



EXCHANGE ON TTIP  
NEGOTIATIONS



CANCER LINK TO RED  
AND PROCESSED  
MEAT



GLYPHOSATE  
CARCINOGENICITY  
RISK ASSESSMENTS



EU PROJECTS AND  
EVENTS



# NEWSLETTER

## Dear Members,

Season's Greetings and a Happy New Year from all the staff at SAFE! Our December Newsletter highlights the latest news from the European Parliament including AGRI members' discussions with **US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack** on the ongoing TTIP negotiations, and ENVI's exchanges of views concerning IARC's report on the carcinogenic nature of red and processed meat, as well as IARC and EFSA's conclusions on the carcinogen risks posed by the herbicide glyphosate.

**EU projects and food related events** can be found on the last pages of the Newsletter.

We look forward to your feedback.

Enjoy reading.

Sincere regards,

*Floriana Cimmarusti*  
Secretary General of SAFE

# Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP): Exchange of Views in the European Parliament

*On 30 November 2015, SAFE attended an exchange of views in the European Parliament (EP) between members of the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee (AGRI) and United States (US) Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, concerning the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).*

TTIP is a controversial economic and trade agreement between the European Union (EU) and the US aimed at trade liberalisation by the elimination of duties, reduction of non-tariff barriers and reforming and aligning food production regulations, among others. Yet agriculture and food issues under the proposed trade deal have proved some of the most difficult to address to date. They have been strongly disputed both in and outside EP for fear that the EU's food safety regulation and standards would be weakened by integrating them with the US (See SAFE February, April and June Newsletters).

Fundamental differences in regulatory and risk management approaches relating to food exist between the two regions. A major area of disagreement lies in the US and the EU's conflicting approaches to the World Trade Organisation (WTO)'s **Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (SPS) Agreement**, which sets out basic food safety and animal welfare rules for international trade in foodstuffs. Indeed, EU standards and regulations uphold the precautionary principle (PP) whereby sufficient scientific evidence must prove a product or process is harmless before it is allowed on the market. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), animal cloning for farming purposes, and meat products treated with antibiotics, hormones and chemicals which have long



posed safety concerns due to uncertainty on risks to health have thus been restricted or banned on the EU market. The US on the other hand allows the aforementioned as it bases its risk assessment on a cost benefit analysis, which assumes products and processes are safe unless scientifically proven otherwise.

Another important sticking point concerns rules on the protection of intellectual property rights. The EU uses **Geographical Indications (GIs)** which ensure only products originating from specific areas using specific production methods can be denominated and labelled as such. Instead, the US grants trademarks that allow businesses to distinguish their products but these do not usually indicate geographical areas due to the difficulty for the applicant in proving all parties in that region would be represented. Thus like the EU's SPS standards, GIs have mostly been denounced by the US as protectionist and barriers to US exports.

The 11<sup>th</sup> round of negotiations on the free trade agreement recently concluded in Miami and little to no progress has been achieved on the above issues. With US president Obama's end of office term fast approaching, it is no surprise **Secretary Vilsack** was keen to present a conciliatory image in his address to Members of Parliament (MEPs). He mostly emphasised the common goals of the US and EU agriculture and food safety systems as well as the need to focus on obtaining equivalent rather than identical systems to achieve these.

Below is a summary of the US Secretary's key messages as well as the concerns reiterated by AGRI members notably in the areas of GIs,