

ICC Global Trade Update

28 May 2026

DISCLAIMER: Given the fast-moving trade policy environment, please ensure that latest developments have been taken into account in your operations and communications. This update is prepared exclusively for ICC members and National Committees. External sharing or publication is not permitted.

Contents

World Trade Organization.....	1
G20 & APEC.....	3
United States of America.....	4
European Union.....	5
China	7
Free Trade Agreements.....	7
Trade Remedies.....	8
ICC News & Publications.....	9
What we're reading.....	9

World Trade Organization

Dispute Settlement Body

At its 22 May [meeting](#), the Dispute Settlement Body considered China's request to establish a dispute panel to review India's measures affecting imports of solar cells, solar modules, and information technology goods.

- The new DSB Chair, Ambassador Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota of Brazil, signalled his intention to resume negotiations on dispute settlement reform. In a statement circulated as JOB/DSB/12, Ambassador Patriota indicated he intends to take stock of Members' current positions on the work done to date on how to resume DS Reform discussions as soon as possible and on what basis further work should proceed. He drew attention to heightened trade tensions, unilateral measures and decreased observation of WTO rules since 2024.

- At the same meeting, the U.S., for the 97th time, blocked a proposal from 130 countries to commence the selection process for filling Appellate Body vacancies.

Committee on Rules of Origin

- At its 11–12 May meeting, the [Committee on Rules of Origin](#) advanced work on transparency and notification practices, discussed the future direction of work on preferential rules of origin for least-developed countries (LDCs), and held an information session on the links between trade facilitation and rules of origin.

Fisheries Subsidies Committee

- The WTO Fisheries Subsidies Committee held its first meeting on 1 May. A note from the Chair, Ana Laura Lizano of Costa Rica, indicates the meeting faced a challenging start, as Members did not agree on a format for submitting information on subsidies and fleets. The Chair proposed that Members without reservations use draft notification templates while consultations continue. The next meeting is scheduled for October.
- Separately, the Kyrgyz Republic became the latest country to ratify the WTO’s 2022 Fisheries Subsidies Agreement, bringing total ratifications to 120 (representing 72% of Members).

Council for Trade in Goods

- At its 20 May meeting, the Council for Trade in Goods heard an extended statement from the U.S. outlining its vision for the international trading system. The U.S. argued that the system must prioritise and protect national interests while ensuring balance and fairness, stating that Washington cannot allow its interests to be “boxed in by outdated frameworks that no longer serve their purpose.” The U.S. called for a new system that incorporates flexibilities to reduce economic vulnerabilities, address non-market policies and practices, and make long-term balance “a cornerstone of international economic policy.”
- China submitted a proposal ([G/C/W/896](#)) for technical discussions on the proper use of GATT Article XXVIII, which allows WTO members to modify or withdraw tariff concessions subject to prescribed procedures. China warned that while proper use of the article can serve as a “safety valve” for trade frictions, improper use “could become a ‘broken window’ undermining the multilateral trading system.” Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Türkiye supported the Chinese proposal. The U.S. and EU maintained that the use of Article XXVIII is a treaty right of Members, with the U.S. arguing that technical discussions are not warranted.

- A group of advanced economies, together with India, raised concerns over Chinese restrictions on rare earth mineral supplies. China criticised the U.S. for launching Section 301 investigations on what it described as spurious grounds, including overcapacity investigations covering 16 countries and forced labour enforcement investigations covering 60 economies. India continued to question the method used by the UK to calculate its post-Brexit commitments on domestic support for agriculture, including the exchange rates used when converting euros to pounds.

G20 & APEC

Trade Ministers Meeting

- APEC trade ministers from the 21 member economies issued a [joint statement](#) following their meeting in Suzhou on 22–23 May, chaired by China’s Minister of Commerce, Wang Wentao. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to advancing economic integration in the Asia-Pacific, including through work on the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) agenda. They acknowledged the importance of WTO rules to global trade and called for meaningful reform. Ministers also reaffirmed their commitment to expanding the digital economy and facilitating cross-border data flows.
- Separately, the APEC Policy Support Unit published its [latest economic outlook](#). The Asia-Pacific economy grew 3.3% in 2025, exceeding projections, but growth is forecast to ease to 3.1% in 2026 and 3.0% in 2027. The report attributes the weakening outlook to wider disruptions in the Middle East, which have pushed oil prices up by 52.8% since February 2026 and disrupted global shipping and logistics.

APEC Committee on Trade and Investment

- At the [APEC Committee on Trade and Investment](#) meeting, officials discussed efforts to facilitate the movement of goods and services across borders, including work on paperless trade, digital customs procedures, supply chain connectivity, and interoperability between digital trade systems. Officials also reviewed progress on efforts to advance economic integration in the region, including the RCEP, CPTPP, and DEPA.

G20 Trade Ministers

- USTR Jamieson Greer [announced](#) that the U.S. will host the G20 Trade Ministerial in Milwaukee, Wisconsin from 30 September to 1 October. The agenda will include forced labour, updating the MFN principle, the weaponisation of trade in food, and structural excess capacity and production. President Donald Trump will host the G20 Leaders’ Summit on 14–15 December at Trump National Doral in Miami, Florida.

