

We are here today to talk to you about TTIP, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the possible impact the introduction of such an arrangement would have on the residents of Leeds and the City Council. This deal between the EU and the US is being sold to us as a Free Trade agreement that will stimulate the economy, job market and increase prosperity. TTIP is currently being drafted in secret. With over 90% of the advisers being consulted representing Corporate interests. There is little talk of this in the Press and no opportunity for us to have a say in what is contained within the agreement. This is a Global trade deal that will have a local impact.

TTIP looks to Standardize regulations between member states. This means the EU is bargaining with our countries' regulations. We maintain high Food Standards and do not want to adopt some of the more dubious practices from the US such as the Hormone treatment of meat, and the washing of chicken in chlorine. In the Pharmaceutical industry TTIP could place new restrictions on less-expensive generic drugs and force people to pay exorbitant prices for life-saving medication. Under TTIP our labour standards could be pushed into a race to the bottom as our markets become more exposed to competition with states in the US where unions are illegal.

TTIP could also tie our hands at a local level. The European Commission has stated that it wants TTIP to open up local procurement to international competition. It could threaten to restrict local contracts which benefit local businesses and the environment. For example, if Leeds City Council wanted to ensure that all its schools sourced local food then a food-service competitor could complain – with legal backing – that they were being disadvantaged.

Another one of the ways in which TTIP will allow Corporations to play by their own rules is something called ISDS. (Investor-State Dispute Settlement). It would allow Corporations to sue governments over projected profit losses through a private court system at the tax payers' expense. If a corporations' profits are affected, for example, by environmental laws or minimum-wage legislation then a law suit could be brought against that country. This has already happened in 2013 through a similar trade agreement. When the residents of Quebec voted to protect the environment, a Fracking company successfully sued the Canadian Government for 250 million dollars. The implications of this could be catastrophic!

If TTIP is agreed, local planning regulations (such as Lancashire County Council's recent denial of planning permission for fracking, or Cllr Sobel's recent motion) would be extremely difficult to push through, due to the risk of being sued for future losses of profit, and because of the pressure to harmonize energy legislation across the Atlantic.

Jude Kirton Darling MEP for the North West, recently gave us an update on the negotiations. We were very glad to hear that Labour has clear red lines when it comes to TTIP, for example MEPs will vote no, if the NHS isn't explicitly exempt from

the deal. Though this is somewhat reassuring, we know that the establishment of a Regulatory Cooperation Council will mean that areas like pharmaceutical regulation and the approval of new drugs could be more open to corporate influence. This could affect the price of medicines, and the economic feasibility of local health services, even if they were to be theoretically exempt from TTIP. It may also include 'ratchet clauses' which could prevent Leeds from ever rolling back on privatisation, even with the new powers gained through devolution.

It is now becoming clear that this will not be representing the interests of CITIZENS but CORPORATIONS and BANKS. This Agreement is being constructed in an undemocratic way and will itself undermine our ability to decide how we want to live. It's essentially a shift in power. TTIP could lock us as citizens and a country into a contract that we've had no say in writing. Is this fair?

In a Democracy we say how we want our country to be run. This is why we are asking you to declare Leeds a TTIP-Free zone. In Yorkshire, both Sheffield and Bradford already have. And Over 3 million EU citizens have signed a petition against TTIP. Many MEPs have come out against it too. We are speaking loud and clear, and we say NO to this damaging Trade agreement.

Thank you for your time.