

Statement issued by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development on 13 October 2016

The Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development of the Parliamentary Assembly, meeting in Strasbourg on 13 October 2016, expressed its concern over the planned signing of the Provisional Agreement on the EU-Canada Free Trade Agreement (the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement CETA) at the EU Council of Ministers meeting on 18 October 2016.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has provisionally scheduled a debate on the “Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and its implications for social rights, public health and sustainable development” (Rapporteur: Mr Geraint Davies, United Kingdom, SOC), as well as on “Human rights compatibility of investor–State arbitration in international investment protection agreements” (Rapporteur: Mr Pieter Omtzigt, Netherlands, EPP/CD) for its January 2017 part-session (23-27 January 2017).

At a hearing held on 13 October 2016, the Committee was informed by experts that the Provisional Agreement on CETA would bring into force (with immediate effect) new powers for transnational investor companies to sue EU member states for laws they pass which affect investor profits, including those designed to protect public health, the environment and workers’ rights.

The Committee considers that such provisions would unacceptably restrict the powers of national parliaments to adopt legislation on matters within their remit, and thus calls for the postponement of the signing of the Provisional Agreement.