

Response from Canada's New Democrats

To help our member organizations make an informed decision on who they should vote for in the next election, we would very much appreciate answers to the following questions about CETA:

1. What, in your view, are the major potential benefits and the major potential drawbacks of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement?

New Democrats will only pursue and conclude trade agreements that are of net economic and social benefit for Canadians. At present, the current version of the Canada-EU Economic Trade Agreement needs significant improvement if the interests of Canadians are to be protected. For starters the negotiations should be much more transparent, and Canadians should have an opportunity to express themselves with regard to what is on the table and the implications for their lives. Too little information exists for Canadians to reach informed conclusions on the merits and risks of a CETA.

2. Does your party support the inclusion of an investor-state dispute settlement process in the CETA? If yes, please explain the value to Canadians of including this process in trade agreements. Should provincial and territorial governments be held liable for any damages when a provincial, territorial or municipal measure is found to violate investment protections in trade agreements like CETA or NAFTA?

We have viewed the investor-state provisions as an inequitable element in trade agreements that privilege corporations in a way that conflicts with the public interest. Certainly, holding provinces liable for damages assessed under agreements they have not been a party to is problematic. Once again, failure to engage Canadians in assessing the full implications of provisions like the investor-state clauses has placed Canada in a very vulnerable position.

3. Does your party support the inclusion of municipal drinking water services under the procurement, services and/or investment rules of CETA?

No. We believe that it is a right and responsibility of municipal, provincial/territorial and federal governments to make procurement and regulatory decisions in the best interests of their residents without looking over their shoulder at trade provisions negotiated without their involvement.

- 4. Does your party support the right of provincial and local governments to “Buy Canadian” and/or to consider local economic development benefits when tendering public procurement contracts?**

Yes.

- 5. Would your party agree that labour mobility is a human right, not a commercial issue, and therefore should not be included in CETA?**

Yes.

- 6. Does your party support extended patent terms for medicines as demanded by the European Commission and the Canadian brand-name drug industry? Related to this, should the federal government be responsible for any additional costs for medicines incurred by the provinces and consumers due to strengthened patent protection under CETA?**

The NDP believes that Canada already accords too much status to brand-name drug patents. Tying Canada further into arrangements that protect the patent drug industry is not in the interests of a country that must reassess its entire approach to pharmaceutical therapy in our public health care system. Canada needs to avoid such an outcome.

- 7. Does your party support a broad cultural exemption in CETA that would exclude books, magazines, newspapers, publishing, broadcasting, film, video, performing arts and all other aspects of Canadian and European cultural industries?**

Yes

- 8. Does your party support a broad exclusion for health care that would stipulate that nothing in CETA shall be construed as applying to health care or public health insurance?**

Yes

- 9. Will your party ensure that Canada’s agricultural orderly marketing systems, including supply management and the Canadian Wheat Board, are not adversely affected by CETA?**

Yes

- 10. Do you agree that in return for dropping high European tariffs on Canadian fish products that European boats should be allowed to catch more fish in or adjacent to Canadian waters?**

No. Canada’s East Coast has suffered from European over-fishing and flouting of international rules for far too long. Loosening such controls as currently exist is a step in the wrong direction.

11. Do you support the maintenance of existing foreign ownership limits in telecommunications, fisheries and financial services under CETA? Related to this, should Canada protect its ability to screen foreign investment to ensure that it is of net benefit to Canada?

Yes.

12. Do you agree that Canada should use trade agreements to pressure trade partners, including the European Union, against adopting climate policy (ex. EU fuel quality standards) or public health measures (ex. restrictions on genetically modified organisms) that restrict Canadian exports or investment?

Trade agreements should not be allowed to prove an impediment to progressive change here or abroad.