

The European Union and the World Trade Organization – Principles, Results and Comparison of Trade Liberalization Regimes

Abstract

The subject of this thesis is an analysis and subsequent comparison of the origin, principles, development, results and basic legal instruments of trade liberalization within the European Union and the World Trade Organization. While coexisting in the field of international economic co-operation for more than 60 years, these bodies have emerged from the same aspirations to deepen mutual economic co-operation through trade liberalization and suppression of the protectionist practices. Our primary objective is to examine and point out the aspects that both organizations share, as well as the degree and form of their differences. However, the presented work focuses on the similarities and differences between the EU and the WTO from a specific point of view. It is based on traditional expectation of most authors, believing that the EU is pursuing more ambitious goals than the WTO. Under this assumption, trade liberalization obligations between EU Member States would necessarily have to be stricter and more progressive than the WTO's respective commitments. The subsequent objective of the thesis is to examine the validity of this expectation. Regarding the analysis of the rules, the work is not normative. The goal of the study is not to find out whether or not a positive or negative response to research questions is desirable. This work does not aim to enter into a political debate. It rather focuses exclusively on analyzing similarities and differences between the two organizations, as well as on analyzing whether trade liberalization between EU Member States is stricter and more progressive than the corresponding WTO's commitments. In addition, the work also examines the political-economic principles of international trade and political-economic reasons for the association of states. Thus, another objective of this thesis is to explain the *raison d'être* of international trade, the reasons and means of trade protectionism, as well as the forms and methods of trade liberalization.

Keywords: European Union, World Trade Organization, trade liberalization.