

IoD members may or may not be aware of the US-EU trade agreement currently being negotiated called “TTIP” [formally the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership] which is seeking to improve market access and achieve regulatory coherence and convergence across a number of sectors. In effect, this means removing any remaining tariffs and reducing an array of non-tariff measures.

The IoD is taking a leading role in this debate to ensure that the deal is as ambitious as possible, working at both UK and EU level to keep the interests of firms of all sizes and sectors represented, in particular those of small and medium sized enterprises. The wider the number of sectors being covered by the discussions, the wider and more diverse the benefits accrued to companies across the UK will be.

Below are some of the pieces we have written on the subject:

<http://www.cityam.com/1409850384/screaming-silence-free-marketeers-jeopardising-vital-eu-us-trade-deal>
<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/dont-believe-the-scaremongering-myths--ttip-is-nothing-to-be-afraid-of-9868416.html>
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/6c13e4fe-ad5e-11e4-97c1-00144feab7de.html>

To better understand and explain what some of the potential benefits of TTIP are, the IoD is undertaking a case study project, and want to get feedback from members who have experience exporting to and trading in the US on the challenges and hurdles SMEs in particular face – from tariffs to regulatory barriers such as standards duplication, which create unnecessary paperwork and state-to-state variance in legislation and guidelines which complicate setting up services operations. The aim of TTIP is to make doing business and trading in the US market faster, cheaper and simpler.

It is worth noting that many of the areas being looked at may not immediately come across to members as traditional barriers – there are a host of regulations which add costs to doing business –both at the port of entry and further back in the supply chain. Regulators on both sides are meeting to discuss where progress can be made on mutually recognising each other’s standards, which could significantly reduce the compliance documentation and associated costs and make it easier to trade with and in the US, and facilitate transatlantic professional mobility through mutual recognition of qualifications where possible. Additionally, making it easier for temporary workers to enter the US to assist with knowledge-specific delivery of products and services, as envisaged in the recently-agreed EU-Canada free trade agreement, would be of great benefit to SMEs.

These are only a sliver of the areas being examined by TTIP to free up and increase trade between the US and the EU. The IoD will be putting together a report looking at some of these barriers and challenges, featuring a few case studies of members already exporting to the US and those considering doing so to give concrete examples. From medical devices to cosmetics, food & drink to machinery, pharmaceuticals to consultancy services, textiles to customs, intellectual property, there is a lot to be gained on a number of levels.

If you would be willing to discuss your experience in further detail, we would be most grateful. Depending on your sector, we will also be happy to send you more information on what some of the EU’s negotiating objectives that would pertain to your particular sector. Please get in touch with the IoD’s Head of Europe and Trade Policy, Allie Renison – allie.renison@iod.com for more information.