

# Obama's Proposed Atlantic TTIP Trade Deal with Europe. "Public Services Under Attack"

"Aristocracy Aren't Satisfied; They Demand More"

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*A new analysis of the Obama-proposed TTIP 'trade' treaty, which the U.S. would have with Europe, finds that it was initiated and shaped by large international corporations, which will, also according to [the only independent economic analysis](#) that has thus far been done of TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership), be the only beneficiaries of the proposed Treaty — all at the expense of the publics in each one of the participating countries.*

This new study is titled [«Public Services Under Attack»](#), but it's about more than just the proposed treaty's impacts upon replacing «Public Services» by private services.

Corporate Europe headlined about this study on October 12<sup>th</sup>, [«Public services under attack through TTIP and CETA»](#), and listed 15 of what they consider to be the report's highlights. The following will instead quote extensively from the study itself, so that this summary will come mainly *from* the report itself:

The study is »Published by Association Internationale de Techniciens, Experts et Chercheurs (AITEC), Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), European Federation of Public Services Unions (EPSU), Instytut Globalnej Odpowiedzialności (IGO), Transnational Institute (TNI), Vienna Chamber of Labour (AK Vienna), and War on Want«. So: it reflects a concern for workers, and for the poor, not mainly for corporate owners — the latter being the proposed Treaty's sole sponsors and beneficiaries.

This new study opens by defining (page 8) «Public Service»: «Public services are those provided by a government to its population, usually based around the social consensus that certain services should be available to all regardless of income». Another way of stating this is that a «public service» is one provided to citizens as a right, available to all equally, instead of as a privilege, available only upon the basis of ability-to-pay. The «social consensus that certain services should be available to all regardless of income» is repudiated in treaties like this, because they reflect instead a «libertarian» (to use the U.S. term) or «liberal» (to use the European term) viewpoint, that a person's wealth reflects that person's contribution to society, so that no poor person possesses any rights at all. (Supporting this viewpoint, Adam Smith, in his 1762 Glasgow *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, said: «Till there be property there can be no government, the very end of which is to secure wealth, and to defend the rich from the poor».

He wrote this in a society and age in which virtually all wealth - or else poverty - was

inherited from one's parents, not earned. He portrayed the poor as being the enemies. Their rights were no more than their wealth, in his view. He retained that aristocratic view throughout his life.) This viewpoint is also often referred to as being «conservatism», because it conserves the existing power-structure, with the richest (the aristocracy) being the most powerful in the future, as they have been in the past. Consequently, in the West at least, [the ideological polarity is between «liberalism» versus «conservatism», both of which are fundamentally the same](#). Progressivism hardly even has a name, as of yet. (In other words: the ideological 'debate' is bogus, and is shaped on 'both' sides by the aristocracy.)

Therefore, proponents of Obama's proposed 'trade' treaties call themselves, variously, «liberals», «libertarians», and «conservatives»; but only the terminology varies, because the reality does not.

The same section of the study says: «With free trade treaties like CETA and TTIP, governments will lose policy space to organise public services according to societies' preferences by locking in liberalisation and privatisation. This is raising great concerns about whether profit will distort the ability of these services to be run in the public interest. Moreover, government attempts to regulate them could be deemed 'barriers to trade' and overturned».

### **The report's Table of Contents is also something of a summary of the report:**

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Here is the opening of:

### **3.1 Public services: everything must go**

*To ensure maximum coverage of services in TTIP, the powerhouse lobby groups on both sides of the Atlantic, ESF and CSI, recommended a particular negotiation strategy known as a ‘negative list’ which means that all public services are subject to liberalisation unless an explicit exception is made.*

*This ‘list it or lose it’ approach dramatically expands the scope of a trade agreement as governments make commitments in areas they might not even be aware of, such as new services emerging in the future (see box 7 on page 28). It marks a departure from the positive lists used so far in EU trade agreements containing only those services which governments have agreed to liberalising.*

*At the same time, transatlantic lobby groups are trying to prevent negotiators from exempting any public services from the trade agreement. Their alarm bells started to ring in February 2015 when the European Parliament’s Committee on International*

Trade (INTA) drafted a TTIP resolution asking for «an adequate carve-out of sensitive services such as public services and public utilities (including water, health, social security systems, and education) allowing national and local authorities enough room for manoeuvre to legislate in the public interest».21 ...

