



Joint Committee on European Union Affairs

Interparliamentary Meeting on EU Trade Policy

17th June 2015, Paris

Report of the Delegation

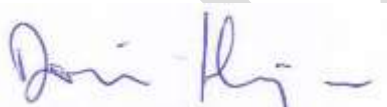
Joint Committee on European Union Affairs

1. An interparliamentary meeting on EU Trade Policy took place in the National Assembly of France, in Paris on 17 June. Twenty-two Members States and consisting of twenty-nine parliamentary delegations attended the meeting to discuss EU Trade Policy and TTIP.
2. The meeting was attended for the Houses of the Oireachtas by the Mr. Dominic Hannigan, Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs and Ms. Marcella Corcoran Kennedy, Chair of the Joint Committee on Job, Enterprise and innovation. Ms Bríd Dunne accompanied the delegation.
3. Session 1 on **“Trade Agreements, what risks and how to avoid them?”** began with opening addresses by Mrs. Danielle Auroi, Chair of the Committee on (French) European Affairs and Mr. François Brottes, Chair of the Committee on Economic Affairs, following which delegates contributed to the debate.
4. For the Houses of the Oireachtas, Ms Marcella Corcoran Kennedy (Chair of the Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Committee) made the following points and stated:-
 - That trade is central to growth and jobs and it is through Ireland’s openness to trade and investment that the foundations of our economy have been built; Ireland continues its export-led recovery and supports an ambitious trade agenda of the EU while acknowledging the risks;
 - That a dedicated chapter on SMEs in TTIP was welcomed in view of the importance of the SME sector;
 - That Ireland has concerns regarding the issue of regulatory convergence and believes there should be no dilution of safety or quality particularly in the agri-food sector;
 - That the Irish Parliament was taking a very active role in monitoring the TTIP negotiations and that Ireland has red line issues, such as no hormone-treated beef or GMOs (genetically modified organisms).
 - That the Irish Parliament supports the classification of TTIP as a mixed agreement, requiring ratification by national Parliaments.
 - That the EU trade agenda should continue to pay increasing attention to issues beyond trade, such as sustainable development and growth, creating high international standards, promoting Europe’s values, democracy and the rule of law, labour and human rights and increasing engagement thereby with a broader spectrum of civil society.
5. Session 2 **“Trade agreements: an opportunity for whom and under which conditions”** also began with opening statements by Mrs. Danielle Auroi, Chair of

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the Committee on European Affairs, and Mr. François Brottes, Chair of the Committee on Economic Affairs.

6. For the Houses of the Oireachtas, Mr. Dominic Hannigan, Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs contributed to the debate stating that:
 - Ireland's small open economy is very dependent on export markets and that trade agreements offer opportunities for trading nations;
 - The trade agenda of the EU is supporting our national efforts by opening markets and breaking down barriers which inhibit it
 - Ireland's is broadly supportive the EU's Free Trade Agreement agenda, but conscious of the concerns around TTIP, such as jobs displacement, ISDS GMOs etc;
 - National Parliaments must have a role to play in Free Trade Agreements, in view of their wide-ranging nature;
 - the Irish Parliamentary Committee on EU Affairs is actively engaging on TTIP and it submitted a political contribution on TTIP to the EU institutions last year;
 - EU Commissioner Malestrom has attended at Committee to discuss TTIP. This has been followed up with engagement with an EU Commission expert on ISDS (Investor to State Dispute Settlement), a concern of Irish Parliamentarians.
 - As the EU is tasked with negotiating on behalf of Member States, greater transparency in negotiations and accountability are essential elements of trade negotiations;
 - In summary Ireland is support, but will remain critical (in a positive manner).
7. The exchange was followed by an intervention by Mr. Matthias Fekl, Minister of State for Foreign Trade, following which, the Irish delegation withdrew from the meeting.



Dominic Hannigan T.D.
Chairman
8 July 2015