



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on June 11, 2015

G7 Pushes Completion of Transoceanic Merger Treaties “in the Next Six Months”

At the recently concluded Group of Seven meeting in Germany, President Barack Obama, Chancellor Angela Merkel (shown), and the other G7 leaders stressed their commitment to gaining approval in their respective countries for the mammoth transoceanic agreements known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). The treaties, which have been in secret negotiations for several years (and remain secret today) have become increasingly controversial, as text from the agreements has been leaked, [revealing their vast scope and devastating potential](#).



The [G7 Leaders' Declaration](#) issued at the conclusion of the summit on June 8, pledged to “make every effort” to finalize the TPP and TTIP “by the end of the year.” And British Prime Minister David Cameron called for concluding the TTIP “in the next six months.”

The trade section of the Leaders' Declaration states:

We welcome progress on major ongoing trade negotiations, including on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the EU-Japan FTA/Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), aimed at reaching ambitious, comprehensive and mutually beneficial agreements. We will make every effort to finalize negotiations on the TPP as soon as possible as well as to reach agreement in principle on the EU-Japan FTA/EPA preferably by the end of the year. We will immediately accelerate work on all TTIP issues, ensuring progress in all the elements of the negotiations, with the goal of finalizing understandings on the outline of an agreement as soon as possible, preferably by the end of this year. We welcome the conclusion of the negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the EU and look forward to its timely entry into force. We will work to ensure that our bilateral and regional FTAs support the global economy.

Opposition Ranks Swell, EU Parliament Backs Off

Even as the G7 leaders were announcing their solidarity in support of the TPP/TTIP and other FTAs, popular opposition to the secretive, expansive agreements was mounting rapidly. In addition to anti-TTIP demonstrations across Europe and a petition signed by more than two million Europeans demanding an end to the TTIP negotiations, elected members of national governments, as well as members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, have been receiving increasingly negative feedback, as more and more citizens have become aware of the TTIP treaty. The G7 leadership thought it had things well coordinated with the leadership of the European Parliament to get a vote of support for TTIP on Wednesday, June 10. That was the plan. However, on Tuesday night, June 9, the



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parliament's president, Martin Schulz, announced that he was sending the TTIP support resolution back to committee.

On Wednesday morning, the European Parliament voted in plenary session also to postpone action on the resolution. Although the margin was very narrow (183 in favor and 181 against the delay), the surprise decision demonstrates how the agreement that was once seen as a slam-dunk is now facing increasingly stiff opposition. The Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) opposing the TTIP compose a disparate coalition ranging from conservative United Kingdom Independent Party (UKIP) to various Green and socialist parties.

EU Establishment "Running Scared," "in Panic" Over Opposition

MEP Nigel Farage of the UKIP, one of the EU's fiercest critics, says the recent parliamentary action shows the EU's TTIP managers are "running scared."

Farage wrote on Twitter: "EU running scared of European public on TTIP, corporatist agenda cracking." He also tweeted: "17 years as an MEP and never seen such public disquiet re an EU issue. The result? Debate and vote on TTIP suspended. They've got the wind up."

Greens/EFA trade spokesperson Yannick Jadot agreed, saying the EU leaders are "in panic" over mounting opposition. "The European Parliament's establishment is in panic that the vote on the EP's TTIP resolution will reveal the clear divisions within the larger political groups on the controversial EU-US negotiations," Jadot stated. "EP president Schulz has pulled a fast one and used an underhand administrative procedure to postpone tomorrow's vote and prevent these divisions from being put on the record, notably as regards the highly contentious ISDS investor protection mechanism," he continued.

As an indication of the divisiveness the TTIP has engendered, critics point to the more than 200 amendments that MEPs have submitted to the agreement. "This division within the European Parliament on TTIP is a major turnaround from the last time MEPs voted on the issue 2 years ago and shows that the significant and mounting public pressure is bearing fruit," noted the Greens' Jadot. "It is important that this pressure from the public and civil society is maintained. This resolution is just one step on a long road, with the TTIP negotiations liable to drag on for the foreseeable future. We will continue to raise these concerns with TTIP and fight to ensure that TTIP will not simply be waved through by a cosy coalition among the centre-right and centre-left political groups in the parliament."

But British Prime Minister David Cameron, speaking at the end of the G7 summit, insisted TTIP is a good deal for the British economy. "It is now over 700 days since we launched negotiations and every day we don't do a deal is costing the global economy £630 million," he said, citing phantom figures that have yet to be substantiated. "So we must redouble our efforts and reach a political agreement on an ambitious deal in the next six months."

Meanwhile, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper used his appearance at the G7 summit to push for a similar treaty between Canada and the EU. Business News Network reported, "Mr. Harper repeatedly called on EU counterparts to speed passage of the deal which the Conservative leader is expected to repeatedly cite during the election campaign as proof he's performed well as steward of the Canadian economy."

BNN further reported: "The Prime Minister's Office said Mr. Harper raised the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) in at least four meetings Sunday, including tête-à-têtes with U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and top European Union



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officials as well as the G7 group session on the global economy. He asked them to ‘swiftly implement’ the deal, the PMO said.”

The G7 summit and the vote in the EU parliament are the latest indication of the high stakes involved, and the battle lines that are being formed in the TPP/TTIP fights.

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