

# EU statement at the Trade Policy Review of the United States, 16 & 18 December 2014

*Statement by Ambassador Angelos Pangratis*

I would first like to welcome the Delegation of the United States led by Ambassador Punke. I would also like to thank the WTO Secretariat and the US Government for their reports which form the basis of our discussion today. Let me extend my appreciation to Ambassador John Adank (New Zealand), for getting us started today with his remarks.

The United States is recovering very successfully from the severe recession caused by the financial crisis of 2008. The combination of a highly trained and motivated workforce, abundant and relatively cheap energy and natural resources, and a strong culture of innovation have enabled the US economy to continue to play its full role in our globalising world.

The United States is the EU's first partner in an economic relationship characterised by balance and mutual benefit over many decades. Our bilateral investment relationship is the deepest in the world, reflecting a strong degree of mutual trust in our respective democratic institutions and judicial systems. Together with other trading partners, the EU and US have supported and promoted economic openness as a normative standard in international relations and in this Organisation.



European  
Union

---

MISSION TO THE  
WORLD TRADE  
ORGANIZATION

GENEVA



The EU and the US are currently engaged in a further iteration of this process, through the ongoing Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership talks. While this is a bilateral effort, I wish to emphasize that third countries will stand to benefit from a TTIP agreement once it is concluded. TTIP is also an opportunity to make progress in rule making and in addressing complex and so far untouched areas in trade agreements. The TTIP allows us to experiment new rules beyond the WTO acquis, which is unique. We hope this will over time profit this Organisation too.

I also wish to convey the EU's appreciation for the constructive role played by the US recently in putting the WTO back on the negotiation track. The EU trusts the US will continue exerting its positive influence in this Organisation and welcomes its renewed commitment to the multilateral trading system expressed in its report.

I would be amiss if I did not mention that America's impressive overall level of openness is qualified by a limited number of persistent trade or investment restrictions in some sectors and policy areas. In most cases, these restrictions have been in place for so long that they have faded in people's memories and become like immovable objects: you would like to get rid of them but nobody knows how to bring that about. The TPR process is an appropriate forum to consider the significant drag remaining restrictions can exert on productivity, growth, and on other sectors of the economy. This leads me to the questions the EU raised in advance of this meeting on the following subjects:

- Public Procurement: Our concerns on Buy America provisions are well known;

- SPS: In the field of sanitary and phytosanitary measures, the EU remains concerned that US procedures are costly, extremely time consuming and unpredictable. The problems we have been struggling with as regards BSE-related import conditions are a clear example of that. In particular, the US is still unable to recognise that all EU

establishments follow the same rules which are enforced by the EU Commission. The EU is a single entity for trading purposes.

- Shipping and air transport: These sectors remain closed to foreign activity for domestic traffic. The US economy could reap significant benefits from measured liberalisation.

- The new Farm Bill: The EU notes that under the new Farm Bill some subsidies provided to the agricultural sector depend on the evolution of world prices. While we acknowledge that its implementation is still under way, we are already examining the relevant pieces of legislation with interest and are following developments to better understand how this Bill fits with the process of the reform of trade in agriculture to which we have all committed

- Custom procedures: the EU would like to reiterate its call for maintaining an adequate balance between security concerns and legitimate trade.

-Regulatory cooperation: Today's globalised economy inevitably calls for a significant increase in cooperation between national regulators. This is a trend that our governments should support as pro-actively as possible;

I would like to conclude by saying that, by tradition, the US TPR takes place just before Christmas and is the last one of the year. This time, we made a real effort and limited the number of our questions to less than 50 questions. We trust that the meeting will be useful to all of us here and will contribute to future policy deliberations in Washington. I wish the US a very fruitful TPR.