



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Internet freedom and public interest groups pleads, yet again, to be heard as TPP11 countries meet in Sydney**

*Canberra, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2017*

Leading internet freedom and public interest groups have urged the eleven governments that remain in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) following the US withdrawal to heed their calls for a renegotiation of the deal when they meet from 28 to 30<sup>th</sup> August in Sydney, Australia.

The open letter to ministers of trade has been signed by prominent public interest groups and privacy advocates in TPP11 countries and globally, including Electronic Frontiers Australia, Civil Liberties Australia, Council of Canadians, Derechos Digitales (Chile and Mexico), Open Media and Public Interest Advocacy Centre (Canada), Sinar Project (Malaysia), Hiperderecho and RedGE (Peru), PARC (Japan) and many more.

The privacy advocates warn, yet again, that the TPP that would “impact negatively on countries’ flexibility to robustly protect individual privacy and security and establish legitimate safeguards”. Worse, given that these provisions “were imposed by the USA and the USA is no longer in the TPP, it makes no sense for you to keep those provisions, particularly without the projected gains from access to US markets”.

The letter advises the ministers that “the only truly acceptable approach to ensure sufficient protection of privacy and address the other concerns raised by the ecommerce chapter is to renegotiate the whole TPP”.

If the governments fail to heed their call and opt instead to suspend the most dangerous provisions of the TPP until the US re-joins, a minimum number of provisions would need to be frozen. The e-commerce chapter requires TPP governments to allow cross-border data flows and severely restricts their ability to require local data storage and use of local servers. The privacy exceptions that purport to balance these obligations are seriously deficient in ways that restrict TPP11 governments’ ability to establish privacy and security safeguards. The European Union insisted on better privacy safeguards for same obligations in the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) and the EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement.

Internet freedom and public interest groups urge their Governments to leave data transfer regulations out of the TPP. If however they decide to proceed with such rules, there should at least be an open and informed discussion to determine rules on internet governance and the protection of individual privacy and security.

The letter can be accessed at <http://bilaterals.org/?sign-on-letter-concerns-over>.

### **About EFA**

Established in January 1994, Electronic Frontiers Australia (EFA) is a national, membership-based non-profit organisation representing Internet users concerned with digital freedoms and rights.



**Electronic Frontiers**  
AUSTRALIA

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 civil liberties in the digital context. EFA members and supporters come from all parts of 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.

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