

Safeguards in free trade agreements: Council adopts horizontal framework for bilateral measures

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The EU will soon have in place an overall framework for ensuring consistency of safeguard measures included in free trade agreements.

The Council today adopted a regulation streamlining **the inclusion of safeguard measures in trade agreements** so that they are applied effectively and consistently across the board.

Bilateral safeguard measures linked to trade agreements (allowing for the temporary withdrawal of tariff preferences) are intended to **protect a particular domestic industry** from an increase in imports of any product which is causing, or which risks causing, serious injury to that industry.

The EU regularly concludes trade agreements with third countries, most of which include bilateral safeguard clauses or other mechanisms for the temporary withdrawal of tariff preferences or preferential treatment. Up to now, the bilateral safeguard mechanism has been proposed **separately** in conjunction with each trade agreement.

At this stage, the regulation covers the **implementation of the EU-Japan, EU-Singapore and EU-Vietnam free trade agreements**. Further trade agreements might be added to the scope of the regulation in the future by means of delegated acts.

Next steps

The regulation should be signed on 13 February in Strasbourg. It will then be published in the Official Journal and enter into force 20 days later.

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