

Trade Negotiations in a post-Lisbon era: New Actors, New Challenges

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Abstract

The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty has brought the European Parliament and the European External Action Service into the picture as new actors in trade negotiations. Respectively, the European Parliament plays the role of the new veto player while the European External Action Service plays the role of the new political negotiator. Thus, the question arises as to whether the current framework of trade negotiations is better than during the pre-Lisbon era. The case studies of the Association Agreement with Central America and the Association Agreement with Ukraine have been selected in order to illustrate effectiveness. Veto players theory has been used for the analysis of the European Parliament, complemented by Principal Agent theory for the analysis of the European External Action Service.

The research results were twofold. First, the involvement of the European Parliament and the European External Action Service brought significant procedural changes in trade negotiations. Second, the participation of the European Parliament as veto player has decreased the effectiveness of trade negotiation by reducing the policy outcomes available, whereas the participation of the European External Action Service has yielded mixed results. Thus, the present state of affairs of the European Union's trade negotiations seems to suggest that it is worse off compared to the pre-Lisbon period.