PRESS RELEASE

United States Washington is tightening its tariff measures and is already preparing its next steps

Paris, July 31, 2026 – The United States has replaced its temporary tariffs with new tariffs of between 10% and 12.5% targeting 60 countries, which account for 99% of its imports of goods. This development illustrates Washington's determination to maintain its tariff strategy whilst preparing for possible new measures.

Key figures:
• **60 countries** affected by the new Section 301 duties of between 10% and 12.5%.
• **99%** of US imports of goods are covered by the targeted countries.
• **50%** duties announced on $20 billion worth of Canadian imports, due to come into force on 19 August 2026.

The end of a temporary regime, not of tariff pressure

The end of the temporary Section 122 tariffs[1] does not mark a retreat in US trade policy. On 24 July, these duties expired, but they have been replaced by new duties of **10% to 12.5%** based on Section 301[2], applied to **60 countries** accounting for **99%** of US imports of goods. This transition illustrates Washington's determination to maintain a high level of tariff protection despite the legal obstacles encountered in recent months.

The immediate impact on the average level of customs duties is expected to remain limited: the new measures are not automatically added to existing duties and do not significantly alter the overall rate applied to US imports. However, they demonstrate the US administration's ability to adapt its instruments to pursue its trade strategy.

A more solid legal basis

Section 301 has already been used by the United States to impose tariffs, notably on China during the first Trump administration. Unlike the IEEPA regime, which is

[1] A temporary mechanism allowing the United States to impose emergency tariffs for a limited period.
[2] A tool under US trade law authorising tariff measures against trade practices deemed unfair or discriminatory.

weakened by the lack of explicit authorisation to impose tariffs, it provides the White House with a more firmly established legal basis.

However, this solidity does not preclude further action. To justify these duties, Washington puts forward the argument that there is a lack of effective prohibition or control over imports derived from forced labour in the targeted countries. Importing companies could challenge this justification, particularly as it is applied to a very broad range of trading partners.

"*This decision is not merely a technical renewal of existing duties. Above all, it demonstrates Washington's determination to transform a contested regime into a more sustainable tariff framework. For businesses, the message is clear: the risk of US tariffs remains high, even when a measure is due to expire*", **explains Marcos Carias, North America economist at Coface.**

Further tariffs could follow

The new tariffs of 10% to 12.5% re-establish a **common tariff framework** across a large proportion of US imports, but they do not fully restore the previous regime. That regime also included additional surcharges, targeted at specific countries or products. It is this second layer that Washington may seek to re-establish in the coming months.

Another Section 301 investigation is already underway, this time focusing on structural overcapacity in **16 economies**, including China, the European Union, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, India, Vietnam, Mexico and several countries in South-East Asia. The timetable and the level of duties that might result remain unknown, but this procedure could enable Washington to target certain economies more specifically.

Other **sector-specific investigations** are also underway, notably into the aerospace sector, drones, medical equipment, robotics, industrial machinery, wind turbines, critical minerals and polysilicon. Here too, there is as yet no way of predicting precisely what measures might be taken, but these investigations confirm that US tariff policy remains a work in progress.

Canada: an example of increased trade pressure

The pressure being exerted on Canada illustrates this dynamic. The United States has announced new **50%** tariffs on **$20 billion** worth of Canadian imports – representing

5.2% of Canadian exports to the United States – due to come into force on 19 August 2026.

This measure appears, at first glance, to be designed as a bargaining chip in the context of North American trade talks. Its macroeconomic impact would remain limited were it to come into force, but it confirms the growing use of tariffs as an instrument of economic and diplomatic pressure.

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