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Press release | 12.12.2018

JEFTA imports old mistakes

EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement

The Japan-EU Free Trade Agreement (JEFTA) between the European Union and Japan does not represent a forward-looking and sustainable trade policy, which is why the Greens/EFA Group have voted against it in the European Parliament today. The European Commission continues to focus on deregulation and has failed to learn from the massive public opposition to the previous trade agreements.

JEFTA allows for the liberalisation of financial services and provides insufficient protection for public services such as water and sanitation. The precautionary principle to prevent damage to the environment, health and consumer protection is not safeguarded. Environmental protection rules such as an import ban on illegally harvested timber and protective mechanisms for Japanese small farmers against the mass exports of dairy products from the European Union are missing.

Ska Keller, President of the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament, comments:

"The European Parliament has missed an opportunity to take the lead in demanding a sustainable and fair international trade policy. The liberalisation of financial services and weak protection for public services ignore standards for the environment, citizens and municipal services such as water supply. We want international trade agreements, but not at any cost. The liberalisation of financial services raises doubts about compatibility with the regulatory paradigm following the financial crisis. The Paris climate goals and the sustainable development goals must be the overarching framework for modern trade agreements. Escalating liberalisation, on the other hand, will not bring about a sustainable and social trade policy".

Klaus Buchner, shadow rapporteur of the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament's lead trade committee, added:

"The European Union ignores citizens' voices and imports the old mistakes of CETA to the Free Trade Agreement with Japan. Safety and quality standards for the environment, consumers and health must not be jeopardised by deregulation. JEFTA is a decision against Europeans citizens and for multinational corporations. Together with millions of citizens, we are calling for a trade policy that guarantees sustainable environmental and social standards, basic democratic values and the precautionary principle and is not simply misused to deregulate banks and the economy".

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