United States of America

US-China Summit

- On 14–15 May, U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping met in Beijing, marking their first in-person meeting since last October in South Korea. According to the Chinese [readout](#), the two agreed to a “new vision of building a constructive China-U.S. relationship of strategic stability”. The U.S. [readout](#) was more positive, citing “historic deals”. The leaders also agreed to meet again at upcoming global summits, with President Trump inviting President Xi to visit the U.S. in September.
- Reported trade outcomes included a Chinese purchase of 200 Boeing aircraft (unconfirmed by China), and U.S. approval for the sale of Nvidia’s H200 chips to ten Chinese firms (subject to Beijing’s approval). The announcements also covered agricultural sales, including soybeans, poultry, and beef.
- The summit established a new “Board of Trade” to identify products for potential tariff reductions and to sustain engagement during periods of strain. A parallel “Board of Investment” is also under discussion. The U.S. readout stated that China will address concerns regarding supply chain shortages related to rare earths and other critical minerals, including yttrium, scandium, neodymium and indium.

Section 232 pharmaceutical tariffs

- The Commerce Department’s Bureau of Industry and Security has laid out procedures for pharmaceutical companies to seek company-specific onshoring agreements that could reduce new Section 232 tariffs on patented drugs and related ingredients. The [Federal Register notice](#) published on 13 May implements Proclamation 11020, which imposed a 100% tariff on certain imports of patented pharmaceuticals and associated pharmaceutical ingredients, effective 29 September.
- Companies that secure Commerce-approved onshoring plans may qualify for a reduced duty rate of 20%. Companies that also enter into MFN pricing agreements with the Department of Health and Human Services may receive a zero-duty rate until 20 January 2029. Applications are requested within 30 days of publication and must be submitted to BIS at pharma232@bis.doc.gov.

IEEPA refunds

- On 12 May, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) provided an [update](#) on Phase I of IEEPA refunds through the new CAPE system. Of the declarations that passed file validations covering over 15 million entries, just over 8 million entries have been accepted for liquidation/reliquidation. Those 8 million entries covered U.S.\$35.46 billion

in refunds (including interest), but only a portion has been sent to the U.S. Department of Treasury for processing.

Section 122 litigation

- On 12 May, the Court of Appeals issued an [immediate administrative stay](#) in the Administration's appeal of the Court of International Trade's ruling against its use of Section 122 tariffs.

ICTS emergency renewed

- The White House has [extended](#) for another year the national emergency that underpins the Department of Commerce's authority to review, mitigate or prohibit information and communications technology and services transactions. The 13 May Federal Register notice continues the emergency first declared in Executive Order 13873.

USMCA Rapid Response Labour Mechanism

- USTR has [invoked](#) the Rapid Response Labour Mechanism (RRM) under the USMCA to review whether workers at Faurecia Sistemas Automotrices de Mexico in Silao, Guanajuato, are being denied the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. The U.S. has suspended liquidation of unliquidated entries of goods from the facility.

EXIM Bank launches ExportAI

- The U.S. Export-Import Bank [announced](#) the launch of ExportAI, an initiative designed to accelerate the export of U.S. AI technologies. The programme will leverage Commerce Department-designated AI exports to fast-track global deployment and streamline administrative processes.

US Democrats outline trade policy

- A group of 29 House Democrats [introduced](#) the Fair Trade for Working Families Resolution, which outlines ten principles for international trade that prioritise the interests of workers. Key principles include enforceable labour and environmental standards in trade agreements, Buy America provisions, safeguards against offshoring driven by AI, and aggressive enforcement of trade laws.

European Union

EU-U.S. Turnberry deal

- On 20 May, the Council of the EU and the European Parliament reached a [provisional agreement](#) on two regulations implementing the tariff-related aspects of the EU-U.S. Turnberry trade deal. The main regulation will remove remaining EU tariffs on U.S. industrial goods and grant preferential access, including TRQs and reduced tariffs, for select U.S. seafood and non-sensitive agricultural products. A second regulation extends the EU’s duty suspension for U.S. lobster.
- The compromise largely reflects the Commission’s and Council’s positions but drops the Parliament’s proposed “sunrise” clause. The agreement includes safeguard mechanisms, including the ability for the Commission to suspend concessions if, by 31 December 2026, the U.S. continues to apply tariffs above 15% on EU steel and aluminium derivatives. A sunset clause means the regulation will cease to apply at the end of 2029 unless extended.
- Both the Council and Parliament must now formally adopt the agreement. The INTA Committee vote is expected on 2 June, and a Parliament plenary vote is scheduled for 16 June. The agreement follows two failed trilogue rounds and growing pressure from President Trump, who threatened to raise tariffs on EU automotive imports to 25% if the deal is not implemented before 4 July.

