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EU-Canada: CETA concludes with ETUC criticism about lack of transparency

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As Canadian PM Stephen Harper flies in to co-sign the EU-Canada trade agreement, after 2 years of secretive negotiations on the so-called Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) has reiterated its call for greater transparency in EU trade and investment policy and negotiations.

In January 2013, the ETUC and Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) set joint benchmarks for any future deal on labour rights, investment and the right of governments to regulate in the public interest and protect public services. Both trade union organisations called for more transparency in the negotiations.

“We ask to be heard by the appropriate committee of our Parliaments as part of the necessary consent procedure following the negotiations, as part of a general debate that must be held before any agreement is ratified. The public has the right to full disclosure, along with the right to meaningful and informed input into the negotiations”, reads the joint statement.

Little information has been shared with the public on the negotiations, despite concerns around the application of labour rights, the environmental record of the Canadian government, and a growing public concern about the inclusion of investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS).

“We have made it clear that any EU-Canada agreement must set a decent standard on labour rights and environmental responsibility”, stated Judith Kirton-Darling, ETUC

Confederal Secretary, “*this is what we are demanding in CETA as well as TTIP, and yet these negotiations have been conducted under the radar, without public scrutiny by stakeholders or democratically elected representatives. There is no way of guaranteeing the quality of the result*”, she stressed. “*The lack of transparency only increases suspicion and will not create the climate needed to get social acceptance of the final agreement. Formal social stakeholder engagement is essential in this process – both the Commission and the Canadian government have failed this test miserably*”, she stated.

ETUC-CLC joint statement is available here:

http://www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf/CLC_ETUC_final.pdf

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) exists to speak with a single voice, on behalf of the common interests of workers, at European level. Founded in 1973, it now represents 85 trade union organisations in 36 European countries, plus 10 industry-based federations. The ETUC is also on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#).

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