



KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT
LEUVEN



Leuven Centre
for Global
Governance Studies



Fondation Francqui Stichting
Fondation d'Unité Publique - Stichting van Openbaar Nut



UCL
Université
catholique
de Louvain

INAUGURAL LECTURE INTERNATIONAL FRANCQUI PROFESSOR PETROS C. MAVROIDIS

A Preference for Multilateralism? A Review of the WTO's Inability to Discipline Preferential Trade Agreements

6 October 2009 – 18:00h
Auditorium Zeger Van Hee, Tiensestraat 41, 3000 Leuven

To register please contact Mr. David Belis (david.belis@ggs.kuleuven.be)

A PREFERENCE FOR MULTILATERALISM?

Preferential trade agreements (PTAs) have been a *prominent feature* in the multilateral trading system since its inception. Following the Uruguay Rounds, PTAs have continued to multiply at a rapid pace. WTO law aims, in principle at least, to *discipline* them. Some legislative amendments notwithstanding, it has failed miserably to do so. Moreover, the recent transparency exercise associated with the multilateral control of PTAs has further diluted these disciplining efforts. As a result, the multilateral system has been tolerating dozens of similar schemes of dubious legality. The emerging picture should not come as a surprise: the legal regime only superficially, if at all, cares about the welfare implications of PTAs; 'corrective' legislative amendments have been very scarce and address only few of the aspects of PTAs that 'outsiders' care most about; modern PTAs concern issues which do not come under the purview of the current WTO mandate and dispute activity in this context has been scarce for various reasons ranging from strategic thinking by individual WTO Members to the institutional design of WTO adjudication. These and many other reasons help explain the current situation. Furthermore, it is rather unlikely to expect any *drastic change* in the near future: the incentive of the incumbents is to preserve the current margin of preference and for some of them at least, the counterfactual (a world with tight multilateral control or even with no PTAs at all) might be an unacceptable option.

THE INTERNATIONAL FRANCQUI CHAIR AT K.U.LEUVEN AND UCL

Upon the request of the K.U.Leuven and the Université catholique de Louvain (UCL), the Francqui Foundation granted an International Francqui Chair to Professor Petros C. Mavroidis in 2008. The Chair is hosted by the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies at K.U.Leuven.



Professor Petros C. Mavroidis was born in Thessaloniki, in the north of Greece. He is Edwin B. Parker Professor of Foreign and Comparative Law at the Columbia Law School, Columbia University, and teaches at the Faculty of Law of the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland. Professor Mavroidis, who earned his law degree at the University of Thessaloniki and has an LL.M. from Berkeley, originally focused his work on antitrust and public international law. He worked in the Legal Division of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the 1990s, and has written extensively on the organization and its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Professor Mavroidis is one of the world's leading experts on the WTO and its dispute settlement mechanism. Since 1996, he serves as the Legal Advisor to the WTO in the Technical Cooperation Division, where he assists developing countries in WTO dispute settlement proceedings. He is also the Chief Co-Reporter of the American Law Institute project "Principles of International Trade: The WTO," and a member of the board of the Council of the World Trade Law Association. His most recent work includes "*The Genesis of the GATT*", (2008, with Prof. Dr. Douglas Irwin and Prof. Dr. Alan Sykes) and "*Trade in Goods: An Analysis of International Trade Agreements*" (2007).



KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT
LEUVEN



Leuven Centre
for Global
Governance Studies



Fondation Francqui Stichting
Fondation d'Unité Publique - Stichting van Openbaar Nut



UCL
Université
catholique
de Louvain

PROGRAMME

17:30 Registration

18:00 Introduction

Prof. Dr. Jan Wouters, Director of the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies at K.U.Leuven

18:05 Welcome Address

Prof. Dr. Paul Van Orshoven, Dean of the Faculty of Law at K.U.Leuven

18:10 Official Inauguration

Inauguration of the International Francqui Chair by Prof. Dr. Pierre Van Moerbeke, Chairman of the Francqui Foundation

18:30 Keynote Lecture – A Preference for Multilateralism? A Review of the WTO's Inability to Discipline Preferential Trade Agreements

Chair: Prof. Dr. Hylke Vandenbussche, Professor of International Economics at the Université catholique de Louvain

Keynote speaker: Prof. Dr. Petros C. Mavroidis, International Francqui Professor

19:10 Q&A

19:30 Reception
