



WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION  
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU COMMERCE  
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DEL COMERCIO

## INTRODUCTION TO THE WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

*16 and 18 December 2024*

11h30-13h00 (GVA time – Online)





## COURSE OVERVIEW AND DESIGN

The WTO Dispute Settlement System stands as a cornerstone of the multilateral trading system, ensuring that trade disputes among WTO Members are resolved in a rules-based, fair, and predictable manner. This introductory course offers government officials from Uzbekistan a practical and accessible understanding of this unique mechanism.

Across two sessions, participants will explore the fundamentals of the dispute settlement process, from its objectives and structure to its key procedural stages. Designed specifically for non-specialist audiences, the course blends concise theoretical overviews with practical examples and interactive exercises to make the learning experience engaging and relevant. Participants will gain insights into how the dispute settlement system reinforces WTO Members' rights and obligations, facilitates the resolution of trade disputes, and provides a platform for clarifying WTO rules. Discussions will include the system's current challenges and its evolving role in addressing global trade issues.

The course is led by **María J. Pereyra**, Senior Counsellor at the WTO Legal Affairs Division. With nearly three decades of experience in international economic law and dispute resolution, María brings deep expertise and a practical perspective to the sessions. Participants will benefit from her insights, drawn from advising panels and arbitrators in numerous WTO disputes, and her hands-on experience in capacity-building activities for WTO Members and acceding countries.

The **first session (Monday 16 December 2024, at 11:30–13:00 Geneva time)** will introduce participants to the nature and scope of the WTO Dispute Settlement System, focusing on its objectives and scope. The session will cover how disputes are initiated, including preparation and consultations as the first stage in resolving disputes diplomatically. Participants will also engage in a practical exercise to identify potential trade measures that could be subject to dispute settlement.

The **second session (Wednesday 18 December 2024, at 11:30–13:00 Geneva time)** will delve into the panel process, including the establishment, composition, and procedures of dispute settlement panels, as well as the appellate process and its current challenges. The session will also cover compliance mechanisms and remedies, such as compensation and the suspension of concessions. Time permitting, participants will conclude the course with a practical case study designed to apply their learning in a simulated WTO dispute scenario.

This course underscores the value of dispute settlement for WTO Members and acceding countries as they navigate integration into the WTO. By the end, participants will be better equipped to understand the system's functioning and its significance for safeguarding their trade interests within the multilateral framework.



## SCHEDULE

### **Session 1: Monday, 16 December 2024 (11h30–13h00 Geneva Time)**

#### **1. Introduction to the WTO Dispute Settlement System**

- Overview and key statistics.
- Nature and objectives of the system.

#### **2. Jurisdiction and Scope of the Dispute Settlement Mechanism**

- Covered agreements and measures.
- Access to the system: who can bring cases and against whom.

#### **3. Key Stages of the Dispute Settlement Process**

- Preparation of a case.
  - Consultations: the initial stage for resolving disputes diplomatically.
  - Practical exercise.
- 

### **Session 2: Wednesday, 18 December 2024 (11:30–13:00 Geneva Time)**

#### **1. Key Stages of the Dispute Settlement Process (cont.)**

- Panel proceedings: establishment, composition, and procedures.
- Appellate review: current situation, alternative mechanisms (e.g., MPIA).

#### **2. Compliance and Implementation**

- Adoption of reports and ensuring compliance.
- Remedies: compensation and suspension of concessions.

#### **3. Practical Case Study and Wrap-Up**

- Analysis of a hypothetical WTO dispute.
- Closing – feedback session.



WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION  
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU COMMERCE  
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DEL COMERCIO

### WTO SECRETARIAT EXPERT



**MARÍA J. PEREYRA**  
**LLB, LLM College of Europe, Admitted to Bar in Spain**  
**Senior Counsellor, Legal Affairs Division. SIEL Executive Council Member. Advisory Board Member, Master in International Legal Studies, IE Law School**

**Maria.Pereyra@wto.org**  
**<http://linkedin.com/in/maría-j-pereyra-2269b113b>**

With nearly three decades of professional experience in the fields of public international law, international economic law, and international dispute resolution, María J. Pereyra is a senior international civil servant and serves as Senior Counsellor with the Legal Affairs Division of the WTO. In that capacity, María leads teams of lawyers from the Secretariat advising panels and arbitrators in WTO dispute settlement proceedings. Additionally, María provides assistance to disputing parties and, where appropriate, to the WTO Director-General, in the selection and appointment of dispute settlement panelists and arbitrators; and to WTO Member governments and the various divisions of the WTO Secretariat on legal issues and practice related to WTO law and public international law. María also delivers training to WTO Members' delegates, government officials, academics, and professionals on WTO dispute settlement and WTO law. She is a member of the WTO Digital Transformation Advisory Group.

Before joining the WTO Legal Affairs Division in May 2001, María practiced law at two leading international law firms in Brussels, focusing on international economic law. María holds a law degree, has a Master's degree from the College of Europe, and has been admitted to the Bar in Spain. In addition to her professional activities, María regularly lectures at universities around the world and has published widely on issues of international economic law. María is a member of the Executive Council of the Society of International Economic Law (SIEL) and of the Advisory Board of the Master in International Legal Studies, IE Law School.

Throughout her career in both the private and public sectors, María has acquired substantial experience managing large multicultural and multilingual teams, including both young and senior lawyers, non-legal staff (such as economists, political scientists, engineers), and WTO adjudicators, many of whom are senior government officials. María is committed to nurturing fresh talent and serves as role-model and mentor for a generation of WTO lawyers now working at the WTO Secretariat, other international organizations, governments, law firms, and academia.