
AUSTRIA, FRANCE PROPOSE RESTARTING TTIP UNDER NEW NAME

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Austria and France will today (23 September) propose ending the current round of trade talks between the United States and the European Union, and starting fresh talks under a new name, Austrian Economy Minister Reinhold Mitterlehner said.

The free trade talks with the USA should begin again under a new title and with different substantive headings, including greater transparency, Mitterlehner told Germanys Die Welt newspaper.

Mitterlehner said he and French Trade Minister Matthias Fekl would push for a new start to the WTOs Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) at a meeting of EU trade ministers in the Slovak capital Bratislava.

FRANCE TELLS EU TO GET TOUGH ON TTIP

France has called for the EU to rethink its approach to trade negotiations, while pushing ahead with CETA, the free trade deal with Canada. But free trade is an increasingly thorny subject with European citizens. EurActiv France reports.

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He said the talks should resume after the US presidential election on 8 November.

Washington and Brussels are officially committed to sealing the free trade deal before President Barack Obama leaves office in January, but their chances of doing so are being eroded by approaching elections on both sides of the Atlantic and Britains vote in June to leave the European Union.

Fekl last month said he would request a halt to TTIP talks at the ministerial meeting after German Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel declared that they were de facto dead.

GERMANY SAYS TTIP DEAD IN THE WATER

Germanys Vice Chancellor and Economy Minister, Sigmar Gabriel, said yesterday (28 August) that negotiations on the so-called Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership □ or TTIP □ between the EU and the US were effectively dead in the water.

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The French minister told the Handelsblatt newspaper that the United States had demanded too much and not compromised enough.

A crazy machine

A crazy machine is moving here, the negotiations are a failure, nobody believes that they will come to a successful conclusion, he was quoted as saying.

French business lobbies called on Thursday for the TTIP talks to be extended.

Mitterlehner said officials needed to ensure that investment protections modelled on the European system were included in the future free trade pact, and that it would not have a negative impact on standards, pensions or the healthcare system.

TTIP has become a metaphor for the exuberant dealings of big corporations. That has a negative connotation. We hope for a good deal, but it has to be approached differently, Mitterlehner told the Welt newspaper.

He said he saw growing support for a new start.

We don't have the backing of everyone, but many colleagues are supporting us privately, he said.

What consequence for CETA?

Ending the TTIP talks for now could also help ensure passage of a separate free trade deal with Canada, he said.

Hopes remain for CETA, however, the deal with Canada that has already been negotiated, but it has had to overcome unexpected hurdles in Germany, where Gabriels socialists put up last minute resistance.

CANADA EXPECTS EU TRADE DEAL RATIFICATION IN 2017

Canada is working towards signing a new trade agreement with the European Union in October and put it for ratification early 2017, Canadian Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland said on Monday (12 September).

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Similar opposition has flared up in Austria and Belgium, but ministers backing the deal hope to greenlight the treaty so that it can be signed with Canadian Premier Justin Trudeau at an EU-Canada summit on 27 October.

ANTI-CETA FEELING IN AUSTRIA YIELDS NOTHING TANGIBLE

Members of Austria's Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) have overwhelmingly shown their opposition to the EU's trade deal with Canada, known as CETA. But party leader and Austrian Chancellor Christian Kern seems to be fighting a losing battle against it. EurActiv Germany reports.

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CETA would then go on for ratification in national and regional parliaments across the EU, a tricky and likely time-consuming process.

The failure of CETA would be a huge challenge to our credibility in the world, said Markus Beyer, head of the EU's most powerful lobby, BusinessEurope.

You simply will not find another place in the world that shares the same values to this degree, he added.

Fears of a failure of CETA have waned since German socialists narrowly backed the deal at a party conference last week.

GERMANY'S GABRIEL GETS SPD GREEN LIGHT TO SUPPORT CETA

Germany appeared set yesterday (19 September) to back an ambitious trade accord between the European Union and Canada after the leader of the Social Democrats (SPD), junior partner in the ruling coalition, overcame left-wing resistance to the deal within his party.

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This despite more than 160,000 demonstrators thronging seven major cities across Germany on Saturday. Thousands more protested outside EU headquarters in Brussels on Tuesday.

THOUSANDS PROTEST IN BRUSSELS AGAINST US, CANADA TRADE DEALS

Thousands of protesters marched through Brussels on Tuesday (20 September) to demand the European Union abandon planned transatlantic free trade deals they say will worsen labour conditions and allow big business to challenge governments.

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