

H.E. Didier Chambovey, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to WTO

## Switzerland and the multilateral trading system

Tuesday, 13 November 2018

16.00-18.00

Silva Casa Auditorium, World Trade Institute, University of Bern  
Hallerstrasse 6, 3012 Bern, Switzerland

More Info 

*For current MILE and TRAIL+ students, this seminar is worth 1.5 ECTS.*

### Brief description

Switzerland has a domestic market of 8.4 million consumers. Excluding intra-EU trade, it is the thirteenth exporter and eleventh importer of merchandise. As far as trade in services is concerned, Switzerland ranks ninth as an exporter and seventh as an importer. Moreover, Switzerland is ninth in the world in terms of foreign direct investment. These statistics show how thoroughly the Swiss economy is integrated into the world market. Like other countries with relatively modest domestic markets, Switzerland generally pursues a liberal economic policy, open to the world.

The multilateral trading system embodied in the GATT and the WTO seems tailor-made for such a medium-sized export-oriented economy.

Switzerland would not have the same bargaining power and benefit by the same predictability and stability of market access conditions and trade rules without the multilateral system. Indeed, differences in bargaining power are narrowed by agreed rules, consensus decision-making and coalition building.

Against all odds, Switzerland was not an original contracting party to the GATT that it joined provisionally in 1958 and fully in 1966. Since then, Switzerland has strongly supported the development of the multilateral trading system, including the major overhaul that resulted from the Uruguay Round.

This seminar will address the following issues:

1. Switzerland and the GATT : the early days
2. The Uruguay Round : Switzerland's involvement
3. Multilateral trade cooperation within the context of global value chains : the perspective of a highly globalized economy
4. How to deal with present day's challenges?

### Biography of the Speaker

Ambassador Didier Chambovey, Dr. oec. head of the Swiss Permanent Mission to the WTO and EFTA in Geneva since 1st September 2016. Previously, Federal Council Ambassador and Delegate for Trade Agreements, and head of the World Trade Division in the Foreign Economic Affairs Directorate. From 2006 to 2011, he was Deputy Secretary-General of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). From 1998 to 2006 he served as deputy head of the Swiss Permanent Mission to the WTO and EFTA in Geneva. Before his appointment as section head in the WTO Division in 1993, he worked in the field of economic cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Didier Chambovey joined the Federal Office for Foreign Economic Affairs (FOFEA) in 1987 as scientific adviser in the GATT Division.

Participation is free of charge.