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism

- The European Commission has launched a [consultation](#) on a final implementing regulation needed for the EU CBAM, covering the rebate of carbon price paid in third countries. The consultation is open until 10 June 2026.

Council adopts revised Generalised Scheme of Preferences

- The Council formally [adopted](#) the revised Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) regulation. The revised framework strengthens monitoring and transparency, expands the list of international conventions that beneficiary countries must respect, and introduces a link between trade preferences and cooperation on migration and readmission. It also establishes a specific safeguard mechanism for rice imports. The regulation will apply from 1 January 2027.

Council suspends fertiliser tariffs

- The Council [decided](#) to suspend tariffs on key nitrogen-based fertilisers, including urea and ammonia, for one year. The Commission estimates the measure will save EU farmers and the fertiliser industry approximately €60 million in import duties. The suspension does not apply to products from Russia or Belarus.

China

Putin-Xi summit

- Russian President Putin travelled to Beijing on 19–20 May to meet President Xi. The summit aimed to demonstrate strategic alignment and the parties signed over 20 bilateral agreements covering trade, technology, infrastructure, culture and research. On energy, the parties committed to cooperation across fossil fuels, nuclear and renewables, although they did not announce any major new energy deals. They also committed to advancing financial services cooperation and settlements in national currencies as part of a broader drive away from dollar-denominated trade.

Free Trade Agreements

UK-GCC Free Trade Agreement

- On 20 May, the UK and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) announced the [conclusion](#) of negotiations on an FTA, following talks that began in June 2022. The GCC comprises Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain. The agreement will fully liberalise 90 per cent of GCC tariff lines within 10 years, corresponding to approximately 93 per cent of current UK exports to the region. Sectors benefiting from immediate or phased tariff elimination include aerospace, food and drink, consumer goods, medical devices, automotive and pharmaceuticals. The deal includes digital trade commitments that are a first for the GCC, including provisions on free flow of data and restrictions on data localisation. The parties will now complete legal scrubbing, followed by ratification.

EU-Mexico Summit

- The eighth EU-Mexico Summit took place in Mexico City on 22 May. Leaders signed the Modernised Global Agreement and the Interim Trade Agreement (ITA). The [joint statement](#) notes the agreement will strengthen political dialogue, cooperation, and flows of trade, investment, science, technology, and innovation.

EU-Philippines

- The Philippines and the EU [concluded](#) the sixth round of FTA negotiations in Pasay City, Philippines, held on 18–22 May 2026. Negotiating teams reported substantial progress across all chapters, including Legal & Institutional, Rules of Origin, Intellectual Property, and Digital Trade.

EFTA-Vietnam

- EFTA and Vietnam held the [20th round](#) of negotiations from 20 to 24 April in Hanoi. Parties concluded several key chapters, including rules of origin, trade in services, investment, trade and sustainable development, SPS, and TBT. Negotiations continue on government procurement, intellectual property, and trade in goods. Both sides agreed on next steps with a view to concluding negotiations in the summer.

Trade Remedies

EU measures

- **Chemicals:** The European Commission plans to initiate in June a safeguard investigation into key chemicals in the packaging value chain.

U.S. measures

- **Tin mill products:** The International Trade Commission found a reasonable indication that a U.S. industry is materially injured due to imports of tin mill products from China, Taiwan and Türkiye that are allegedly sold at less than fair value and subsidised by the government of China.
- **Polytetramethylene ether glycol:** The ITC found a reasonable indication that a U.S. industry is materially injured due to imports of polytetramethylene ether glycol from China, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam.
- **Chassis and subassemblies:** The ITC determined that a U.S. industry is materially injured by imports of chassis and subassemblies from Mexico, Thailand, and Vietnam. Commerce will issue antidumping duty orders on imports from all three countries and countervailing duty orders on imports from Mexico and Thailand. Commerce found dumping margins of 32.37% for Mexico, 72.85% to 129.63% for Thailand and 189.84% for Vietnam.
- **Unwrought palladium:** Commerce issued a determination that unwrought palladium from Russia is unfairly subsidised, with a subsidy rate of 109.10%.
- **Quartz:** USTR has published a [request](#) for comments and public hearing on the Administration's action following a determination of injury about quartz surface products.

ICC News & Publications

- **News:** [New ICC Rules of Arbitration enhance efficiency, clarity and usability](#) (22 May 2026) & related blogs – [part 1](#), [part 2](#), [part 3](#) & [part 4](#).

What we're reading

- From the OECD: [Globalisation isn't dead, it's reconfiguring](#) & [Digital Trade Review of ASEAN](#).
- From the IMF: [Nowcasting Country-Level Trade Estimates Using IMF PortWatch](#).
- From the Hinrich Foundation: [The Great Digital Wave](#).
- From the U.S. Congressional Research Service: [Section 232 Automotive Tariffs: Issues for Congress](#).
- From the Asia Global Institute: [Latest iteration of the RCEP Trade Tracker](#).

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

VALERIE PICARD, HEAD OF TRADE
CATHERINE MUSGRAVE, LEAD – TRADE
tradecustoms@iccwbo.org