

## **Exclude Education from Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) talks, says IFUT**

*March 27, 2015*

The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has warned that the implications for education must be addressed seriously in any considerations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

Commenting on detailed reports regarding a new report to government on TTIP to be published today, Mike Jennings, General Secretary of IFUT, said he was amazed that the proposal to include education within TTIP for the first time was not highlighted.

“Education should be excluded from the terms of these talks. Proposals to make education a ‘traded’ commodity could have huge consequences for the Irish taxpayer, by allowing foreign investors in private colleges to sue the government over state investment in public education.

“A proposed ‘investor-state dispute resolution process’ in TTIP would allow so-called ‘for-profit’ education companies the right to challenge measures that they feel interfere with their profits. A panel of private, unaccountable arbitrators could then force the government here to compensate such investors for any alleged losses,” Mike Jennings said.

He said that the TTIP proposals, heavily promoted by the US ‘for-profit’ lobby, would effectively prevent regulation of ‘for-profit’ schools and institutions on the basis that it would represent a ‘disguised barrier to trade.’

“A US Congressional Report in 2012 was damning of the ‘for-profit’ education sector there. It found that over 22% of their revenue was spent on marketing and 19.4% taken in profits, with just 17% spent on instruction. The study also reported "substandard academic offerings, high tuition and executive compensation, low student retention rates and the issuance of credentials of questionable value."

”Having been substantially discredited in the US, are they now seeking to enter the Irish and European markets, with potentially disastrous consequences for our students and education system.

“The Minister for Education should press for an explicit exclusion of education from the talks. The EU Foreign Affairs Council of Ministers has already excluded the audiovisual sector from TTIP based on the public interest goal of preserving and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity within the EU. The same reasoning would justify an exemption for education,” Mike Jennings said.

ENDS

**For further information on this press release please contact:**

*John Gallagher, John Gallagher Consulting. Tel. 087.9369888*

*Mike Jennings, General Secretary, IFUT. Tel. 087.6776747.*