

**Summary of the political debate regarding the TTIP held on 26 February  
2015  
in the Hungarian National Assembly**

The political debate entitled “The risks and the impact of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) on sustainability and sovereignty” was held on 26 February 2015 in the plenary of the Hungarian National Assembly. The nearly six-hour political debate – in which several MEPs from Hungary have participated – was opened by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Péter Szijjártó who firstly gave an overview about the state of play of the negotiations. The Minister mentioned that the Government continuously follows the negotiations, which is considered to be highly important since the EU can only be strong if it is open to cooperation and under present circumstances, isolation would be a wrong response. In his opening address the Minister emphasised that transparency and publicity are Hungary’s fundamental expectations regarding the negotiations and he was of the opinion that the EU should avoid falling between two stools in the competition between regional trade integration. Mr. Péter Szijjártó finally added that the outcome of negotiations about the TTIP to be concluded between the European Union and the United States remains uncertain. He highlighted that the Government will submit an agreement for parliamentary approval solely with Hungarian interests in mind.

Following the Minister’s exposé a speech was delivered by Commissioner Tibor Navracsics, who presented the position of the European Commission and touched upon the aspect of substantive and institutional guarantees regarding the TTIP negotiations. As for the concerns around the TTIP, the Commissioner recalled the negotiating directives as “the mandate”, which would never allow for the European Commission to finalize an agreement that would infringe the interests of the EU or limit the governments’ right to regulate. He added, the European Commission will negotiate and present for ratification an agreement that is beneficial both for citizens and for Member States. Regarding the lack of transparency Mr. Navracsics moreover emphasized that the European Commission in office is committed to have open and frank discussions about the TTIP both with EU governments and with European Parliament. At the end, the Commissioner pointed out the potential benefits of the

agreement, such as the economic growth and the promoting competitiveness of the European Union.

The Minister of State for Security Policy and International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. István Mikola emphasised that the main goal of the TTIP agreement is improving the market access of goods, services and the accessibility of public procurement, reducing the regulatory barriers to trade and investments, as well as strengthening the regulatory cooperation of the parties and coherence between the regulations. Mr. Mikola also highlighted the common responsibility of Member States to reach a compromise, which is beneficial for all of them. Talking about the Hungarian interests the representative of the Government explained that Hungary had from the beginning an open-minded and supportive attitude to the negotiations, aiming to reach a balanced agreement. The Minister of State touched upon the importance of maintaining the GMO free agriculture. Regarding the investor-to-state dispute settlement (ISDS) it was pointed out that the Hungarian domestic judicial system was suitable for the dispute settlement between private investors and government.

During the debate several speakers emphasised that the content of the agreement is more important than quick conclusion of an agreement since it is in the interest of the EU and the United States to draft a treaty that can be enforced in practice. It was also underlined that the agreement could improve the EU's global competitiveness and the point for Hungary is to what extent it is able to contribute to this goal. The representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade finally highlighted that the Government is committed to reach an acceptable agreement which should be ratified by the national Parliaments as well.