

Dear President Juncker, President Obama,

We, the undersigned Visegrad Members of the European Parliament, want to declare our support for the negotiations between the European Union and the United States over the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

The TTIP negotiations are strategic negotiations. They are also a chance to reconfirm and strengthen the alliance based on the common values of the United States and Europe, which was formed almost 100 years ago.

Europe has raised itself from the ashes of a continent destroyed by warfare and today it is an economic force in the world, an equal partner to the United States. It is in our mutual interest to link our economies and create a united front vis-à-vis global economic development. The chance to formalize and strengthen economic ties between the countries and between 850 million citizens is crucial to keep our leadership on the global stage.

The total trade value between the USA and our countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) amounted to more than 25 billion US dollars in 2014. From the perspective of the Visegrad, no one can deny that international trade is a vital tool of growth and investment and a way to continue the transformation of our societies for the better. The TTIP should be used as an incentive to boost even more that growth and employment in the future. That TTIP will also set up standards for the whole of global trade and for Europe, provide an important new source of energy resources.

We also want to underline the geopolitical importance of these negotiations, which goes beyond economy alone. The adoption of the TTIP will be the next step in the movement from a military alliance to stronger economic and political ones.

In the light of the events in Ukraine, in the Middle East and other places, it is clear that both sides of the Atlantic Ocean have to unite if we want our values and principles, like democracy, transparency, accountability and human rights, to be respected in the world. We should join all of them together in order to defend our common vision that every human is born with fundamental freedoms. Moreover, we should not allow the vision to be destroyed by corruption and greed of individuals that seek power or ideology.

We support all efforts to keep up the momentum on this historical agreement by putting aside internal politics, bureaucratic procedures or protectionist tendencies.

We encourage you to continue the negotiations on the ambitious and balanced TTIP, which will deal with the social and economic concerns raised by some and, at the same time, it will give companies on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean the access to the real market. The final agreement has to be supported by us, legislators, but it should also encourage our voters to support it as citizens.

We, the Visegrad nations, have experienced peace and prosperity since 1989, because we decided to seize the opportunities presented to us. If we had not embraced the unknown, we would not be a part of the European Union or NATO now.

Fears of the unknown should not prevent us from embracing the chance to bring us closer to each other. If we do not work to explore all the possibilities of reaching a good agreement, we will make a mistake that we will both regret.

Best regards,

Dita Charanzová, Member of the European Parliament, Czech Republic

Danuta Hübner, Member of the European Parliament, Poland

György Schöpflin, Member of the European Parliament, Hungary

Ivan Štefanec, Member of the European Parliament, Slovakia

CC:

PM of Czech Republic

PM of Hungary

PM of Poland

PM of Slovakia