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TTIP could undermine public services and democracy, says EFA MEP

Press release from EFA MEP Jill Evans (Plaid Cymru)

Plaid Cymru MEP **Jill Evans** will vote against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) trade agreement report in Strasbourg this week.



Following the postponed debate last month, MEP's will this week have the opportunity to express their views on the current negotiations.

Jill Evans MEP is concerned that the agreement could open up Welsh public services like the NHS, fire services, education and others to competition from private US companies.

It could also mean watering down our hard fought for environmental and food quality standards and workers' rights.

TTIP is a bilateral free trade agreement currently being negotiated between the European Union and the United States. The twenty eight EU governments gave the European Commission the power to negotiate on their behalf.

This week in Strasbourg the European Parliament will be voting on its recommendations for the TTIP negotiations, a key step in the ongoing process, and an expression of people's democratic view. At the end of the process the parliament can vote to accept or reject the agreement, but not amend it.

A major concern is the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) which could result in international companies being able to sue democratically elected governments in secret courts of arbitration. Following massive lobbying from constituents opposed to ISDS, a compromise version has now been put forward, but it still allows foreign investors to use a separate layer of jurisdiction, other than the domestic legal system.

Jill Evans is calling upon fellow MEPs to join her in saying 'no' to TTIP and 'no' to secret courts which would undermine our democracy.

But she is calling too for action by the Welsh Government to protect Wales's interests, which they have failed to do in this process to date.

Speaking ahead of Wednesday's crucial vote, **Jill Evans** said:

"TTIP is becoming known as the 'Trojan horse' treaty because of its hidden dangers to our public services, food safety, the environment and our very democracy.

"With secret courts, deregulation and companies able to overturn democratic government decisions, TTIP as it stands would be bad news for Wales. That is a decision based on the partial knowledge we have. All the negotiations are behind closed doors.

"We want trading relationships with other countries which are partnerships of equals but which also improve, not lower standards.

"One of the EU's great benefits for Wales has been environmental and food safety regulation – but this could all be put at risk by TTIP.

"Once again we have this promise of jobs, but in fact studies show there could be job losses.

"I will vote against this bad proposal for Wales. I believe the people of Wales should know what exactly is at stake and should have the opportunity to put their views forward.

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Jill Evans

Member

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