

Extract from:

Iana Dreyer, "Trade Policy in the EU's Neighbourhood. Ways forward for the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements", Study No. 90, Notre Europe, May 2012.

## Foreword

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**A**n ambitious and responsible European Union wishing to carry weight in our multipolar world needs to build an environment of security, stability and prosperity with its neighbours to the south and to the east.

Yet a great deal remains to be done both in order to achieve it and in the field of economic relations. The merit of Iana Dreyer's work lies in its assessment of the situation today and in its presentation of prospects for the future.

It is a hard fact that most of our neighbours rely on the EU both as their primary export market and as their primary source of imports. Thus it is crucial for the EU to develop increasingly close ties with each one of its neighbouring countries through a new model of Association Agreement known as a "deep and comprehensive free trade agreement" (DCFTA). As its name indicates, this kind of accord runs "deeper" than a mere agreement on the abolition of duty, its aim being to chip away at every possible barrier standing in the way of free trade by harmonising laws, regulations and standards in each country with those of the European Union. This approach adopted by the European Commission is a welcome and healthy move which should bind our various neighbouring countries more tightly to our internal market.

The author makes three concrete proposals which I feel deserve reflection and debate. I do not subscribe totally to the ideas she puts forward, in particular when she calls into question certain political conditionalities, shows hesitation in acknowledging the virtues of regulatory convergence, or overestimates the benefits of customs union. Be that as it may, the merit of this work lies in its sparking a debate outside expert circles on issues which have an unquestionable political impact on the future of the European Union.

The credibility of the EU's external and neighbourhood policies depends on major progress being made in the spheres which Iana Dreyer addresses, but also on measures capable of facilitating individual mobility and on cooperation aid equal to its political aspirations. This is the price to pay if we want the European Union to be an influential regional power and to carve out a better place for itself in a globalised economy.

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