

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTY LEADERS

Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)

This provincial election comes at an important moment in the ongoing free trade talks with the European Union. In just a few weeks, the provinces will join federal and EU trade negotiators in Ottawa for a ninth and possibly final round of negotiations. The provinces are expected to present a list of public agencies and municipalities, service sectors and investment-related measures which will be bound by new trade rules in CETA that restrict the types of economic and social policies our elected governments will be able to pursue in the future.

The Trade Justice Network is made up of environmental, labour, cultural, farmers, Indigenous and social justice organizations critical of the lack of public involvement and debate in the CETA negotiations. Network member organizations are very concerned about the impact CETA will have on public services, health costs, municipal autonomy, environmental policy, Indigenous rights, jobs and cultural protections. To help our members make an informed choice in the upcoming provincial election, we would appreciate your answers to the following questions about CETA.

1. A ninth and possibly final round of negotiations toward a Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement will take place October 17 - 21 in Ottawa. What in your view are the benefits and risks of this agreement for the province?
2. The provincial governments are at the negotiating table for the first time. They have been asked to put together ambitious offers for the EU, including commitments on government procurement, services and investment. These commitments will go beyond what Canada offered the U.S. in its 1988 free trade deal. Will you commit to making those offers public and debating them before a final agreement is signed with the EU?
3. Does your party support the inclusion of an investor-state dispute settlement process in CETA? If yes, please explain the value to Canadians of including this process in trade agreements. Should provincial and territorial governments be held financially liable for any damages when a provincial, territorial or municipal measure is found to violate investment protections in trade agreements like CETA or NAFTA?

4. Does your party support the inclusion of municipal drinking water services and water utilities under the procurement, services and/or investment rules of CETA?
5. Does your party support the right of provincial and local governments to “Buy Canadian” and/or to consider local economic development benefits when tendering public procurement contracts?
6. Would your party agree that labour mobility is a human right, not a commercial issue, and therefore should not be included in CETA?
7. Does your party support extended patent terms and data exclusivity periods for medicines as demanded by the European Commission and the Canadian brand-name drug industry? Related to this, should the federal government be responsible for any additional costs for medicines incurred by the provinces and consumers due to strengthened patent protection under CETA?
8. Does your party support a broad cultural exemption in CETA that would exclude books, magazines, newspapers, publishing, broadcasting, film, video, performing arts and all other aspects of Canadian and European cultural industries? What about a broad exclusion for health care stipulating that nothing in CETA shall be construed as applying to health care or public health insurance?
9. Will your party ensure that Canada’s agricultural orderly marketing systems, including supply management, are not adversely affected by CETA?
10. Do you support the maintenance of existing foreign ownership limits in telecommunications, fisheries and financial services under CETA? Related to this, should Canada protect its ability to screen foreign investment to ensure that it is of net benefit to Canada?

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer these questions. We look forward to seeing your answers, which can be emailed to TJN.RCJ@gmail.com.

Trade Justice Network
Réseau pour le commerce juste

For a list of Trade Justice Network member organizations and to read a joint declaration on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, see <http://tradejustice.ca/en/section/22>.