

Online Event
Thursday, November 19th, 6-8pm (CEST)

EU trade in the time of COVID-19: Facing the challenges, seizing the opportunities

COVID-19 is a humanitarian crisis on a global scale. With the pandemic continuing to threaten the health and well-being, but also jobs and businesses of billions, trade systems are being affected by disruptions in the global supply chains and a growing lack of confidence in global markets and international institutions.

The outbreak of the pandemic occurred in a context of an already sluggish global trade that had not been fully recovered from 2008–2009 financial crisis. Against this backdrop, the volume of global trade in goods fell – according to the OECD – by 17.7% in May 2020 compared with the same month in 2019. Global foreign direct investment could be cut up to 40% during 2020-2021, which will have major implications for global value chains, while global GDP in 2020 is expected to register its sharpest contraction since WW2.

The economic and social consequences of COVID-19 are likely to reverse much of the progress already made towards the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Increased inequalities, a rise in food insecurity and fragile natural eco-systems call for stronger action in the face of global threats. At the same time, it is clear by now that pandemics and climate change are not separate events that sometimes happen to collide. Extreme climate conditions as a result of climate change are contributing to the increase and diversity of emerging regional and global pandemics.

At European Union level, the European Green Deal is in the heart of the COVID-19 recovery, providing a path to a greener, more resilient and more inclusive future. COVID-19 recovery is also an opportunity to redesign our trade policy, providing a fairer and more sustainable model of cooperation. Incorporating sustainable development and climate resilience and preparedness into international trade policy, strengthening multilateralism and modernizing global institutions, promoting robust supply chains, fair competition and food security, while protecting human rights and labour rights are key elements in the progressive agenda for a renewed EU international trade policy.

Program

6pm	Opening Remarks:
	Arne Schildberg , Director FES Athens
	Introduction to the Topic:
6.05pm	Manolis Christodoulakis , KINAL Secretary General
6.15pm	Keynote Speech:
	Bernd Lange , MEP, International Trade Committee Chair
6.30pm	Panel Discussion:
	- <i>The Impact of the Pandemic on the EU Trade Relations with USA and China</i>
	- <i>International Trade in Covid Times - Challenges and Chances for Greece</i>
	- <i>Sustainable Development as the Key to Progressive Trade Relations</i>
	Barbara Melis , European Parliament, S&D Advisor to the International Trade Committee
	George Kavvathas , Head of The Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants (GSEVEE)
	Phoebe Koundouri , AUEB Professor, UN SDSN Greece Co-chair
	Chair:
	Elena Papadimitriou , Journalist at Skai TV
8pm	End of Event
	<i>The audience will be able to pose questions and comments in the chat</i>
	<i>Language of the Event will be Greek and English</i>