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TTIP NEGOTIATIONS: A SUMMARY OF ROUND 8

BY KARA SUTTON

Fresh Start, Fresh Progress

The eighth TTIP negotiating round, which took place February 2–6, marked the first talks under the command of EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström. Malmström and US Trade Representative Ambassador Michael Froman met twice before the round to discuss ways to advance the negotiations. Both called for a “fresh start” and acknowledged that 2015 is an important year for TTIP.

This eighth round reversed fading optimism of a deal, but negotiators recognized that concrete actions remain necessary if they are to reach an agreement.

Takeaways

- Two of TTIP’s three pillars, **market access** and **regulatory cooperation**, were discussed at length during the week.
- The US and EU discussed their initial **tariff-elimination** proposals that were exchanged prior the fourth round of negotiations. Discussions had come to a halt following EU disappointment with the US offer. Negotiators hope an exchange of second offers will take place in July, but no definite timeline was set.
- A second exchange of **services** offers could also occur in July. The US expected the EU’s first offer to be similar to the relevant section in the completed Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada. However, the EU excluded market access in financial services, signaling a desire for TTIP to go beyond market access and address financial-services regulatory cooperation.
- Negotiators continued ongoing conversations on **regulatory cooperation**. The EU released three documents explaining its priorities for regulatory cooperation: an [introduction](#), the [textual proposal](#) provided to the US and a [fact sheet](#).

- In its textual proposal, the EU calls for the creation of a regulatory-cooperation body, which would help streamline future cooperation across multiple sectors and issues.
- Negotiations on specific regulatory issues (including technical barriers to trade and sanitary and phytosanitary measures) continued throughout the week. The two sides presented proposals and believe further progress on a joint text is possible in the next round.
- **Small- and medium- sized enterprises (SMEs)** remain a critical topic for negotiators as they look for ways to help boost trans-Atlantic trade for SMEs.
- Negotiating texts on **environmental and labor standards** are expected to be exchanged in the next round of talks.
- The two sides also discussed **data flows and the digital economy** and emphasized the necessity of including these issues in TTIP.

Potential Sticking Points

- Negotiators discussed **public procurement** during the round but did not reach agreement on the scope of such a chapter. The EU would like access at the US state and local levels.
- The EU would like TTIP to include an **energy** chapter. While still hesitant to do this, the US has agreed to review energy-specific measures that could be included such a chapter. A final decision will be made later in negotiations.
- The EU is adamant that the US accept European rules on **geographic indications (GIs)** that protect product names, particularly among agricultural products.
- Discussions on the **investment** chapter remain on hold as the EU works on reforming its investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) framework.
 - The EU released on January 13 a [report](#) on the results of its ISDS public consultation. The Commission stated in its report that it will continue to engage with stakeholders, EU member states and the EU Parliament to determine the best method to ensure investor protections in TTIP.

On the Margins

- Prior to the round, the European Commission released [23 fact sheets and eight negotiating texts](#) that outline the EU's priorities for TTIP.
 - A Bertelsmann Foundation summary of these documents can be found [here](#).

- US President Barack Obama mentioned the importance of TTIP on the American economy in his [State of the Union](#) address on January 20. His administration also highlighted TTIP in its [National Security Strategy](#), which was released on February 7.
- TTIP was a key item on the agenda for [German Chancellor Angela Merkel's meeting with US President Barack Obama](#) on February 9 in Washington, DC.
- Merkel and US Vice President Joe Biden emphasized TTIP's importance to the trans-Atlantic relationship at the Munich Security Conference.

Next Steps

- The next round of negotiations is tentatively scheduled for April in Washington, DC.
- The European Parliament's International Trade Committee (INTA) is preparing a resolution on TTIP for the full parliament's May plenary session.

Kara Sutton is project manager for legislative relations at the Washington, DC-based Bertelsmann Foundation.

kara.sutton@bfna.org