

# ICC Global Trade Update

26 September 2025

**DISCLAIMER:** *Given the fast-moving trade policy environment, please ensure that latest developments have been taken into account in your operations and communications.*

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## WTO PUBLIC FORUM

- Despite the WTO Public Forum being slimmed down this year to only two days, the global business community showed up with the largest business participation in the history of the event according to the WTO Secretariat.
- [ICC Chair Philippe Varin](#) joined the opening session on trade, trust and transformation. The panel discussed how businesses are navigating current challenges and what role the WTO can play in restoring confidence, fostering transformation, and ensuring the global trade architecture remains relevant and responsive to real-world needs. Philippe Varin called for Members to launch a 'reform round' at MC14 as well as the need to establish innovative structures to embed real business expertise into trade policymaking ensuring new rules work in practice, not just on paper. He also highlighted the need to address climate-trade frictions head-on, urging new cooperative approaches, including fresh thinking on how carbon is calculated across value chains.

Watch the session [here](#).

- ICC's dedicated session drew on our paper on [Reimagining WTO Dispute Settlement: A business case for mediation](#) and underscored that:
  - Governments and businesses agree that it is time to reconsider the role of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in resolving trade frictions, including novel issues such as those arising in the context of digital trade.
  - A key challenge remains lack of awareness, misperceptions and mistrust, making awareness-raising across governments, businesses and the WTO Secretariat essential.
  - Cooperation and dialogue between governments, businesses and ADR institutions, coupled with concrete test cases, will be vital in overcoming mistrust and demonstrating the practical utility of ADR.

Watch the session [here](#).

- Other sessions discussed a wide range of issues from critical minerals and digital trade through to more WTO-specific issues like overcoming the WTO e-commerce moratorium deadlock. Several are available to watch online [here](#).
- Alongside the Public Forum, ICC organised a series of side events including the Geneva Trade Week Business Day with the Geneva Trade Platform, the ICC Global Trade & Investment Policy Commission meeting, and a roundtable on AI & Trade with the United States Council for International Business and BCG. A huge thank you to all our members who participated and our speakers — Amb. Peter Ølberg (Norway), WTO reform facilitator; Amb. Matthew Wilson (Barbados), coordinator of WTO ACP Group; Amb. Salomon Eheth (Cameroon), host of MC14; Amb. Richard Brown (Jamaica), facilitator of the WTO e-commerce work programme; Amb. Kumar Iyer (United Kingdom); DDG Zhang (WTO); DDG Hill (WTO); Emmanuelle Ganne (WTO); Dr. José Viñals (former Group Chairman and Senior Advisor, Standard Chartered); Susanne Waidzunus (Chief Supply Chain Officer, Inter IKEA Group); Nathalie Louat (Global Director for Trade and Supply Chain Finance, IFC); Cecilia Malmström (PIIE); Chad Bown (PIIE); Dr. James Nedumpara (Center for International Trade and Investment Law, India); María Pagán (former USTR Ambassador to WTO); Tetyana Payosova (Legal Officer, European Free Trade Association); Michael Lawrence (Executive Director, National Clothing Retail Federation of South Africa); DPR Erika Watanabe Patriota (Brazil); Professor Kathleen Claussen; and Alya Ladjimi (Counsel, ICC Dispute Resolution Services).

## **WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION**

### ***WTO Fisheries Agreement enters into force***

- At a special General Council meeting on 15 September, WTO members celebrated the entry into force of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, which commits members to curbing billions of dollars in annual spending on the most harmful subsidies that contribute to the depletion of marine fish stocks.

### ***China renounces use of special and differential treatment***

- During a [speech](#) at the United Nations General Assembly, Chinese Premier Li Qiang on 23 September announced that as a “responsible major developing country”, China will not seek any new special and differential treatment in future WTO agreements. Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the WTO, issued [this statement](#) welcoming the announcement.

### ***WTO publishes World Trade Report on AI***

- The 2025 edition of the [World Trade Report](#) reveals that, with the right enabling policies, artificial intelligence (AI) could boost the value of cross-border flows of goods and services by nearly 40% by 2040 thanks to productivity gains and lower trade costs. However, the flagship publication by the WTO Secretariat notes that for AI and trade to contribute to inclusive growth — with benefits shared widely — policies need to be in place to bridge the digital divide, invest in workforce skills, and maintain an open and predictable trading environment.

