Tweede Kamer
DER STATEN-GENERAAL

Mr. K. de Gucht
European Commissioner for Trade
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Commissie Europese Zaken
R. W. Knops
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date 25 June 2014
Subject Letter in the framework of the political dialogue: the role of national parliaments in free trade agreements

Dear Mr. De Gucht,

The national parliaments of the EU have been following with great interest the negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the United States and the EU. A recurring issue between the European Commission and the Council when agreements have been reached, is whether or not these types of comprehensive agreements should be considered as coming within the exclusive competence of the European Commission (so-called 'EU-only' agreements) or that that they concern both competences of the Commission and of the member states (mixed agreements).

The chairs of relevant committees in national parliaments who are signatories to this letter believe that free trade agreements should be considered as mixed agreements, since they contain provisions that concern policy areas which are within the competences of the member states. For CETA, as well as TTIP (as well as can be foreseen at this stage), this is the case for certain elements of policy areas such as services, transport and investor protection. In the case of a mixed status, all Member-States, namely through their national Parliaments, have to ratify the agreement. In view of the important role national parliaments have in the democratic decision making process of the EU, we feel that it is of great importance that trade agreements such as CETA and TTIP are ratified by the national parliaments.

Therefore, we ask you to consider comprehensive trade agreements such as TTIP and CETA as mixed agreements.

We look forward to your reaction.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr. R. W. KNOPS, *Chairman of the committee on European Affairs*	Tweede Kamer	Netherlands
Mr. R. DE ROON, *Chairman of the committee on Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation*	Tweede Kamer	Netherlands
Mr. K. KOPF, *Chairman of the Standing Subcommittee on EU-Affairs*	Nationalrat	Austria
Mr. E. MAYER, *Chairman of the EU Committee*	Bundesrat	Austria
Mr. A. FLAHAUT, *President of the Belgian House of representatives and chair of the advisory committee on European Affairs*	House of Representatives	Belgium
Mr. O. BENESIK *Chairman of the Committee for European Affairs*	Chamber of Deputies	Czech Republic

Mr. M. KREJCA *Chairman of the Committee on EU Affairs*	Senate	Czech Republic
Ms. D. AUROI, *Présidente de la Commission des Affaires européennes*	Assemblée nationale	France
Mr. G. KRICHBAUM, *Chairman of the Committee on Affairs of the European Union*	Bundestag	Germany
Mr. R. HÖRCSIK *Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs*	National Assembly	Hungary
Mr. D. HANNIGAN *Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs*	House of the Oireachtas	Ireland
Ms. Z. KALNIŅA- LUKAŠEVICA *Chair of the European Affairs Committee*	Saeima	Latvia
Mr. M. ANGEL *Chairman of the Committee on foreign and European Affairs*	Chamber of Deputies	Luxembourg
Hon. L. BUSUTTIL *Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs*	House of Representatives	Malta
Ms. A. POMASKA *Chair of the European Affairs Committee*	Sejm	Poland

Mr. E. WITTBRODT *Chairman of the EU Affairs Committee*	Senate	Poland
Mr. P. MOTA PINTO *Chairman of the European Affairs Committee*	Assembly of the Republic	Portugal
Mr. L. BLAHA *Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs*	National Council	Slovakia
Mr. J. HORVAT *Chairman of the Committee on EU Affairs*	National Assembly	Slovenia
Sir W. CASH *Chairman of the European Scrutiny Committee*	House of Commons	United Kingdom
Lord T. BOSWELL *Chairman of EU select Committee*	House of Lords	United Kingdom