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TiSA: Trade in Services Agreement is Bad News for Workers and Communities

Brussels, 10 November 2016 (ITUC OnLine): As trade negotiators representing 50 countries meet behind closed doors to try and finalise the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) before the end of the year, the ITUC has released a new analysis of leaked information about the deal "All about TiSA: Everything you didn't know about the Trade in Services Agreement". The report sets out how a TiSA agreement would concentrate more power in the hands of multinational corporations, put a stranglehold on vital government regulation, undo the limited progress which has been made on regulating banks and finance conglomerates, and lead to an "Uberisation" of millions of workers' jobs.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said: "While trade deals like TTIP, TPP and CETA are making headlines, government negotiators working hand in glove with corporate lobbyists are hoping to smuggle TiSA through while attention is focused elsewhere. This must not be allowed to happen. From what is known about the secret TiSA deal, it would have a profound and negative impact on financial regulation, protections for workers and consumers alike, and across a whole raft of other areas. Governments have still not learned the lesson that putting corporate interests ahead of the living standards and lives of their own people is not only unjust, it is political stupidity."

The leaked information shows how governments would have to "consult" with multinationals when considering new regulations, and how so-called "ratchet" and "standstill" provisions would make it impossible to undo disastrous privatisations. Companies like Uber, which thrive on employing workers without even the most basic rights to decent pay and working conditions, would be allowed to extend their reach across swathes of the economy. Employers would also be able to move workers in professions like law and accountancy from country to country, without having to respect national laws.

"TiSA is good news for banks and tax havens, and for some of the most irresponsible corporations on the planet. Even local government authorities would be banned from supporting local services companies, which would hurt small businesses and local communities. TiSA is bad news for working families and for the very function of democratic government. TiSA in its current form is totally unacceptable, and if there is a need for an agreement on trade in services, then negotiators should start again, with an open and democratic process and without corporate lobbyists calling the shots," said Burrow.

The report is based on information leaked before the current round of TiSA negotiations. Information from those negotiations is limited, since governments still insist on keeping the talks secret. To download the TiSA report and leaflet:  
<http://www.ituc-csi.org/all-about-tisa>

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