

Scenario building on “WTO Reform and the Role of the European Union”



Geneva, 12 May 2010

Venue: La Perle du Lac, Grand Salon, www.laperledulac.ch

“The Geneva Scenarios on Global Economic Governance 2020” are taken as the starting point for this scenario project. Depending on the scenario, the European Union (EU) plays each time a different role there: a strong one in “March of the Elephants”, where it ranks among the seven big regional blocks with nearly 40 members; a weak one in “Law of the Jungle”, where some member states came back to their previous currency and the EU is even threatened of falling apart. In the other two scenarios the EU’s role is not pre-eminent: in “Decaying National Park” it most reflects the present state, and in “Harmonious Nature Reserve” the “true” multilateral system which is created within the chapter most meets the interests of the “soft power” with strong development policy as well as humanitarian dimensions. Why not add also the pictures of Parag Kanna, with the EU as one of three world powers (beside the US and China), and of Rifkin, where the EU figures as a social stability and welfare model for the world?

Based on these scenarios and pictures, the role of the EU with special regard to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to the ongoing debate about its future and necessary reforms shall be elaborated, by applying the scenario method. The scenarios are supposed to convey possible visions of the future to political, economical and social decision-makers and stakeholders in both Europe and the Global South, which could help them to recognize the consequences of certain decisions for the future and to act accordingly. Especially in view of the global crisis and the unstable situation in many parts of the world, a social and development-friendly conception of the future world economic system is of great importance. The EU as a “social and civil power” is particularly called on to participate in this conception and bring issues like social, ecological and development policy dimensions, democracy and transparency to the discussion about the WTO reform, as it is required by the European Parliament’s report of 3 April 2008. The scenarios should facilitate the recognition of possible “paths”, but also obstacles, on the way there.

Such an image of the EU as a positively constructive power is impeded by the reproach that particularly the EU itself (beside the US) undermines, with its growing number of bilateral and regional trade agreements, the multilateral trading system and with it the WTO, which is the only multilateral organization with binding regulations and effective sanction mechanisms. In this context, the ominous role of the EU agricultural subsidies for development purposes in many countries in the Global South shall also be discussed, which bear part of the blame for the quasi-failure of the Doha Development Round.

The scenarios will be written by an FES team and electronically sent to all participants for approval. It is planned to present them in a public event in Brussels in the second half of the year.

Program

“WTO Reform and the Role of the European Union”

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Venue: La Perle du Lac, Grand Salon, 126 rue de Lausanne, Geneva

09:00	Opening and introduction into scenario building Winfried Veit
09:15	Experiences from the GEG scenario building Vera Thorstensen
09:30	Outlining possible WTO reforms Vicente Yu
10:00	Outlining possible roles of the EU N.N., EU-Delegation, Geneva
10:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:00	Identifying “driving forces” and “critical uncertainties”
11:45	“Future headlines and stories”
12:30	<i>Lunch break</i>
14:00	Scenario building
16:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
16:30	Scenario building (cont.)
18:00	<i>End of workshop</i>
