Press release | 04.02.2015

Service trade agreement (TISA)

Health services at risk under controversial service liberalisation treaty

A leaked document from the ongoing negotiations on the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) has made clear that health services could come under the scope of the agreement, in spite of assurances by the European Commission to the contrary (1). Commenting on the revelation, Green trade spokesperson **Ska Keller** said:

"This leak confirms the worst fears regarding the TISA negotiations. Despite the EU Commission stating health and other public services would not be included in the scope of the agreement, we now have evidence to the contrary. The rabbit is out of the hat and we must now be vigilant to ensure TISA is not used to force through the liberalisation of vital public services by the backdoor. Health care is an essential part of a society and essential health services cannot be traded away via an international agreement.

"Opening the door to healthcare tourism simply on grounds of cost alone, as is being proposed in this document, risks undermining the provision of basic health services in all countries. It would create cost competition in the healthcare sector, when the goal should be to ensure the affordable provision of health services to all. This would risk creating a race to the bottom and undermining the provision of basic services in countries. Treating health services like any other good or commercial service is incompatible with the universal service principle."

(1) The leaked document details a proposal by Turkey on the reimbursement of costs for health services abroad under TISA. However, there are major concerns about the implications of such a provision on the ability of national healthcare systems to maintain essential services. The leaked text is available at: http://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/Propuesta-paciente_0_352764993.html#documento

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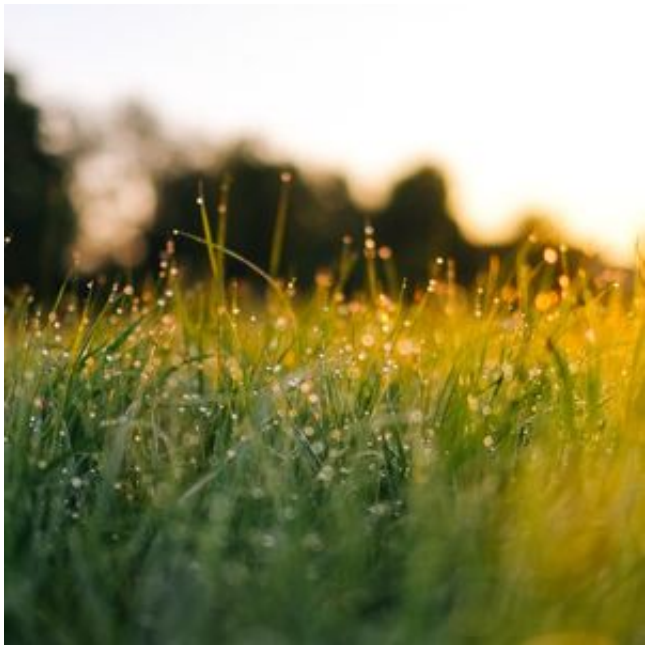
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Ska Keller

Member

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