



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

Education is a public good and has to be excluded from the TTIP negotiations

EAEA is deeply concerned by the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations and its possible consequences. EAEA wants to firmly underline that (adult) education is a public good and asks the European Commission and the Member States to exclude (adult) education from the negotiations.

The TTIP negotiations have so far taken place behind closed doors, and civil society positions have not been included. The TTIP is a very bad example of stakeholder involvement of in key EU developments - we demand a stronger involvement of civil society organisations that represent European citizens' interests.

From information that other organisations have leaked and/or commented, EAEA knows that the documents so far say that "services supplied in the exercise of governmental authority" will be excluded from the negotiations. This formulation is dangerous and weak, as it opens the floor to various interpretations and even contradicting interpretations. EAEA agrees with ETUCE's argument that "proposed exceptions would apply only to services that are provided on a non-commercial basis and not in competition with other suppliers. In other words, if any part of a country's education system is provided on a commercial or for-fee basis, or if private schools operate, education may not benefit from the general exclusion. In education systems throughout the EU some elements of fees are common, e.g. students fees and school books." This clearly means that the phrasing of the exception is inadequate and insufficient. It has to be formulated in a different way.

We have also been informed that adult education (e.g. literacy courses, but also other general and vocational provision) is part of the negotiations. We strongly oppose this inclusion – the European benchmark on adult education has decreased and stagnated instead of growing, which shows that it is already difficult to provide affordable adult education for learners. In many countries, this can only be achieved by very cheap, free-lance trainers or through volunteers – any added pressure through US companies would further undermine the provision of adult education.

EAEA also agrees with ETUCE that the "negative list approach" is dangerous and should be replaced by a "positive listing". Indeed, the latter is much clearer and will not lead in the future to conflicting interpretations. Other trade agreements have chosen this approach in the past that should be the one of all trade agreements, as it is safer for all parties and will avoid potential future disputes.



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EAEA asks the European Commission and the Member States to entirely and formally exclude education and furthermore all public services from the negotiation on the TTIP. EAEA also supports the statements of other organisations that asked for the exclusion of education and public services from the TTIP and underlined that education is a public good and cannot be dependent on commercial and trade agreements.