

Overview

The Canada-E.U. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement negotiations are based on commitments to place corporate rights before social and economic justice, democratic control, and ecological sustainability. Negotiations are progressing quickly and with little public scrutiny until now.

The Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement is being negotiated as a “next-generation” free trade deal that goes beyond NAFTA and the WTO in shielding corporate activity from government controls. The draft agreement includes extensive chapters on services and investment, government procurement, intellectual property, and standards and regulations. It will also contain a controversial NAFTA-like investor-state dispute process that allows corporations from Europe to directly challenge and sometimes overturn Canadian laws that interfere with profits – even for public health or environmental reasons.

Too secret, not democratic enough

Like all free trade agreements, the Canada-E.U. talks are happening in secret with each side, making offers and requests of the other in the hopes of getting the best deal for their home companies. By their nature, trade agreements are based on corporate interests – without corporate input how would the Canadian government know what to ask for? The flip side of this is that free trade agreements end up protecting corporate interests and giving short shrift to other public priorities such as protecting the environment, ending global poverty and generally creating economies that work for people not just for profits.

Lip service to sustainable development

CETA contains a nice sounding sustainable development chapter but like NAFTA’s environment and labour side-agreements, this one has no teeth. Meanwhile, its services, investment and procurement chapters, would give European corporations new tools with which to challenge public

policy and remove provincial or local development initiatives that prioritize good, green jobs and the transition to more sustainable, local economies.

Municipalities left in the dark

Unlike NAFTA, the Canada-E.U. free trade agreement would interfere with local and municipal policies for the first time and yet our mayors and municipal councillors are not part of the negotiations. Policies designed to maximize public spending by considering the social as well as economic benefits of local sourcing or local hiring, would be banned. Municipal services, including water and energy utilities, would be restricted in the same way while European P3 consortiums (public-private partnerships) would get new guarantees in municipal tendering to the possible detriment of local public services.

What should we do?

Call your municipal councillors, provincial politicians and your Member of Parliament. Find out if they are in favour of this deal. If so, ask them how it would affect your community. Ask how it would strengthen Canada's social, economic and environmental policies.

Tell us about your conversations. Link to the website. Share the materials. Learn more at www.tradejustice.ca.

Get your organization to sign the Civil Society Declaration on the Canada-E.U. trade agreement and become a member of the Trade Justice Network. info@tradejustice.ca

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