



German Economy Minister: “TTIP Talks Have Failed”

This definitely proves that bully US Trade Representative Michael Froman, a member of the Trilateral Commission, was the primary architect and hammer-head on TTIP negotiations. Europe has said “enough”. □ TN Editor

In the latest blow for Obama’s global trade agenda, German Vice Chancellor and Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel said that free trade talks between the European Union and the United States have failed, citing a lack of progress on any of the major sections of the long-running negotiations.

“In my opinion the negotiations with the United States have de facto failed, even though nobody is really admitting it” [ZDF quoted the minister](#), according to a written transcript of the interview to be aired on Sunday. “[They] have failed because we Europeans did not want to subject ourselves to American demands.”

He added that in 14 rounds of talks, the two sides **haven’t agreed on a single common item** out of 27 chapters being discussed. Among the stumbling blocks is a US objection to opening public tenders to

European companies. “For me, that goes against free trade,” Gabriel previously commented regarding the issue.

But more than just disagreement on general principles, Gabriel singled out the US as the party making strong demands with no concessions: “We mustn’t submit to the American proposals,” said Gabriel, who is also the head of Germany’s center-left Social Democratic Party.

Gabriel accused Washington of being “angry” about the deal that the EU struck with Canada, known as CETA, because it contains elements the U.S. doesn’t want to see in the TTIP.

Despite strong misgivings among many EU member states over the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or TTIP, especially by farmers in the European block, both Washington and Brussels had pushed for a deal by the end of the year. As [AP reports](#), Sigmar Gabriel compared the TTIP negotiations unfavorably with a free trade deal forged between the 28-nation EU and Canada, which he said was fairer for both sides.

As AP adds, Gabriel’s ministry isn’t directly involved in the negotiations with Washington because trade agreements are negotiated at the EU level. But such a damning verdict from a leading official in Europe’s biggest economy is likely to make further talks between the EU executive and the Obama administration harder. Surprisingly, Gabriel’s comments contrast with those of Chancellor Angela Merkel, who said last month that TTIP was “absolutely in Europe’s interest.”

European critics of the TTIP have claimed that the treaty is dangerous as it could place the interest of international corporations above those of the nations they operate in, and undermine European standards for labor and environmental protections. Germany, where support for the TTIP has plunged over the past year, has seen a number of popular protests demanding that the TTIP never be implemented.

A recent survey, [conducted by YouGov for the Bertelsmann Foundation](#), showed that only 17 percent of Germans believe the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is a good thing, down from 55 percent two years ago.

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