

The [30th Trade Monitoring Report on G20 trade measures](#) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) shows that between mid-May and mid-October 2023 (review period), G20 economies introduced more trade-restrictive than trade-facilitating measures on goods. The members of the G20 are: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, the European Union and, since September 2023, the African Union. However, with the exception of South Africa, the WTO report still does not cover African countries, given the [too recent admission](#) of the African Union (AU) to the group. It will be interesting to read the next edition of the report to understand what is the ratio trade restriction/trade facilitation in Africa, which is likely to raise the average at the G20 country level. Speaking about this average, the WTO notes that for the first time, since 2015, the average number of new trade restrictions introduced per month by G20 economies, reached a level that was superior to trade-facilitating measures (9.8, compared to 8.8).

Most of restrictions were related to imports, including trade remedy measures (e.g., antidumping and countervailing duties, safeguard measures, etc.) and other measures that can be considered as trade-restrictive. Among these ones, the introduction of new general economic support measures such as environmental impact reduction programmes, renewable-energy production schemes, support for energy efficiency and decarbonization and for clean- and

renewable-energy projects. On many occasions, such measures have taken the form of subsidies which, according to the WTO, could lead in future to a possible increase of countervailing measures, even though this trend has not yet materialized. Other measures included various support programmes for the agricultural sector, tourism, aviation, and transport.

During the review period, G20 economies submitted to the WTO 34% of all Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) measures notified by all WTO Members (358 out of 1,051). The top five notifying countries and territories were the United States (67), India (65), China (39), the European Union (39) and the Republic of Korea (32). Particularly high are also the Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (SPS) notified by G20 economies to the WTO, in most cases motivated by food safety reasons such as non-compliance with maximum residue limits (MRLs) or authorized pesticides. These notifications, notes the WTO, account for 75% of all notifications received, which raises the suspect that G20 countries are making an instrumental use of these measures to protect their domestic producers, even though many of them appear to have been taken still in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. More candidly, the WTO admits that during the review period it has identified several measures that restrict imports of various agricultural products, including wheat, and that some of such restrictions appear to be designed to prevent excess supply of imported agricultural commodities and to protect domestic producers of these products.

The G20 economies also continue to account for a major share of current Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) activities. Out of the 10 RTAs notified during the review period, nine of them regarded at least one G20 economy, with a trend to include other policy areas in addition to the liberalization of trade in goods and services, such as subsidies, SPS measures, technical barriers to trade, also regulations on labour and environment, competition, government procurement and dispute settlement.