

## FOREWORD

The volume consists of the studies prepared in the framework of the project ‘Developing Trade and Trade Policy with the European Union. Experience of V4 countries and Implications/ Lessons for Eastern Partnership Countries’. The project was financed by the International Visegrad Fund and it was executed under the leadership of the Institute for World Economics of the Research Center for Economic and Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with a contribution from various institutes and think-tanks from Visegrad- and Eastern Partner countries.

The study of Tamás Szigetvári gives a general overview on the development of EU trade policy with the neighbors, analyse the different forms of trade relations (European Economic Area, customs union, Euro-med agreements, deep and comprehensive free trade agreements) and an evaluation on current trends and some future prospects.

The following studies of the volume deal with the experiences of the V4 countries from the early 1990’s when three countries from Central and Eastern Europe (Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia) officially applied for an association agreement. On 16 December 1991 the bilateral association agreements were concluded between the European Communities and the three countries. The joint study by Elzbieta Kawecka-Wyrzykowska and Sándor Meisel draws up the framework in which the so called Europe Agreements were established, and gives an overview on the steps made in the framework of the agreements. Then two country studies (on Poland and Hungary) give a detailed analysis on the initial presumptions and motivations of the given Visegrad countries but also deal with the negotiation strategies and tactics, the main hori-

zontal and sectoral problems, the compromises and outcome of the agreements. The studies analyse the legal harmonisation in the field of trade related issues (main fields, sequencing, internal problems, slippages and backslidings) and the institutional questions (organisation and institutional set-up of the negotiation, implementation and harmonisation phases). The two studies try to draw up some relevant conclusions for the Eastern partner countries.

The country studies from the Eastern Partners' side deal with four countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan). The structure of the studies is similar. Firstly, they give a brief description on the actual state of country specific EaP process by showing the general features, statistics and trends of bilateral economic relations. They also analyse the actual state of the DCFTA process, with a special regard on the main problems and expectations concerning the DCFTA from the EaPs point of view. They elaborate on the major impacts in a sector specific approach as well by focusing on the interests of the EaP countries and on the major barriers to their enforcement. Finally, they give suggestions related to DCFTA between the EU and the individual EaP country as well as recommendations on how the EU could do a better job within Eastern Partnership initiative in general and DCFTA talks in particular.

At the same time, each study deals with the topic on its own way. The study on the Ukraine by Lidia Shynkaruk, Iryna Baranovska and Olena Herasimova concentrates more on the technical analysis of the relations, and considers the expected benefits and possible hazards for the core sectors of the Ukrainian economy. The country study on Moldova by Adrian Lupusor draws up a broader framework of the EU-Moldova relations, but similarly deals with the sectorial issues, and with the special problems of Transnistrian territory. The study on Georgia written by Merab Kakulia puts its focus on analyzing the difficulties of Georgia concerning the DCFTA agreement. The study on Azerbaijan by Vugar Bayramov has a different approach since Azerbaijan is not member of the WTO yet so the country has not started negotiations on DCFTA. The last study in our volume is by Zsuzsa Ludvig, who takes the im-

pacts of the Russian factor into consideration. As the events in late 2013 clearly proved, the Russian interests in the region basically influence the framework in which the EaP countries and the European Union develop their bilateral relations.

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