A History of Law and Lawyers in the GATT/WTO

The Development of the Rule of Law in the Multilateral Trading System

Edited by Gabrielle Marceau

How did a treaty that emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War, and barely survived its early years, evolve into one of the most influential organisations in international law? This unique book brings together original contributions from an unprecedented number of eminent current and former GATT and WTO staff members, including many current and former Appellate Body members, to trace the history of law and lawyers in the GATT/WTO and explore how the nature of legal work has evolved over the institution’s sixty-year history. In doing so, it paints a fascinating portrait of the development of the rule of law in the multilateral trading system, and allows some of the most important personalities in GATT and WTO history to share their stories and reflect on the WTO’s remarkable journey from a ‘provisionally applied treaty’ to an international organisation defined by its commitment to the rule of law.

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Cover image: the stone statue of ‘Justice’, by Luc Jaggi (1924), situated in front of the main entrance to the Centre William Rappard, the headquarters of the WTO in Geneva. The statue was donated by the Swiss Confederation on 28 November 1924. Photograph © WTO / Pierre-Yves Dhinaut.

Cover design: Sue Watson
About this publication

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"The establishment of the WTO in 1995 is widely regarded as a major milestone in modern international law. As our Organization marks its twentieth anniversary, this book paints an interesting and sometimes surprising portrait of the evolution of the role that law and lawyers have played throughout the history of the multilateral trading system. [...] I commend this book to anyone with an interest in international law or international trade. It is a fascinating look back at a crucial element of the trading system – and one which should inspire us as we look forward to the challenges ahead."

Roberto Azevêdo
WTO Director-General

Contributions from a wide range of current and former GATT and WTO staff, as well as members of the Appellate Body, provide unprecedented insights into legal work in the multilateral trading system, as experienced by a wide range of persons.
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