

Trade-restrictive measures continue at historically high level: WTO

According to the latest **mid-year report on trade-related developments of the World Trade Organization (WTO)**, trade flows hit by new restrictions implemented by WTO members continued at a historically high level between mid-October 2018 and mid-May 2019. The report notes that the trade coverage of import-restrictive measures implemented during the review period is estimated at USD 339 billion, the second-highest figure on record after the USD 588 billion reported in the previous period. Together, these two periods represent a dramatic spike in the trade coverage of import-restrictive measures.

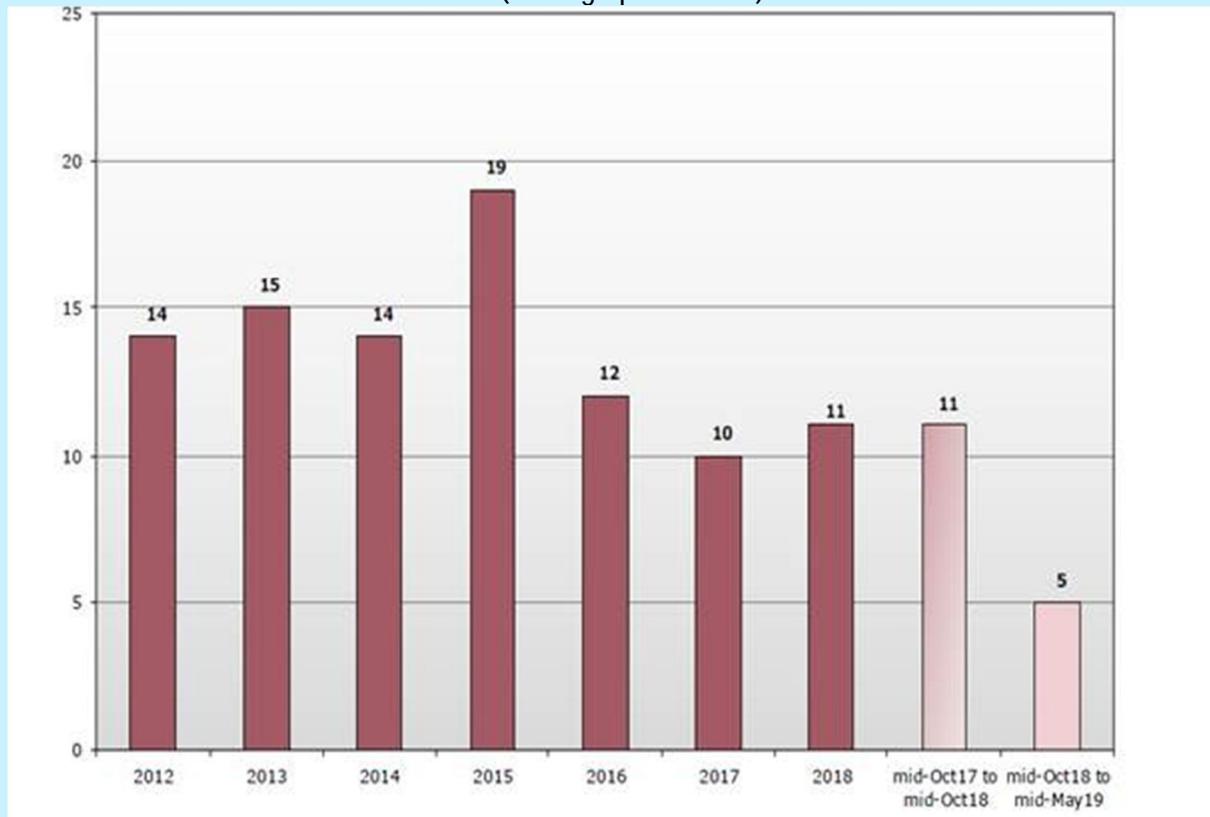
Key Findings

- The report covers new trade and trade-related measures implemented by WTO members between 16th October 2018 and 15th May 2019. During this period, trade tensions continued to dominate the headlines and added to the uncertainty surrounding international trade and the world economy.
- The report provides evidence that this turbulence is continuing. The previous period saw a record level of new restrictive measures introduced. Most of these measures remain in place and have now been added to by a series of new measures in the current period which are also of a historically high level.
- The trade coverage of import-restrictive measures during the period is estimated at USD 339 billion. This is the second-highest figure on record, after the USD 588 billion reported in the previous period. Together these two periods represent a dramatic spike in the trade coverage of import-restrictive measures. The downward trend identified between mid-October 2014 and mid-October 2017 has been replaced with a steep increase in the trade coverage of import-restrictive measures.
- The report also notes that several significant trade-restrictive measures, which fall outside of the

review period, remain under consultation for potential later implementation. This further compounds the challenges faced by Governments, businesses and consumers in the current global economic environment.

