



ICC SWEDEN AND TRADEEXPERETTES:

ROUNDTABLE ON THE FUTURE OF THE WTO

Wednesday 10 May, 16.00–17.30

Näringslivets hus, Storgatan 19, Stockholm

CONCEPT NOTE

The global trade environment is becoming increasingly complex for businesses to navigate. Geopolitical tensions are rising and national security concerns increasing, digital trade and emerging technologies reshape trade, and the need to address the overarching challenge of climate change and enabling sustainable development on a global scale becomes ever more urgent. In light of this, the WTO and the multilateral trade system is as important as ever in order to ensure stability as well as predictability, and in providing global trade rules fit for the 21st century and the opportunities and challenges facing businesses. There is agreement that the WTO needs to reform to be able to fulfill these tasks. But what does the future of the WTO look like and what do businesses need?

The roundtable will explore the future role of the WTO by breaking down this question into three segments: **Trade and Sustainability**, **Digital Trade**, and **Trade Winds**. The discussion will be moderated by **Susanna Zeko**, ICC Sweden, who will also give short welcome remarks together with **Hanna Norberg**, TradeExperettes.

Trade and Sustainability

International trade has an intrinsic role to play in sustainable development and the green transition, fostering innovation and allowing the global dissemination of new green technologies. How can the WTO support this? Is there prospect for renewed environmental goods negotiations, how can the WTO support circular transition, and how does the IRA and a relaxation of EU state aid rules affect the legitimacy WTO? A five minute introduction to the segment will be provided by **Anabel González**, Deputy Director-General, WTO.

Discussion Points:

>>> What role should the WTO play when it comes to sustainability in general and addressing climate change in specific?

>>> What are your main challenges when exporting and/or importing green technology, goods, and services, and how can the WTO help facilitate this trade?

>>> How does IRA, the relaxation of EU state aid rules, and violations of WTO non-discrimination rules affect your company and the green transition in a global perspective?

Digital Trade

Digital trade makes up an increasingly important part of the world economy, reshaping trade relations and accelerating innovation and boosting productivity. Ongoing negotiations at the WTO for an e-commerce agreement could further enable digital trade, while opposition to the WTO e-moratory risk back-tracking on earlier liberalisations. At the same time, regional and bilateral developments in Asia are increasingly shaping the digital trade rules of the future. What will this mean for other regions of the world, and how can we ensure that these developments are expanded on multilaterally? A five minute introduction to the segment will be provided by Hanna Norberg, Founder, TradeExperettes.

Discussion Points:

>>> What are the main obstacles to digital trade that your company face today and what are the most important issues for a WTO E-Commerce Agreement to address?

>>> How would customs duties on electronic transmissions affect your company and sector?

>>> What can the EU and the US learn from other regions, and how do we scale up those experiences to a multilateral level?

Trade Winds and the WTO

The trade winds are stormier than they have been for many years, while the multilateral trade system, which has ensured stability and predictability during the past decades, is coming under increasing pressure. What are the main geopolitical trends affecting businesses and how do businesses react to them? What must the WTO response be and how can it provide businesses with much needed stability? Are protectionist trends, moves towards deglobalization, and increasing emphasis on autonomy sentiments that are unique to the EU and the US, or shared by the rest of the world as well? A five minute introduction to the segment will be provided by Cecilia Malmström, Nonresident Senior Fellow, Peterson Institute for International Economics, and former European Commissioner for Trade.

Discussion Points:

>>> What are the main geopolitical challenges and risks facing your company or sector internationally when doing business?

>>> How does your company respond to these challenges and risks?

>>> What further steps can the WTO take to help alleviate risks and increase the ease of doing business globally?

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS:

ICC

ICC is the world's largest business organisation. Our goal is to, through international trade, create relationships that promote peace and prosperity. Together with our members we therefore strive to promote global free trade and to facilitate sustainable international business. What differentiates us from other business organisations is our unique network. It consists of businesses of all sizes, in all sectors, from all over the world and reaches international arenas such as the UN, EU and WTO. Together, we create the conditions for tomorrow's international trade. We are the global voice of business.

TRADEXPERETTES

TradeExperettes is membership-based organisation that welcomes individuals from all over the world, interested in supporting women's voices in international trade research and policy-making. We welcome individuals of all gender identities/expressions. We are a network of women trade experts from around the world and allies in women's empowerment. TradeExperettes members include individuals in the public and private sectors, academia, think tanks, and international organisations from around the world. Download TradeExperette's publication [10 Quick Wins on Digital Trade](#) »