

Guest's Editor's Introduction: Women in Trade

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This special issue of the *Global Trade & Customs Journal* is dedicated to women in the field of international trade: it features contributions from women only. It is not theme-specific. On the contrary, it is meant to showcase women's expertise on an array of trade topics as wide as possible (technical barriers to trade, trade defence, customs, trade facilitation, etc.). It intends to show that whatever the topic of interest, you will find talented women with valuable insights, ideas and perspectives to contribute.

Although women are definitely present in the trade policy and trade law fields, their visibility and involvement in the public debate is still way too limited, and certainly not commensurate with their professional contributions and achievements.

Initiatives to promote the professional development of female trade experts and their participation in policy debates – by Trade Experettes,¹ Women Inside Trade,² Women in Trade, just to name a few – have multiplied and thrived over the last few years. Thanks to them and to some powerful and influential women like Cecilia Malmström, who relayed and amplified their message, the 'women in trade' issue has gained momentum lately.

We need to keep the momentum going. Because achieving equality is not only a matter of principle, especially in these troubled times for world trade. New ideas and perspectives are more than ever needed to tackle the challenges posed to the multilateral trading system. We cannot afford to waste talent and ideas.

The *Global Trade & Customs Journal* would like to bring its humble and unique contribution. It is committed to unveiling untapped talents and encouraging the expression of diverse and new ideas. Therefore, we urge women not to hold back and to fully contribute to building the knowledge in the field and to participating in policy debates. Because it is much needed.

There are several reasons for women's underrepresentation and visibility in trade debates. I will address only one here: self-limitation. A few years ago, when I thought of writing an article and submit it for publication in the *Global Trade & Customs Journal*, I was hesitant. I thought, 'well, that may not be so original, probably someone else already had and shared this analysis and ideas'. I pushed myself, and my publications led to invitations to speak at conferences, interviews, a citation in the European Parliament Briefing.

When I announced that there would be a special issue of the *Global Trade & Customs Journal* dedicated to women in trade, many female trade experts saw this as a unique opportunity to have their work and ideas published, while they have an equal opportunity to be featured in regular editions (we did not place the bar lower for the present issue). Their submissions are most welcome at all times.

Finally, I would like to warmly thank:

- Contributors to this special issue 15–1;
- All the women who were willing to contribute to this special edition but could not be featured in it. It is worth mentioning that some contributions that we received have been or will be published in previous and future editions of the *Global Trade & Customs Journal*³;
- Last but not least, Jeffrey L. Snyder, General Editor of the *Global Trade & Customs Journal* for welcoming the initiative with enthusiasm, and for his continuous support.

We hope that this special edition will inspire more talented female trade experts to contribute to the *Global Trade & Customs Journal*; and that ultimately, there will be no more need for gender-specific editions.

Notes

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¹ <https://www.tradeexperettes.org/>.

² <https://womeninsidetradetrad.com/>.

³ See Amrita Bahri, 'Measuring the Gender-Responsiveness of Free Trade Agreements: Using a Self-Evaluation Maturity Framework', 14(11–12) *Global Trade & Customs J.*