- In terms of the number of measures introduced, WTO members implemented 38 new trade-restrictive measures during the review period including tariff increases, import bans, special safeguards, import taxes and export duties. While fewer measures were introduced during this review period than in previous periods, the scale of those measures is much increased in terms of their trade coverage and the level of tariffs imposed. Trade measures implemented by G20 economies account for the overwhelming share of the trade coverage of import-restrictive measures recorded in this Report.
- WTO members also implemented 47 new measures aimed at facilitating trade during the review period, including eliminating or reducing import tariffs, eliminating or simplifying customs procedures for exports and reducing import taxes. The trade coverage of the import-facilitating measures implemented during the review period was estimated at USD 398 billion.
- The monthly average of 14 initiations of trade remedy actions during the review period is the lowest registered since 2012. The trade coverage of trade remedy initiations (USD 20 billion) has fallen significantly compared to the previous period. The trade coverage of trade remedy terminations recorded in the review period (USD 16 billion) has also fallen compared to the previous Report.
- The report highlights the continuing challenges in global trade. Collectively, WTO members must follow through on their commitment to trade and to the rules-based international trading system and work together urgently to ease trade tensions and to improve and strengthen the WTO.

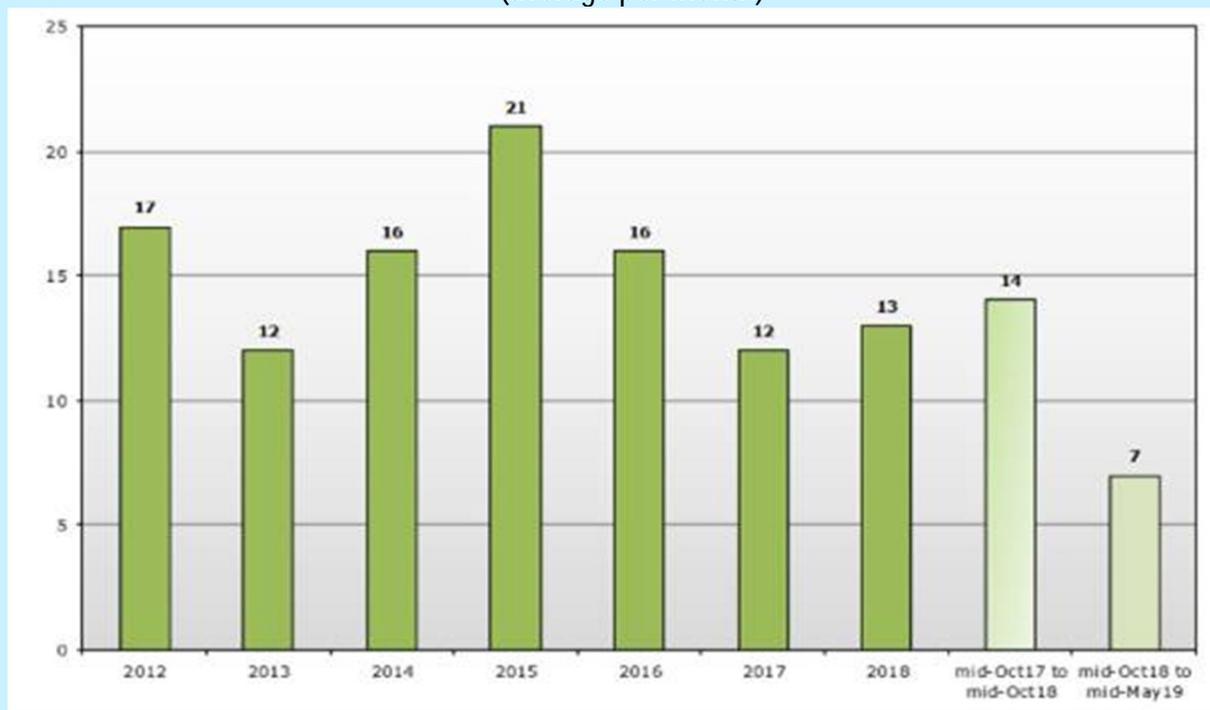
Trade-restrictive measures (average per month)



Source: PHD Research Bureau, PHDCCI, compiled from WTO Secretariat

Note: Values are rounded. Changes to averages of previous years reflect continuing fine tuning of, and updates to, the TMDB.

Trade-facilitating measures (average per month)



Source: PHD Research Bureau, PHDCCI complied from WTO Secretariat

Note: Values are rounded. Changes to averages of previous years reflect continuing fine tuning of, and updates to, the TMDB

Please find enclosed the full report on trade related developments by WTO for your kind reference.

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Warm Regards,
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