

New US tariffs of 12.5 percent announced - the economy firmly rejects allegations of forced labor

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At a glance

- The US administration has announced new flat-rate additional tariffs against 60 countries on the basis of Section 301. A tariff rate of 12.5 percent is planned for Switzerland.
- The new tariffs are justified with allegedly insufficient measures against imports of goods from forced labor - the Swiss economy firmly rejects this accusation.
- The tariffs are not yet final: a public consultation will run until July 6, 2026. Another Section 301 procedure and trade talks with the USA are continuing in parallel.

US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer has announced new flat-rate additional tariffs against a total of 60 countries on the basis of Section 301. A flat-rate additional duty of 12.5 percent is to be levied on countries that do not have an import ban on goods produced using forced labor. In addition to Switzerland, this also affects most other important US trading partners - including Japan, China, South Korea and Brazil. For countries with such an import ban, the US government is proposing an additional duty of 10 percent. These include the EU, Canada and Mexico, among others.


The announced tariffs are not yet definitive: a public consultation will run until July 6, 2026.</p></div>

Swiss economy rejects accusation

economiesuisse firmly rejects the accusation that Switzerland is doing too little to combat the import of goods produced using forced labor. Forced labor is already prohibited in Switzerland under constitutional, civil and criminal law. Switzerland has also ratified the relevant ILO conventions and implemented the UN Guiding Principles with its National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.</p></div>

In line with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Switzerland has adopted a risk-based approach instead of a blanket ban on imports. Swiss companies are subject to comprehensive non-financial reporting obligations, which also include due diligence on human rights risks in the supply chain. In addition, there are transparency requirements, public procurement rules, established corporate responsibility mechanisms and international cooperation. The National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines, which is based at SECO, also offers a recognized procedure for dealing with reports of violations, including supply chain due diligence issues.

This approach is no less effective than a blanket import ban - it is more targeted, internationally supported and in line with the global consensus on effective supply chain diligence.

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No basis for punitive measures

There is also no basis for additional US tariffs in terms of trade policy. There is no evidence that goods from the USA have to compete in Switzerland with products that contain inputs from forced labor. Nor is there any evidence that Swiss supply chains would be used to channel such goods into the US market or to distort competitive conditions to the detriment of American companies. Additional tariffs are therefore not objectively justified from a business perspective.

In addition, the proposed differentiation between Switzerland and the EU would lead to unjustified unequal treatment. It is therefore clear to the Swiss economy that Switzerland must not be put at a disadvantage compared to the EU. The aim must remain to ensure a level playing field and avoid competitive disadvantages for companies in Switzerland.

Further proceedings and trade talks running in parallel

Parallel to the announced additional tariffs in connection with forced labor, the US government is conducting another Section 301 investigation. This concerns the issue of alleged industrial overcapacity and its causes. The results of this investigation are expected in the coming weeks.

At the same time, talks are continuing between Switzerland and the USA on the conclusion of a trade agreement. *economiesuisse* supports the Federal Council in its efforts to reach an agreement with the USA.

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