

Hon. Andrew Robb AO, MP
Minister for Trade and Investment
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2601

cc: Senator Hon. Penny Wong; Senator Peter Whish-Wilson

12th December 2014

Dear Minister,

Ever since talks over the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement (TPP) began over five years ago, there have been broad public calls on leaders to make negotiations more transparent and open to the public. In statements, in letters, and in face-to-face meetings with trade representatives, we have urged the adoption of concrete practices that would better enable the kind of open debate and oversight that would help demystify these ongoing negotiations by making better, more accurate information available to the public.

The European Commission has recently taken leadership on this issue in the parallel context of negotiations over a Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), recommending on 25 November 2014 that the EU's TTIP text proposals henceforth be released to the public, and that other information related to TTIP be shared more broadly with all Members of the European Parliament, beyond the currently limited membership of the International Trade Committee.¹

The end of TPP negotiations now seems to be coming into focus. They have come down to high-level political decisions by negotiating countries, and the text is largely completed except for some resolutions on remaining landing zones. At this point, we know that there is a draft of the TPP that is mostly agreed upon by those negotiating the deal.

Today, we strongly urge you to release the un-bracketed text and to release the negotiating positions for text that is bracketed, now and going forwards as any future proposals are made. The public has a legitimate interest in knowing what has already been decided on its behalf, and what is now at stake with our various countries' positions on these controversial regulatory issues.

We call on you to consider the recent announcement from the European Commission as a welcome precedent to follow, thereby re-affirming your commitment to fundamental principles of transparency and public participation in rule making. The negotiations in Washington DC this week would provide the perfect opportunity for such a ground-breaking accord to be announced.

Sincerely,



Jon Lawrence
Executive Officer

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/news/2014/docs/c_2014_9052_en.pdf

Other Signatories

Australia: Australian Digital Alliance | Australian Fair Trade & Investment Network | Australian Library & Information Association | Australian Libraries Copyright Committee | Public Health Association of Australia

Canada: Council of Canadians | Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network (Réseau juridique canadien VIH/sida) | OpenMedia International

Chile: ONG Derechos Digitales | Organización de Consumidores y Usuarios de Chile

Japan: Movements of Internet Active Users | Creative Commons Japan | thinkC

New Zealand: Consumer NZ | Its Our Future NZ

Malaysia: Blindspot | EcoKnights | Malaysian AIDS Council | Positive Malaysian Treatment Access & Advocacy Group

Mexico, Chile, Peru: International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (Regional Office for Latin American and Caribbean Networks) | Alianza LAC - Global por el Acceso a Medicamentos

Peru: Hiperderecho Peruvian Association of Consumers and User | Acción Internacional para la Salud

USA: Action on Smoking & Health | American Library Association | Electronic Frontier Foundation | Fight For the Future | Food & Water Watch | Government Accountability Project | Health GAP | Just Foreign Policy | Knowledge Ecology International | National Legislative Association on Prescription Drug Prices | Public Knowledge | Sunlight Foundation | Association of Research Libraries

International: Article 19 | Consumers International | Creative Commons | Oxfam International | SumOfUs

Academics: Gabriel J. Michael, Yale Law School | Pam Samuelson, Berkeley Law School | Susan Sell, George Washington University | Sean Flynn, American University | David Levine, Princeton University

About EFA

Celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 2014, Electronic Frontiers Australia, Inc. (EFA) is a national, membership-based non-profit organisation representing Australians concerned with digital freedoms and rights.

EFA is independent of government and commerce, and is funded by membership subscriptions and donations from individuals and organisations with an altruistic interest in promoting digital civil liberties. EFA members and supporters come from across Australia and from diverse backgrounds.

EFA's major objectives are to protect and promote the civil liberties of users of digital communications systems (such as the Internet) and of those affected by their use and to educate the community at large about the social, political and civil liberties issues involved in the use of digital communications systems.