

# CETA – why the citizens are concerned

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Presentation to the Public Discussion

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The coming of the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA), a second-generation trade agreement between Canada and the European Union has been a long time coming. A political agreement was reached in September 2014. This type of trade agreement meets many of the criteria of the more ‘classic’ trade agreements of which the EU has negotiated many which reduce trade barriers (tariffs and quantitative restrictions). At the same time, the ‘second generation’ dimension of it means that it includes more elements than merely free trade. It also includes matters such as public procurement, recognizing professional degrees, as well as dealing with dispute settlement. Some of the Canadian advocacy groups have not been overly impressed by the CETA. The text was created by negotiators of the federal government and of the provinces but not by other expert groups. It seems that there is no ability to revise.

The Council of Canadians, for instance, is concerned that the investor dispute settlement will undermine Canadian democracy. Recently European citizens have been expressing their concern also. This presentation looks into why there have been concerns about CETA, in particular its investor dispute settlements, the lack of input into the negotiations by Canadian advocacy groups, the ‘take it or leave it’ nature of the eventual text, and the fact that CETA is one of a range of trade of agreements (NAFTA, TPP) that also have Investor-State Dispute Settlement clauses and whether their concerns make much sense.