### ***US rejects India’s request for consultations***

- The United States has rejected India’s request for consultations at the WTO over Washington’s Section 232 tariffs on imported copper and copper derivatives products. India requested the consultations under the WTO Agreement on Safeguards, saying that the tariffs amount to an import safeguard action. The US rejected that claim, saying in a communication to the WTO Committee on Safeguards that the Section 232 tariffs are national security measures, not import safeguards.
- India must now decide whether to escalate under WTO dispute settlement. This case could once again test the WTO’s ability to review measures justified on national security grounds — a politically charged issue that Members will not resolve before MC14, but one that underscores the urgency of broader reform to restore confidence in the rules-based trading system.

### ***High-level dialogue on Investment Facilitation***

- Chilean Ambassador Sofía Boza and Korean Ambassador Sung-yo Choi, the two co-Coordicators of the IFD Agreement, moderated a [high-level dialogue](#) on 16 September to discuss needs assessments for WTO Members to implement the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement.

## TARIFFS

### ***Mexico announces 50% tariffs***

- On 10 September, Mexico announced plans to impose higher tariffs on more than 1,300 product categories coming from countries with which it has no trade agreement. China, South Korea and India are among exporters that would be hit under the proposed levies, which must be approved by the Mexican Congress.
- The import taxes would affect items such as auto parts, steel, toys and furniture, with rates ranging from 10% to 50%, depending on the category. The tariffs would be in line with Mexico's bound WTO MFN tariff rates.

### ***US Tariffs***

#### ***President Trump announces new tariffs via social media***

- On 25 September, President Trump announced on Truth Social that the US will place a 100% tariff on brand-name or patented pharmaceutical imports, effective 1 October 2025. This tariff will not cover generic drugs, which face a 0% tariff rate.
- Pharmaceutical companies building manufacturing facilities in the US will benefit from exemptions according to the post – provided the sites are “breaking ground” and/or “under construction”. The President said there will be “no Tariff on these Pharmaceutical Products if construction has started”.



Donald J. Trump    
@realDonaldTrump

Starting October 1st, 2025, we will be imposing a 100% Tariff on any branded or patented Pharmaceutical Product, unless a Company IS BUILDING their Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plant in America. “IS BUILDING” will be defined as, “breaking ground” and/or “under construction.” There will, therefore, be no Tariff on these Pharmaceutical Products if construction has started. Thank you for your attention to this matter!

4.97k ReTruths 22.2k Likes

Sep 26, 2025, 12:24 AM

- Trump also announced new tariffs of [25% on heavy trucks](#), [50% on kitchen cabinets](#), and 30% on upholstered furniture effective from 1 October. The President cited the need to protect US heavy truck brands for national security reasons and the ‘flooding’ of the US with foreign household furnishings.
- No formal government documents have been published at the time of writing.

### ***Supreme Court date set for IEEPA tariffs***

- On 9 September, the US Supreme Court [accepted](#) the request for an accelerated timeline. The Supreme Court has set the date of 5 November 2025 to hear oral arguments on the IEEPA tariffs. A decision could be issued anytime between November and June, though some observers expect it by year's end. If the Court strikes down the tariffs, importers could be eligible for significant refunds on duties already paid.

### ***Commerce Department creates process for more Section 232 automotive product tariffs***

- The U.S. Department of Commerce has issued a [final interim rule](#) creating a process for adding more automotive parts to the Section 232 tariffs imposed on imported automobiles and parts. The process applies to auto parts for passenger vehicles and light trucks subject to the tariffs. The new rule establishes a procedure for stakeholders to let the Administration know if there are any auto parts that should be added to the product list for the Section 232 tariffs.

### ***Commerce Department initiates progress on next steel and aluminium inclusion process***

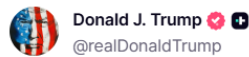
- The U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security has [opened](#) the next inclusion process to determine if there are additional steel and aluminium derivative products that should be subject to the Section 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum imports. Submissions are due by 29 September.

### ***Section 301 China tariff extension***

- USTR is seeking [public input](#) on whether the 178 current exclusions to the Section 301 China tariffs should continue. The latest extension will expire on 29 November 2025. Comments can be submitted prior to 16 October 2025.

