



## TTIP Myths

*The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) treaty, presently being negotiated in secret, will affect us all. The government has made certain claims about TTIP\* We show you that these claims are misleading or false.*

**Government Claim:** TTIP will directly benefit consumers. The average benefit for a family of four is estimated at around £400 per year.

**Fact:** This much-quoted figure of £400 a year is from a government-commissioned report which predicts that TTIP will have delivered an average £40 yearly benefit by 2027 if, in its 'optimistic scenario', TTIP is fully agreed in 2017 and the economy grows successfully in the 10 years after that (no financial crises, no recessions). By not mentioning this detail, it's meant to trick you into believing that the benefit would be £400 per year. It's actually a lie.

**Government Claim:** The EU has no mandate in TTIP to lower our food standards. The high environmental standards and targets which we have in place are non-negotiable.

**Fact:** The leaked TTIP chapter on regulation is proposing two measures which can only lower EU standards. The first is 'mutual recognition' which means that the EU would recognise US standards as 'legitimate' and would therefore allow US exports in the EU even where they don't meet EU standards. The second is 'harmonisation' of standards, the aim of moving towards the same standards in the US and the EU.

**Government Claim:** TTIP will not change the way that the NHS, or other public services, is run.

**Fact:** The stated aim of this treaty to 'liberalise' (privatise) services in the international market. The EU Commissioner and the UK government claim that the NHS, as a public service, is protected from this privatisation drive. But a 'public service' is defined in the 1995 treaty, General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), as one supplied 'neither on a commercial basis, nor in competition with one or more service suppliers'.

These claims are included in an official government leaflet: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transatlantic-trade-and-investment-partnership-ttip-separating-myth-from-fact>

However, more and more health services are being put out to tender in a competitive market by Clinical Commissioning Groups. This commercial competitive element means that large parts of the NHS are not protected by the treaty.

**Government Claim:** The EU has made it clear that the freedom of national governments to regulate would be explicitly protected. The Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions being discussed cannot overturn laws.

**Fact:** ISDS creates a parallel legal system, independent of national law, which allows corporations to sue governments in special international tribunals over laws or regulations that might prevent or reduce profit. These are described as 'indirect appropriation'. Corporations aim to overturn or prevent such government regulations. In recent years the targets included a Canadian government moratorium on fracking, an Australian law on cigarette packaging and a German government decision to close nuclear power plants. Legal experts describe the effect as 'regulatory chill'.

**Government Claim:** We need to remember that this is a negotiation, and making our position available publicly will jeopardise our chances of getting the best deal for the EU.

**Fact:** It's common practice for corporations to claim 'commercial confidentiality' in their contractual negotiations. But TTIP is being negotiated between democratically elected governments, not corporations. And the issues involved are of immense public concern - the future of health and social care, food safety and environmental standards, working conditions and labour rights. There is no reason for keeping these negotiations secret other than to keep the public from knowing what is being negotiated.

**Government Claim:** The UK Parliament will have an opportunity to scrutinise the final agreement through debates in both Houses.

**Fact:** Even if the UK parliament is allowed to scrutinise the treaty after the negotiations have concluded, the UK parliament has no right to accept or reject the treaty. Following the EU Lisbon Treaty of 2009, it is the EU, not national governments, that makes decisions on international trade treaties.

### **What Can You Do?**

Ask your MP to reject TTIP. Join or support the campaigns that are opposing TTIP: Keep Our NHS Public ([www.keepournhspublic.com](http://www.keepournhspublic.com)); StopTTP ([stopttp.org](http://stopttp.org)); Sign the petition of the European Citizen's Initiative (<https://secure.38degrees.org.uk/page/s/eu-ttip-petition#petition>).

(A fuller version of this leaflet, with references to sources, is available on the Oxfordshire KONP website: <http://keepournhspublicoxfordshire.org.uk/the-eu-us-free-trade-agreement/>)