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## Manufacturing Discontent: The Rise to Power of Anti-TTIP Groups

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**Brussels, Belgium, 29th November 2016** - Old beliefs, new symbols, new faces. In 2013, a small group of German green and left-wing activists, professional campaign NGOs and well-established protectionist organisations set up deceptive communication campaigns against TTIP, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the European Union and the United States. Germany's anti-TTIP NGOs explicitly aimed to take German-centred protests to other European countries. Their reasoning is contradictory and logically inconsistent. Their messages are targeted to serve common sense protectionist demands of generally ill-informed citizens and politicians. Thereby, anti-TTIP communication is based on metaphoric messages and far-fetched myths to effectively evoke citizens' emotions. Together, these groups dominated over 90 percent of online media reporting on TTIP in Germany.

Anti-TTIP protest groups in Germany are not only inventive; they are also resourceful. Based on generous public funding and opaque private donations, green and left-wing political parties, political foundations, clerical and environmental groups, and well-established anti-globalisation organisations maintain influential campaign networks. Protest groups' activities are coordinated by a number of former and current green and left-wing politicians and political parties that search for anti-establishment political profiles. As Wallon blockage mentality regarding CETA, the trade and investment agreement between the European Union and Canada, demonstrates, Germany's anti-TTIP groups' attempts to undermine EU trade policy bear the risk of coming to fruition in other European countries. And they carry the real possibility of depriving EU Member States from new economic opportunities and economic convergence.

For Germany, we analyse a unique and comprehensive dataset of 1,508 publicly held "TTIP information" events to study the "local" (offline) politics of TTIP. We find that hostile anti-TTIP sentiment in Germany has not at all developed bottom-up. Leading protest campaign organisations literally manufactured discontent about TTIP. Widespread aversion to TTIP in Germany is the result of an orchestrated, top-down campaign initiative launched by a small number of long-established, well-connected and, thus, highly influential politicians of Germany's Green and left-wing political parties and associated NGO campaign managers masquerading and operating under the guise of pro-democracy, pro-environment and pro-Christian civil society.

Nimble institutional structures, common ideological mind-sets and a strong affinity to modern online media allowed Germany's anti-TTIP NGOs to turbo-charge online and on-the-ground protest

activities in other European countries. At EU level, the European Commission itself provided enormous financial funding to a great number of declared anti-TTIP campaign NGOs – in full knowledge about these organisations' ideologically driven, all too often deceptive, and therefore destructive, ways of political campaigning.

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