[ADDRESS]

DATE

Dear ……

**Re: Disturbing new information about trade deals and parliamentary process**

I am writing as a member of Keep Our NHS Public, a civil society group concerned about the future of the NHS, particularly the threat it faces from trade and investment agreements, such as the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the European Union (EU) and Canada, and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the EU and the US.

As it will be some years before we formally exit the EU, TTIP and CETA could be agreed and applicable to us during this interim period, and (in the case of some measures) after we leave too.

Although TTIP negotiations may be faltering, CETA is not far from being agreed. The European Commission (EC)‘s recent decision that CETA will be a ’mixed’ agreement means that it needs to be ratified not just by the European Parliament (EP), but also by the parliaments of all EU member states.

We are particularly concerned about 2 aspects of these trade deals:

1. The general threat to the NHS and other public services arising from opening them up to investment by US and Canadian companies, and the specific threat from the International Court System (ICS), detailed below.
2. The lack of democratic process in our UK Parliament that allows treaties like CETA come before it to be ratified, also detailed below.

Because of our concerns, we are asking you to do one of the following:

* To raise a Question in the House of Commons on the lack of a Parliamentary process to ensure that MPs can veto bad trade agreements;
* To ask the Parliamentary Procedure Committee to clarify or set in motion a procedure that allows a trade agreement to be decisively vetoed.

**Further details**

1. Surprisingly, if the EP approves CETA, the European Council can begin provisional implementation of about 80% of the treaty (those parts that come within the scope of the EU’s common commercial policy) even before ratification by member states’ parliaments. This would include provisional implementation of the ICS.

ICS will allow Canadian corporations, or those multinational corporations with subsidiaries in Canada, to bypass domestic courts and sue EU national governments for massive compensation over changes in policy or regulations that impact on corporate profits. In the context of Brexit, corporate investments made between the provisional implementation of CETA and the UK's departure from the EU will continue to be protected by ICS for a further 20 years.

(<http://www.mishcon.com/assets/managed/docs/downloads/doc_2850/TTIP_Project_v6_PJ_PROOF.pdf>).

2. Should CETA come to the parliaments of EU member states, the UK Parliament appears alone in being unable to veto it. Regardless of the UK’s ambiguous position within the EU at the moment, there is no *requirement* in the UK for any Parliamentary debate or vote before a treaty is ratified and it can go through on the nod.

Even if there *is* a debate and a resolution is passed to veto CETA, according to the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act of 2010, the government can simply lay a statement before Parliament saying why they wish the treaty to be ratified. It is then up to opponents to put forward another resolution to veto the deal …. and so on, and so on.

This democratic deficit would apply, not only to CETA and TTIP, but also to any new bilateral trade deals that the UK government seeks.

Keep Our NHS Public has written to the Parliamentary Procedure Committee for their view on this lack of veto, but has received no reply.

As one of your constituents, I ask that you help to address this issue by, for example:

* Asking a Question in the House of Commons about the lack of a Parliamentary process to ensure that MPs can veto bad trade agreements;
* Asking the Parliamentary Procedure Committee to clarify or set in motion a parliamentary procedure that allows a trade agreement to be decisively vetoed.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,