



EMI TTIP BRIEFING WITH THE EU OMBUDSMAN

Brussels, 29 January 2015

Since the launch of the TTIP negotiations, the European Movement International has been actively promoting civic engagement at the negotiation table. The Europe-wide cycle of EMI “civil society & TTIP” [events in 2014](#)¹ led to the adoption of the official [EMI position on TTIP](#)² whereby the network of CSOs called for even more transparency in the ongoing negotiations:

“The implementation of the TTIP will have a profound impact on the economy of the EU, the US and the world, since it will function as a world wide standard for future trade and investment agreements. Given this position, the European Movement International emphasises the need to recognise and address all of the concerns expressed by various stakeholders in these negotiations [...]the only way to achieve this is more transparency”.

We enthusiastically welcomed and actively contributed to the public consultations on TTIP transparency launched by the European Ombudsman, Emily O`Reilly, stating that the Commission should take an open and constructive approach towards the measures that have been suggested by the Ombudsman and these participating in the consultation. You can find the EMI contribution on the [EU Ombudsman’s website](#).³

The beginning of 2015 witnessed positive developments regards greater transparency in the TTIP, notably via the publication of the results of the European Ombudsman’s public consultations, followed by further disclosure of the documents by the Commission. We were, therefore, delighted to open the New Year by staging our first TTIP event alongside the EU Ombudsman, Emily O`Reilly. The publication of the Ombudsman’s report on transparency can be perceived as a milestone in the institutional dialogue on TTIP. The Juncker Commission is now publicly committed to offer concrete solutions towards a more transparent and citizens-friendly negotiation process.

The EMI TTIP Briefing, organised with the kind support of the Madariaga Foundation, saw participants continuing to call for a fuller, more engaged partnership with the Commission, where civil society actors are treated as equal partners. However, as noted by Jo Leinen MEP, and EMI President, the Ombudsman’s consultations constitute a new step towards the democratisation of the process.

¹ <http://europeanmovement.eu/news/emi-ttip-debates-final-report/>

² <http://europeanmovement.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/FA-2014-012-%E2%80%93-Position-on-the-Transatlantic-Trade-and-Investment-Partnership.pdf>

³ <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/cases/correspondence.faces/en/58696/html.bookmark>



Emily O'Reilly stressed that TTIP needs to live up to the standards of the 21st century and the modern technology solutions it offers. The rationale for opening the consultations was a lack of vocal public initiatives, which would ensure balanced and transparent public participation. The European public should be empowered to understand what is at stake, and the European Parliament has a particular democratic responsibility to support this process. However, the question remains: how do we ensure access to all the documents and related information to all citizens? By involving civil society, engaged stakeholders will help by acting as multipliers to help distribute information, enabling access for many more potentially interested parties. Another issue to be addressed is the language barrier which constitutes an obstacle for both citizens, and individual member states. For full transparency, the documents need to be translated in all EU28 national languages, as currently English prevails as the most popular source for information on this topic.



In addition to running public consultations, the European Ombudsman is able to assume a role separate to the European Court of Justice via the interstakeholders' TTIP dialogue. The EMI welcomes the ability of the Ombudsman to make suggestions and put pressure on the Commission to act in this regard, which surpasses the Court's capacities.

[Emily O'Reilly's speech delivered at the EMI briefing](#) is available on the EU Ombudsman website.⁴

⁴ <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/activities/speech.faces/en/58869/html.bookmark>