

DON'T GAMBLE WITH DEMOCRACY



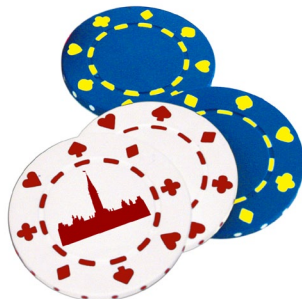
CETA and Democracy: Why can't we see what the provinces are offering?

There have been seven very quiet rounds of Canada-European Union trade negotiations toward a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Until now, negotiators from each country have been working on the text of the agreement. But we're at a critical moment in the talks when the provinces will have to put offers on the table. These offers will include agreements to be restricted in how provinces deliver services (including public services), how local governments spend public money, and how investment is regulated.

Once the Canadian and provincial offers are made and these public policies are put on the negotiating table, it will be almost impossible to take them back. You would think our governments would be consulting publicly about what their offers should look like. But yet there is nothing but silence from our elected officials. Meanwhile, the offers were put together with close cooperation with powerful big business lobby groups that have a vested interest in restricting public policies that affect their profits.

Based on leaked copies of the CETA text and discussions with some Canadian trade negotiators, we know the types of policies being offered by the provinces and territories could include:

- Public drinking water and sanitation: The EU wants Canada to commit to trade rules that would encourage the privatization of Canada's public water systems. It's up to the provinces to decide how far the privatization goes.



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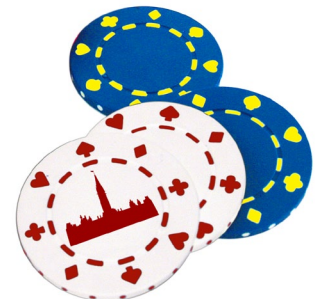
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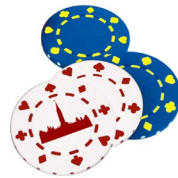
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- Public drinking water and sanitation: The EU wants Canada to commit to trade rules that would encourage the privatization of Canada's public water systems. It's up to the provinces to decide how far the privatization goes.



- Public health care: While Canada and the EU say they would like to exempt public health care from CETA, some provinces may accidentally or willfully commit health services in their offers to the EU. Health insurance will almost certainly be part of their offers, which will make Canada's public health insurance system vulnerable to trade and investment challenges.
- Public transit and energy: European multinational companies, which have successfully dismantled publicly delivered transit and energy systems across the EU, now want to privatize Canada's remaining public systems. EU negotiators will be looking for commitments in these areas.
- Sustainable, ethical and local purchasing strategies: The EU wants the provinces to ban municipal governments, school boards, Crown corporations and most other public agencies from favouring locally sourced products and services when spending public money. EU trade negotiators think contracts should go to the lowest bidder regardless of the environmental and job-creating benefits that come from spending money close to home.

These aren't trade policies. They are domestic public policies that should be developed locally in an open, democratic way. It should not be up to provincial and federal trade negotiators, with help from large corporations, to trade these policies away without consulting the public, or discussing the issue in the legislature.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

We need to demand transparency from the provinces. We need to see the offers before trade negotiators put our public services and policies on the table to be lost forever. It's not right that corporations are given front-row seats while the public is left out of the CETA negotiations. You can send a letter to your provincial government demanding to see the offers by using an Action Alert on the Council of Canadians' website at <http://canadians.org/action/2011/democracy-CETA.html>

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