

Should You Oppose TTIP?



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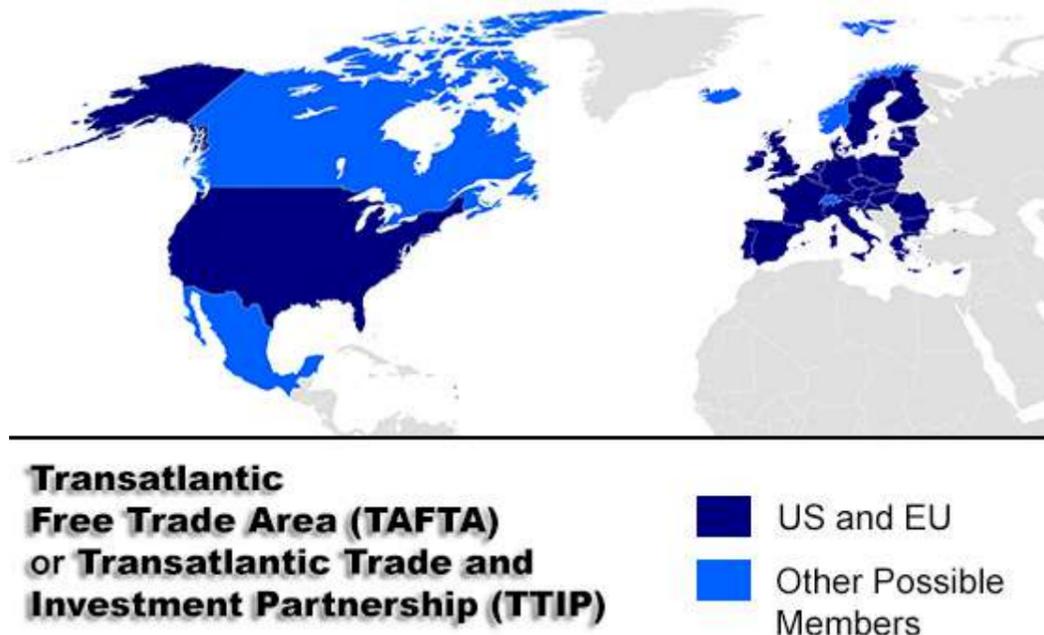
If you haven't heard of TTIP, it's probably because you have not been following the important political news for the past two years. The acronym is pronounced TEE-tip, and stands for TransAtlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. Which means what, precisely? Well, it is either the most alluring trade deal in history that will enrich us all, or a **sinister conspiracy** by the wicked corporations to increase their profits at our expense. And they will do this how? By conducting their negotiations in secret, and by in effect setting up a private system of law that will rubber stamp their demands without being held accountable by elected national governments.

A lot of paranoia has been whipped up about this in recent months, but just because the usual suspects are peddling scare stories doesn't mean we should not be concerned. First, why is trade so important?

The theory of trade is that by nations specialising in what they do best, they can produce more goods and services which can then be traded with other nations. For example, it is possible to

grow bananas in the UK, but the cost of doing so is prohibitive. Far better we import them from the Winward Islands and grow something more suitable for our climate.

Some countries can produce some goods incredibly cheaply, raw materials in particular, the classic one being oil. Because of this it is sometimes considered desirable or even necessary to “protect” home industries with tariffs. This is the way tariffs are sold to the public, but ask yourself this, do you really need to be protected from a foreign company that will sell you a better product at a cheaper price?



TTIP map

Tariffs do not protect the public, rather they protect domestic companies that cannot compete with more efficient foreign ones; they also protect the domestic labour market, because making foreign goods prohibitively expensive makes domestic goods relatively cheap. For this reason, tariffs are favoured by both the local workforce and smaller employers; this runs contra to Marxist theory about the class struggle, but it is a fact nonetheless, and in any case, Marxism is a bankrupt ideology.

Part of the anti-TTIP narrative is that only the major corporations will benefit, but this is not necessarily the case. Here is a [Libertarian perspective](#) on TTIP; written earlier this year, it cuts through the fear-mongering about secret courts, secret this and that, and puts the whole thing into perspective. Free trade benefits us in other ways too, because if goods don't cross borders, soldiers will. Better to trade with foreign nations than fight with them, but that doesn't mean trade deals of this nature should not be subjected to intense scrutiny. There are also likely to be very real consequences for many small companies and even entire industries. Let us take a real if somewhat dated example. Until the advent of the motor car, the major form of transport was the horse, people travelled on horseback or by post-chaise. The first commercial car was produced in 1890; trains had been around for quite a bit longer of course, but when [this film](#) was shot, in 1903, horses were still seen frequently on the streets of England's capital. Now fast forward to just after the First World War, 1920, and see [how few horses](#) there are.

