



EUI-CLEER joint conference

European University Institute, Florence, 21-22 June 2012

TRADE LIBERALISATION AND STANDARDISATION – NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE ‘LOW POLITICS’ OF EU FOREIGN POLICY

The EU's 'low politics' of trade and investment negotiations and its export of standards have played an important role in shaping the role of the Union on the international stage. As the world's largest trading bloc, the European Union has been eager to maintain its position on international markets and increase its competitiveness. Whereas the EU - a member of the World Trade Organization and an actor that (allegedly) speaks with one voice in all of its trade and investment relations - professes multilateralism, it has consistently pursued a policy of entering into preferential trade agreements at bilateral and interregional levels. In fact, globalization's profound impact on EU trade relations has resulted in a patchwork of preferential trade arrangements and a continued drive towards the harmonisation of laws, so as to secure market access and create regulatory convergence and interoperability. To boost global competitiveness of European industries, regulatory convergence as a policy objective has been revived in EU-led trade talks by aiming for increased standardisation and/or mutual recognition.

Against this background, the one-and-a-half day conference co-organized by the European University Institute (EUI) and the Centre for the Law of EU External Relations (CLEER), will bring together leading academics and practitioners to explore whether and to what extent trade liberalisation and harmonisation can be regarded as successful 'low-politics' areas in EU foreign policy and what the challenges are that the EU is and will be facing in these areas. The discussion will focus on (i) the legal and policy objectives that the EU applies in its preferential trade arrangements, with particular attention to interregional approaches, the linking of trade to development and conciliation with multilateral efforts in market liberalisation; (ii) the role of and applied practices in the Union's efforts to promote standardisation within the WTO and with regard some particularly important trade partners, such as the US and China; and (iii) challenges and EU strategies for reconciliatory efforts in investment policy within the context of trade.

Trade liberalisation and standardisation – new direction in the 'low politics' of EU foreign policy

Programme

21 June Thursday

13.30 – 14.00 Registration

14.00 – 14.15 Opening and welcome address by Prof. Marise Cremona (EUI)

14.15 – 14.45 Keynote address by Robert Sturdy MEP (INTA Committee, European Parliament)

14.45 – 15.00 Discussion / Q & A

15.00 – 15.45 **Session 1: Liberalisation through preferential trade agreements, arrangements**

Chair: Prof Steven Blockmans (T.M.C. Asser Instituut/CLEER, University of Leuven)

- Reconciling multilateralism and the EU's extensive liberalisation through bilateral trade agreements (with a focus on Deep and Comprehensive FTAs) (Prof Frank Hoffmeister, Deputy Head of Cabinet De Gucht, DG Trade)
- The Implementation Challenge: Implementing 'Deep Integration' FTAs in EU Partner Countries (David Kleimann, EUI)

15.45 – 16.15 Discussion / Q & A

16.15 – 16.45 Coffee / Tea

16.45 – 17.30 **Session 1 (continued)**

- Linking Trade, Standardisation and Development: Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards in the Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and ACP States (Dr Gracia Marin Duran, University of Edinburgh)
- WTO and EU regulatory policy (Prof Tamara Perisin, University of Zagreb)

17.30 – 18.00 Discussion / Q & A

18.00 – 19.00 Drinks

19.30 – 22.00 Dinner for speakers and chairs

22 June Friday

9.30 - 10.45 **Session 2: Standardisation: removing technical barriers to trade for 'better regulation' and increasing competitiveness**

Chair: Prof. Frank Hoffmeister, Deputy Head of Cabinet De Gucht, DG Trade

- The EU's regulatory policy: internal and external linkages (Prof Marise Cremona, EUI)
- Transatlantic regulatory cooperation (Dr Tamara Takács, T.M.C. Asser Instituut/CLEER)
- Competition, Reciprocity and Harmonization - EU-China Regulatory Cooperation on Standards in the Light of the Europe 2020 Strategy and Europe's Trade Policy (Dr Andrea Wechsler, EUI)

10.45 – 11.15 Discussion / Q & A

11.15 - 11.45 Coffee/ Tea

11.45 – 12.30 **Session 3: EU strategies for its investment policy within trade context**

Chair: Prof Marise Cremona (EUI)

- The evolution of EU investment policy and its relation to trade policy (Dr Stephen Woolcock, LSE and ECIPE)
- EU investment agreements and development (Sergey Ripinsky, UNCTAD)
- Investor-state dispute settlement in investment agreements – challenges for the EU (Dr Angelos Dimopoulos, Tilburg University)

12.30 -13.00 Discussion/ Q & A

13.00 - 13.15 Summary and editorial remarks: Dr Tamara Takács & David Kleimann

13.15 – 14.00 Closing lunch