### ***US sends letter to NATO countries***

- On 13 September, President Trump announced on social media that he had sent a letter to all NATO countries conditioning future U.S. support for Ukraine on their imposition of tariffs on countries buying Russian oil. USTR Greer and Secretary Bessent reiterated this position in a call with G7 Finance Ministers, stating, "if they are truly committed to ending the war in Ukraine, they should join the United States in imposing tariffs on countries purchasing oil from Russia."



A LETTER SENT BY PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP TO ALL NATO NATIONS AND, THE WORLD: "I am ready to do major Sanctions on Russia when all NATO Nations have agreed, and started, to do the same thing, and when all NATO Nations STOP BUYING OIL FROM RUSSIA. As you know, NATO'S commitment to WIN has been far less than 100%, and the purchase of Russian Oil, by some, has been shocking! It greatly weakens your negotiating position, and bargaining power, over Russia. Anyway, I am ready to "go" when you are. Just say when? I believe that this, plus NATO, as a group, placing 50% to 100% TARIFFS ON CHINA, to be fully withdrawn after the WAR with Russia and Ukraine is ended, will also be of great help in ENDING this deadly, but RIDICULOUS, WAR. China has a strong control, and even grip, over Russia, and these powerful Tariffs will break that grip. This is not TRUMP'S WAR (it would never have started if I was President!), it is Biden's and Zelenskyy's WAR. I am only here to help stop it, and save thousands of Russian and Ukrainian lives (7,118 lives lost last week, alone. CRAZY!). If NATO does as I say, the WAR will end quickly, and all of those lives will be saved! If not, you are just wasting my time, and the time, energy, and money of the United States. Thank you for your attention to this matter! DONALD J. TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA."

10.2k ReTruths 39.8k Likes

Sep 13, 2025, 12:15 PM

### ***USTR seeks business views on trade barriers***

- The US Trade Representative has issued [a call for input](#) from businesses as part of its development of the 2026 National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers, a key reference used by the US in its trade negotiations.
- According to a Federal Register notice, USTR is seeking detailed submissions identifying "significant foreign trade barriers or distortions" that affect US goods, services and foreign direct investment. Businesses have until 30 October 2025 to comment.

### **USMCA REVIEW**

- The US, Canada and Mexico have each launched domestic public consultations in preparation for the upcoming review of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA):
  - [Canada](#) is open until 3 November 2025 to [CUSMA-Consultations-ACEUM@international.gc.ca](mailto:CUSMA-Consultations-ACEUM@international.gc.ca)
  - [United States](#) is open until 3 November 2025 to <https://comments.ustr.gov/s/>
  - Mexico is open until 16 November 2025 to [consultas.tmec@economia.gob.mx](mailto:consultas.tmec@economia.gob.mx)

## CHINA TRADE LAW REVIEW

### *China reviews trade law*

- On 22 September, China's top legislative body began reviewing the first revision of the Foreign Trade Law in more than two decades. The reviewed measures would expand Beijing's authority to take countermeasures in trade conflicts, including trade bans or restrictions on foreign individuals or organisations deemed a danger to China's sovereignty or security. The draft also outlines the establishment of a "trade adjustment assistance" system and new measures to stabilise supply chains. The report can be found [here](#).

## CARBON BORDER ADJUSTMENT MECHANISM

### *European Parliament passes CBAM changes*

- On 10 September, the European Parliament gave its final green light to changes to the CBAM as part of the "Omnibus I" simplification package, with 617 votes in favour, 18 against, and 19 abstentions. The package, first presented on 26 February 2025, aims to simplify existing legislation in the areas of sustainability and investment. Key changes include:
  - An exemption threshold of 50 tons per importer per year
  - The CBAM certificate requirement applies from 1 January 2026. However, the purchase of 2026 CBAM certificates will only be required from 1 February 2027.
  - Default values to be set at the average emission intensity level of the 10 exporting countries with the highest emission intensities for which reliable data is available. Regional values will be possible.
  - The regulation relaxes the deadline for Authorized CBAM Declarant application. If applied for prior to 31 March 2026, then the importer may continue importing even if the authorization was not yet granted.
  - Indirect representatives importing CBAM goods must act as the Authorized CBAM Declarant from the first import
  - The quarterly milestone for CBAM certificates required in the CBAM account will be reduced to 50% of emissions embedded in imported CBAM goods.
  - The deadline for submitting the CBAM declaration is moved to 30 September of the following year.
  - CBAM declarations must only be verified by an independent party if actual emissions are declared.
  - Introduction of default carbon prices which can be deducted where default emissions are declared.
  - Actual carbon price paid can only be claimed where evidence of actual embedded emissions has been verified by installation operators. The Authorized

CBAM Declarant needs to keep evidence about the carbon price paid, rebates etc.

