The losers will be all those who depend on quality public services such as healthcare, education, water, energy as well as social, cultural and communication services. While private profits will grow, workers face the risk of deteriorating labour standards and the public of impaired access to essential services. People already marginalised may end up unserved if ever more public services will be converted to for-profit enterprises.

The analysis also shows that the many official assurances public services will remain unaffected by the transatlantic trade agreements are simply wrong. The different reservations introduced into the agreements, both in the rules part and the schedules of commitments, are inadequate to effectively protect the public sector and democratic decision making over how to organise it. By committing any privately funded services to be covered by these trade treaties, governments effectively also include those welfare and public sectors currently run with a public-private mix.

By restricting our policy space, TTIP and CETA undermine many efforts aimed at fostering social cohesion, job creation, the redistribution of wealth, the protection of health, and the preservation of a sound natural environment.

The only measure to effectively protect public services from the great trade attack would be a full and unequivocal exclusion of all public services from any EU trade agreements and the ongoing trade negotiations. Decisions on the adequate organisation, funding and provision of public services can only be taken at the national and local levels. They require transparent and democratic deliberations involving all groups potentially affected. As trade negotiations do not guarantee the ability to regulate in the public interest, they have to be rejected. TTIP and CETA, as they are shaped now, do not satisfy the real needs of our societies still struggling with the ongoing financial crisis. Not unfettered liberalisation, but bold measures fostering democracy, social justice, and wellbeing for all should be on the agenda now.

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