

WTO Reform: US and European Perspectives and Proposals

Chatham House, London
5-6 November 2019

The transatlantic partners have a large stake in the future of the WTO and global trade architecture. Understanding US and European perspectives on WTO reform – including some shared concerns and joint efforts, but also deeply entrenched differences – are important stepping stones and potential stumbling blocks on the way to addressing the shortcomings of the WTO and creating rules fit for 21st century trade.

Tuesday, 5 November 2019

18:00 Registration and networking

18:30 – 21:00 **Conference dinner** (Venue to be confirmed)

Speaker **Victor Do Prado**, Director of the Council and Trade Negotiations Committee, WTO

Chair **Dr Leslie Vinjamuri**, Head, US and the Americas Programme, and Dean, Academy for Leadership in International Affairs, Chatham House

Wednesday, 6 November 2019

09:00 – 09:30 Registration and welcome refreshments

09:30 – 09:45 **Opening remarks and introductions**

09:45 – 11:00 **Session 1 – The WTO Appellate Body crisis – What next for WTO dispute settlement?**

The dispute settlement function of the WTO is under threat. The looming crisis around the functioning of the WTO Appellate Body requires action, but large differences between the US and EU as well as other global trade champions remain.

What explains the blockage of appointments by the US? What is the position of the EU and key member states? What reform efforts have been taken by the EU, Canada, Japan and others to unblock the appointments and address the US's substantive as well as procedural concerns? The chances of reforming the Appellate Body before it ceases to function in mid-December 2019 are low, but might the next WTO Ministerial Conference scheduled for June 2020 provide impetus to reform? And, if not, how will breaches of global trade rules be addressed and disputes be settled?

- Speakers* **Dr Thomas J. Duesterberg**, Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute
Dr Elvire Fabry, Senior Research Fellow, Delors Institute
- Chair* **Dr Linda Yueh**, Fellow in Economics, St Edmund Hall, University of Oxford; Adjunct Professor of Economics, London Business School

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 12:45 **Session 2 – Broader WTO reform: Reshaping global trade governance for 21st century issues**

While reforming the dispute settlement system is currently at the focus, deeper reform is also needed to address the WTO's functions as a forum for trade negotiations and for administering multilateral trade rules.

Should any of the key issues – including the WTO's current inability to address digital trade, state-owned enterprises, state subsidies, and the ability of WTO members to self-identify as 'developing countries' that receive special and differential treatment – be prioritized? What reform efforts have been taken unilaterally, bilaterally, and plurilaterally? Are there any areas where WTO reform is proving more successful? Can regional and plurilateral efforts provide an alternative to the multilateralism of the WTO? What are the risks and opportunities?

- Speakers* **Dr Ignacio Bercero**, Director, DG Trade, European Commission; European Union Visiting Fellow, St Antony's College, University of Oxford
- Tetsuya Watanabe**, Director-General, Multilateral Trade System Department, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan

Chair **Marianne Schneider-Petsinger**, Research Fellow, US and Americas Programme, Chatham House

12:45 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 14:45 **Session 3 – WTO reform: Between transatlantic cooperation and competition**

Existing US-EU trade tensions – such as the ongoing Boeing-Airbus dispute at the WTO or the US imposition of tariffs on steel and aluminium, including on imports from the EU, in the name of national security and proceedings at the WTO – could potentially impede transatlantic efforts for reform. The prospects of the UK leaving the EU will also have implications for WTO reform efforts.

Is US scepticism about the WTO and rules-based, multilateral trading system the new normal? How can the EU and other champions of global trade best engage with the current and future US administration on WTO reform? What role can the EU's member states – in particular Germany – play? What role will the UK play in modernizing the WTO during and after the potential transition period following EU withdrawal?

Speakers **Dr Claudia Schmucker**, Head of Programme, Globalization and World Economy, DGAP

Graham Ziegner, Head of Multilateral Trade and G7/G20 Team, Department for International Trade

Chair **Dr Meredith Crowley**, Fellow, St John's College, Faculty of Economics, University of Cambridge; Research Fellow, CEPR (invited)

14:45 – 15:15 Coffee break

15:15 – 16:30 **Session 4 – China, the WTO, and reshaping global trade governance**

The issues at stake for reforming the WTO are compounded by broader geo-strategic developments (such as how best to address China's trade and technology practices and policies) and addressing sustainability objectives.

Can China undertake reforms that would make its system more compatible with the WTO? Would it be willing to do so? Do current efforts to reform the WTO address the fundamental issue of how to create and enforce trade rules that are applicable to two opposing economic systems – that of China's state capitalism and the west's market economies? How can WTO members best build greater political support domestically and engagement in the WTO? What role can the WTO play in identifying ways in which trade policy can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals? To what extent does WTO reform matter for the future of multilateralism, the rules-based international order and more inclusive global governance in general?

Speakers **Braz da Costa Baracuhny Neto**, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the WTO

Dr Carolyn Deere Birkbeck, Visiting Fellow, Graduate Institute's Global Governance Centre in Geneva; Senior Research Associate, Global Economic Governance Programme, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford

Chair **Bryce Baschuk**, Journalist, Bloomberg

16:30 – 16:45 **Concluding remarks**

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