



# About ECIPE

## Mission

The European Centre for International Political Economy (ECIPE) is Europe's Brussels-based trade and world economy think tank. It is independent and works on a non-profit basis. It was founded in 2006 by Fredrik Erixon and Razeen Sally.

ECIPE is rooted in the classical tradition of free trade and an open world economic order. Progressive reduction of barriers to the movement of goods, services, capital and people across borders creates prosperity, and improves the conditions for peace, security and individual freedom. But discussion and advocacy of abstract ideas is far from enough. ECIPE's intention is to subject international economic policy, particularly in Europe, to rigorous scrutiny of costs and benefits, and to present conclusions in a concise, readily accessible form to the European public. We aim to foster a "culture of evaluation" – largely lacking in Europe – so that better public awareness and understanding of complex issues in concrete situations can lead to intelligent discussion and improved policies. That will be ECIPE's contribution to a thriving Europe in an open world.

## Background

The idea of a trade policy think tank in Europe is not new. In earlier decades, the London-based Trade Policy Research Centre provided discerning analysis that shed transparent light on opaque trade and regulatory barriers. Today there are several research centres and think tanks around Europe addressing international economic issues, but few of them have a strong focus on trade policy. None comes close to the range and quality of international economic policy analysis provided, for example, by the Institute for International Economics and the Brookings Institution in the USA. There is also a dearth of international economic policy analysis that has a genuine "political economy" flavour. ECIPE is contributing to filling this gap with research and analysis that brings together politics, economics and law, and applies them to real world policy-making.

Informed policy research of trade and other international economic issues is as important as ever. After 1945, international commerce has become much freer. Multilateral trade liberalisation through the GATT has contributed to global growth and prosperity. Regional liberalisation and integration have performed the same role for Europe. At least as important, developing countries and ex-command economies have unilaterally lowered barriers to trade and foreign investment; this is particularly true of China and other fast-growing economies in East Asia, and now the case with India as well.

Nevertheless, many barriers to international commerce remain in place. In recent years many regions have seen a liberalisation slowdown, with the threat of retreat to further protectionism. Arguments against liberalisation have become more popular and influential. The World Trade Organisation's Doha round has conspicuously failed to deliver further multilateral liberalisation. Not least, within the EU, protectionist pressures have held back further liberalisation of the Single Market as well as more opening to the rest of the world.

Such a climate demands new efforts to soberly review current policies and present independent facts-based analyses of concrete cases.

## **Organisation, governance and funding**

ECIPE conducts policy research and publishes papers, briefs, and books. We also regularly organise seminars, conferences and roundtables on European and international trade policy, and other international economic policy issues.

ECIPE has a distinguished network of non-residential Fellows and Senior Fellows. It is progressively expanding its Brussels-based secretariat and operations. ECIPE co-operates with other centres and institutes in and outside of Europe, and offers an ideal platform in Brussels for presenting new research and analysis.

ECIPE is governed by a Board of Trustees, responsible for general and financial supervision, and has an Advisory Board with highly respected academics and practitioners to advise on research projects. Some of the European members of the Advisory Board form a Steering Committee which regularly discusses projects and development.

ECIPE receives its base-funding from the Free Enterprise Foundation in Sweden and welcomes financial support from individuals, foundations and other organisations sharing our ideas in favour of an open world economic order based on voluntary exchange and free trade.