Then, there is:

### **3.2 Dismantling public health**

The public health sector is one of the main targets of business lobbyists advocating for TTIP, hoping to capitalize on increasing health expenditure driven by aging populations in both the EU and the US, while public health sectors continue to suffer from fiscal pressures and harsh austerity measures. For instance, the powerful Washington-based Alliance for Healthcare Competitiveness (AHC) assembles companies and associations representing service providers, hospital operators, insurers, producers of pharmaceuticals and medical devices, as well as IT and logistics companies (including Abbott, Johnson & Johnson, Medtronic, UPS, Intel, United Health Group, CSI, PhRMA, and USCIB). It prides itself on being «the only coalition advocating for the freer flow of health goods and services at the healthcare sector level». 26

AHC complains that «today's world of health care services is highly restricted and fragmented», but an «open trading world for these services would create a large new flow of revenue into the United States [to executives and major stockholders of those companies]». ...

Then, there is:

### **3.10 Locking in privatisation**

Beyond prising open services markets, one of the central features of free trade agreements such as TTIP and CETA is their capacity to effectively lock in previous and future liberalisations and privatisations – regardless of any government that gets voted in or what its mandate or policies might be.

Apart from 'standstill' clauses irreversibly binding existing policies, business groups further demand the inclusion of a so-called 'ratchet' provision which would effectively lock in future deregulations. ...

Then, there is:

### **3.11 Protecting investment - endangering welfare**

Business lobbyists are united in their call to have a broad investment protection chapter in TTIP, including the highly controversial Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanism (ISDS), granting foreign investors the exclusive right to bypass international tribunals. One of the overarching corporate aims is to prevent governments from any regulatory changes limiting private profits.

Then, there is:

### **4.1 An ESF win: privatising everything but the kitchen sink?**

*Heeding the demands of the business lobby, CETA and TTIP apply to virtually all public services ... at best excluding some core sovereign functions such as law enforcement, the judiciary, or the services of a central bank.<sup>84</sup> [In common parlance, as Grover Norquist has phrased the matter, «reduce it to the size where I can drag it into the bathroom and drown it in the bathtub.»]*

Then, there are sections indicating that postal services and also the water utility are to be privatized so as to be available only on a for-profit basis: excluding or else prohibitively charging regions where those services are unprofitable:

#### **4.3 Standstill: no backtracking from postal services liberalisation**

#### **4.4 Water utilities unprotected**

Education gets treated similarly. Then, there is:

#### **4.8 NHS: the sell-off of public health**

*TTIP and CETA will allow investors domiciled in North America to exploit liberalisations already undertaken in Europe's public health sectors to force through further market openings and to lock in past privatisations. The UK's National Health Service (NHS) is an important case in point. ...*

Then, there are several sections devoted to such things as:

*Regulatory changes, such as new laws or taxes diminishing private profits, may be seen as breaches of an investor's «legitimate expectations» justifying multi-billion euro payouts in compensation [to companies that have been prohibited from activities by regulations, or even to the violating companies that have been fined].*

and,

*Thus, «indirect expropriation» lends itself to an extremely broad range of interpretation. For example, tribunals have already denounced many public interest regulations as measures «tantamount» or «equivalent» to expropriation - and ordered states to pay multimillions of euros in compensation.*

## **THE STUDY'S MAJOR FAILINGS**

A major failing of this study is that it ignores such things as: Locking in food, drug, automobile-safety, and other existing regulations, so that, for example, when new scientific studies or else newly developed technologies indicate that an updating of a regulation would save lives or otherwise help the public, the regulation under TTIP and similar treaties cannot be updated (except by subjecting the government to potentially crippling lawsuits), which crippling of government will produce ever-increasing numbers of diseases and deaths as government is frozen even while science and technology continue to advance.

This is feudal. Fascism is to the industrial age what feudalism was to the agrarian age; and this is fascism, but on an international or imperial scope, perhaps even an emerging fascist world government — [the exact opposite of what the United Nations was founded in order to promote](#).

U.S. President Barack Obama was elected to office in 2008 with the promise and public expectation that he opposed anti-democratic, pro-aristocratic, initiatives such as this. The fact that he now goes even far beyond the extremists Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in them, is virtual proof that [the United States is no longer a democracy](#). (At least those candidates were honest about their conservatism.) Is the EU at all a democracy? Or will they accept Obama's global-aristocratic monstrosity, and push for the aristocracy against the public, [like the U.S. government does](#)? The hypocrisy is mind-boggling.

Anyone who wants to know the mechanisms by which Obama's mega 'trade' treaties — TTIP, TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), and TiSA (Trade in Services Agreement) — will operate, can find that machinery (the means to enslave the public to the aristocrats) described [here](#).

Investigative historian **Eric Zuesse** is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).

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