- Emissions priced on EU manufactured/processed precursors under EU ETS or a carbon pricing system that is fully linked, are out of scope.
- Authorized CBAM Declarants may delegate the submission of CBAM declarations to a representative.

## **EUDR POSTPONEMENT**

- The European Commission has officially confirmed a fresh 12-month delay to the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), citing capacity constraints in the IT system necessary for due diligence and data submission. This marks the second postponement after the regulation was already pushed back from December 2024 to December 2025.
- The delay must still be ratified by both the European Parliament and EU Member States.

## **FTA DEVELOPMENTS**

### ***EFTA-MERCOSUR sign FTA***

- On 16 September, MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay) and the EFTA (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland) signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil according to a [joint statement](#).

### ***African Ministers agree AfCFTA transitional rules of origin***

- The Egyptian Foreign Trade Minister Hassan El-Khatib [announced](#) on 17 September that transitional rules of origin have been agreed for textile, apparel and automotive sectors during the 17<sup>th</sup> Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) Council of Trade Ministers met in Cairo. The transitional rules will apply for a defined period allowing member states to phase-in the full commitments.

### ***European Commission proposes suspension of trade concessions with Israel***

- On 17 September, the European Commission put forward a [proposal](#) to suspend the trade-related provisions of the EU-Israel Agreement. The proposal would need a Council decision with a qualified majority.

### ***Council of the EU adopts position on EU-Moldova agriculture liberalisation***

- On 18 September, the Council of the EU adopted a [decision](#) on the position in ongoing talks with EU-Moldova Association Committee in Trade Configuration to increase market access for certain agricultural products including plums, table grapes, apples, tomatoes, garlic, cherries and grape juice.



### ***EU-Indonesia conclude FTA***

- On 23 September, the EU and Indonesia [concluded](#) a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. The negotiated draft texts will be published shortly. These texts will go through legal revision and translation into all official EU languages. The European Commission will then put forward its proposal to the Council for the signature and conclusion of the CEPA and the IPA. Once adopted by the Council, the EU and Indonesia can sign the agreements. Once signed, both sides will undertake their respective ratification procedures.

### **DIGITAL TRADE**

- On 10 September, the [ICC Digital Standards Initiative \(ICC DSI\)](#), the World Trade Organization and the Asian Development Bank hosted the [Digital Trade Transformation Forum](#) in Geneva which focused on developing a roadmap for interoperability across industry and global supply chains. Forum speakers voiced strong support for digitalisation to drive efficiency and transparency in trade, as well as to expand opportunities for more companies to enter global supply chains and expand global trade as a growth driver and jobs creator.
- Read the DSI's [roadmap to interoperability and trust at scale](#) here.

### **ICC NEWS & PUBLICATIONS**

- [ICC Trade Register: The global benchmark for trade and supply chain finance](#), 17 September 2025
- [Empowering startups to seize the climate opportunity of a lifetime](#), 15 September 2025
- [Philippe Varin and Laurent Fabius on turning Paris promise into COP30 action](#), 11 September 2025
- From the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation a new report on [Move goods, not paper: carbon impacts of digitalising trade procedures](#)
- The 14<sup>th</sup> ICC World Chambers Congress took place from 2-4 September 2025 in Melbourne, Australia, uniting more than 1,000 business, chamber and government leaders from 100 countries. Under the theme 'Business, government, chambers: Partners for prosperity', the Congress explored how fostering collaboration among businesses, chambers of commerce, and governments can drive economic growth and prosperity. A full breakdown of the sessions can be found [here](#).

## WHAT WE'RE READING

- OECD brief on [Meeting sustainability requirements at the order: can digital tools help?](#)
- [Building a climate coalition: aligning carbon pricing, trade and development](#) from the Global Climate Policy Project.
- Expert article on [The impact of due diligence legislation on international trade and business: an analysis of potential trade-offs](#)
- [Blog](#) on new World Bank database on digital trade and the OECD has published a new [Index of Digital Trade Integration and Openness](#)
- IISD have a new article out on [Rethinking approaches to industrial policy for a net-zero future](#)

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