

Figures released recently show that support for TTIP is relatively prevalent across the European Union. The most obvious exception to this is Germany, where only 39% of the population said they supported the free trade deal between Europe and the United States. Austria also sits on 39% approval for TTIP and only 40% of Luxembourgers support the deal. It is unsurprising then that the German delegation remains one of the staunchest opponents of TTIP in Council deliberations. It remains to be seen whether, with ISDS excluded from negotiations, the German delegation will be prepared to defend their citizens' demands for the protection of privacy on the internet.

France and Italy are other countries with low popular support for TTIP: 50% and 58% respectively. With the dramatic environmental measures already adopted in negotiations it is likely that Italy will back TTIP, as will France though French citizens have similar, sensible objections to TTIP as the Germans do. It will be interesting to see whether Gallic pride or, as it's known to you and me, French stubbornness, will complicate negotiations. As with Germany, with ISDS excluded from TTIP, the French and Italian delegations are unlikely to put up too much of a fight.

This will suit the Latvian delegation who, as representatives of the country with the highest approval rating of TTIP taking part in these negotiations, will be hoping to pass TTIP without too many further alterations. It does raise the question however, of why the Latvian presidency so quickly dismissed the ISDS clause despite the support of 66% of Latvians for TTIP. Perhaps the delegates were too eager to play politics rather than represent their people in the European system. If the Latvian presidency has any sense, they should reintroduce ISDS, despite all the anti-democratic flaws it possesses, so that it can be properly debated and then comprehensively rejected. The way the issue was previously handled has allowed those in favour of ISDS to cry foul, accusing their opponents of playing politics rather than negotiation. This reporter calls on the presidency to reintroduce the ISDS clause to negotiations so that it can be debated upon and then, hopefully, rejected in a *democratic* manner.

This should also serve to give the British delegation a chance to redeem their childish behaviour at the last round of negotiations. Although 66% of Britons are in favour of TTIP, it doesn't mean that the British should uncompromisingly seek to pass it without debate and compromise. To do so denies a voice to the other 34% of Britons, over 21 million people, a voice. Hopefully this time the British delegation will have prepared a proper strategy and decided what compliments they're willing to make rather than simply making grand and meaningless gestures that only serve to embarrass themselves.

As it was, at the last round of negotiations the European Parliament rejected any form of TTIP that does not contain at least some form of ISDS. This contrasts greatly with the stance of the Council, who will only pass a TTIP with ISDS if the ISDS clause is significantly watered down. It will be up to the Commission to mediate between these two bodies to find a compromise that suits everyone, though knowing how uncompromising the Commission can be themselves, it is more likely to be a compromise that pleases no-one.

The last round of negotiations was pretty shambolic. It remains to be seen whether the Council can function properly this time round and develop a passable solution that takes into account all perspectives. This reporter thinks it unlikely.