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**T**he Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) is a think tank that analyses the events taking place in the European Union (EU) and the world at large, particularly the changes and trends that can or do affect citizens and their well-being. The process of negotiating the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) that began in 2013 has raised high expectations – as is to be expected of an agreement of these dimensions between the EU and United States. This agreement, which goes beyond the merely economic, seeks to open up a geostrategic space that could have significant repercussions for the world order in terms of trade and investment and the future political relations of both partners. Because of its potential implications for citizens' rights, consumer protection and levels of employment protection, it is also generating great controversy and popular movements that oppose the deal's completion.

With the publication of this monograph, which is the product of an international seminar held on May 27th 2015, CIDOB aims to play its part in the debate. The experts' contributions contained here explain the pros and cons of the agreement and should aid citizens, consumers, the interested public, businesspeople, unions and political decision-makers to take positions based on deeper knowledge of the agreement and the negotiations underway.

The authors give in-depth examination to all the controversial aspects of the agreement and those causing most concern in public opinion. From the lack of transparency and the European Council's mandating of negotiating responsibilities to the European Commission, to the disputed system of Investor-State Dispute Settlement, via the social, labour and environmental issues.

The basis of the EU has always been a system of economic integration built on market economics and it has established numerous free trade agreements with countries in the Mediterranean, Latin America and Asia, and with developing and industrial economies without provoking criticism or movements opposing the agreements and their negotiating processes. This time it is different, perhaps because the agreement is

with the United States and is clearly a negotiation between peers and it is feared that the EU will be a “norm taker” in relation to the US, or because the economic crisis has reduced levels of well-being and it is feared that protection from third parties will be reduced, or perhaps it is that those who oppose free trade and the market economy have found a cause and an occasion with which to gain popularity. What is certain is that the negotiations have not followed the same course as others previously conducted, such as the negotiation concluded with Canada a year ago on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), a model of agreement and negotiation that is very similar to the TTIP’s.

The importance of the agreement and its conclusion has forced a response from the European Commission that is both understandable and, to some degree, unprecedented. The new strategy for a more responsible trade and investment policy set out in the Communication given by the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament in October 2015 is a sign of the need for a new way of concluding trade negotiations (particularly those on the TTIP) by raising goodwill rather than producing disagreement. In its new strategy, the commission proposes greater transparency and the publication of the mandate from the council to the commission along with their negotiating directives, as well as requirements for promoting and respecting labour rights around the world. It also suggests transforming “the old investor-state dispute settlement into a public Investment Court System composed of a Tribunal of first instance and an Appeal Tribunal operating like traditional court. [And] in parallel, engage with partners to build consensus for a fully-fledged, permanent International Investment Court”.

The TTIP negotiations are changing shape and depth in order to face up to the challenges and ensure conclusion and ratification. Faced with these difficulties, support must be provided in order to reach a good agreement that is widely accepted. The future of the EU depends upon it, as does the preservation of the values set out in its treaty.

As director of CIDOB, I would like to thank all the participants in the seminar, the authors of this monograph, Dr Sangeeta Khorana, for coordinating both, the U.S. Consulate General in Barcelona for supporting the seminar and the European Commission’s Europe for Citizens programme for its contribution to this, among other activities, that bring greater knowledge of the European Union to the citizens.