strongly oppose the free trade agreement with Canada in its current version."*

Gottfried Härle, owner of the Brewery Clemens Härle, also part of the 'KMU gegen TTIP' initiative added: *"For us, a fourth generation brewery, a trusting relationship with our regional suppliers, is of special importance – as are GMO-free raw materials for our beer. CETA would have negative impacts on our suppliers and we fear that we would no longer be able to source regionally and GMO-free. With CETA, even though Canadians would not be allowed to brew "Bayerisches Bier", Bavarian Beer or Bière Bavaroise would be ok. We will not accept this!"*

Lisa Muhr, CEO of the eco-fashion label 'Göttin des Glücks' and one of the initiators auf the Austrian platform SMEs against TTIP states that, *"fewer than 1% of European SMEs export to Canada and the US. For the other 99% CETA and its twin TTIP increase the competition in their main market, which is the European."*

Tom van de Beek, chair of the Dutch initiative 'Ondernemers van Nu' said: *"CETA is already outdated. We need to address the real challenges of today in trade agreements, like climate change, landscape restoration and inclusive, fair economic development, which involves relocalisation and an emphasis on quality rather than quantity. I'm sure the Trudeau government will understand that. Because it's 2016!"*

NOTES

[1] The organisations are: KMU gegen TTIP (Germany), KMU gegen TTIP (Austria), Ondernemers van Nu (Netherlands)

[2] For the opposition of SMEs see lists of signatories on <http://www.kmu-gegen-ttip.de>, <http://www.kmu-gegen-ttip.at>, <http://www.ondernemersvannu.eu>

[3] See the position paper “The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between the EU and Canada: threatening to do more harm than good to SMEs”: http://projekt-more.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2016-08-29-CETA-and-SMEs_EN_SchSt.pdf

For more information please contact:

Arbeitsgemeinschaft „KMU gegen TTIP“ DE:

Press Contact: Kai Weller, Agentur Ahnen&Enkel, weller@ahnenenkel.com, +49 176 24569084

SMEs against TTIP in Austria:

Anna Ilchmann, +43 676 92 11 715, anna.ilchmann@kmu-gegen-ttip.at

Ondernemers van Nu:

Marieke van Doorn, +31 6 14 04 12 04, info@ondernemersvannu.eu

The initiatives are also directed against CETA and TiSA.