The replacement of the horse by the motor vehicle led to the destruction of entire industries, or at least to their downsizing to a tiny fraction of what they once were. The typing pool is a much more recent phenomenon; with the advent of the personal computer, that too has gone, indeed so have

many types of computers, ditto the music industry, anyone remember floppy disks, or cassette recorders?

Like free trade, advances in technology benefit society as a whole, but if you were a blacksmith or a stable owner at the advent of the age of motoring, the price of these benefits was your livelihood.

From this we learn that vested interest comes in many forms, just because big corporations advocate something and the trade union movement opposes it, doesn't mean we should side automatically with the latter. Trade unionists have always had a streak of Luddism in their nature; if they had had their way in the 1980s, the Internet as we know it would not exist, and newspapers would still be produced manually!

One of the major promises of TTIP is jobs – lots of them. In fact, as with our example of the horse, old jobs are destroyed and new ones created; do the jobs created outnumber those destroyed, and does this really matter? This is another, entirely different issue, that of wage slavery. The solution to this is **Basic Income**, which could certainly be instigated in the UK, Western Europe, the US, Canada, and other advanced nations like South Korea, certain Middle East Countries, Australia...

The infographic is titled "Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)" and features the HM Government logo. It is set against a dark blue background with red and white text boxes. At the top, it says "Europe and the US working together to boost trade and jobs" with icons of the Eiffel Tower and the Statue of Liberty. Below this, a large white box states "€120bn+ An ambitious agreement will grow Europe's economy". To the left, a box says "American goods sold in Europe could become cheaper" with currency symbols. In the center, a box with a star border says "300 million US consumers could buy more European goods". To the right, a box says "US and EU firms could create new jobs in Europe" with icons of a wrench and a laptop. At the bottom, three boxes describe: "Europe's biggest businesses could be more competitive in the US" with a car icon; "Removing duplicate product tests could help small and mid-sized firms get a foothold in the US" with a plug icon; and "Prices could fall when unnecessary tariffs are cut" with a pair of pants icon. The EU and US flags are shown at the bottom right.

TTIP as seen by UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

The problem is not the wicked corporations but **the banks**, and while these parasitic organisms have a stranglehold over the world economy, no amount of free trade will liberate us. We should also be more than a little concerned that the **Council on Foreign Relations** is an enthusiastic proponent of TTIP, an organisation that has figured heavily in the sensible literature on the global conspiracy since the 1960s (rather than the nonsense promoted by **David Icke and company**). However, just because the globalists and one-worlders think something is good does not mean it is bad.

There are other issues related to TTIP that do not concern either jobs or those who would enslave us but in some ways are even more important. One of its aims is to standardise such things as food safety and quality control. Many people worry that this will involve Europe in particular lowering

its standards to harmonise with American standards, but are American standards of food hygiene really lower than those of the EU?

How about the environment? The last thing we need is another Deepwater Horizon disaster, in Europe or indeed anywhere else. There are also legal questions relating to the rights of companies to exploit markets free of government interference. These are real issues that are not to be treated lightly. It is not necessary to buy into the myth of evil corporations – leave that to the [gullible Abby Martin](#) – but it is always best to assume that whoever is calling for legislation or deals, there will be things they are not mentioning or are trying to foist onto us in the name of the public good. If you have the time, check out this [excellent video](#) by the late Murray Rothbard. Although he gave this speech in 1984, it is as relevant today as it ever was.

Finally, the future of trade is likely to be radically different from what it was in the past. Over the next twenty years if not the next five we will see new technologies, particularly 3-D printing, reshaping our industries and even the high street. The Internet has already radically reshaped the music and film industries. People still buy books, newspapers and magazines, but all the reading material most of us need is available for free at the click of a mouse.

The [RepRap](#) and the developing solar technologies will soon mean both that the economies of scale only mega-corporations enjoy will become superfluous, and the energy needed to run them will be available in every home at a fraction of the current cost.

We will still need to trade with other countries, but we should not become paranoid about corporations. True, they exist only to make profits, but if we don't buy from them, they go out of business, so ultimately the consumer is sovereign. As long as TTIP or any other trade agreement recognises this principle, it should not be opposed dogmatically.