

# AN OPEN, SUSTAINABLE AND ASSERTIVE TRADE POLICY

## THE EUROPEAN UNION'S TRADE POLICY AND THE 2021 REVIEW, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME?



The EU is the largest trading bloc in the world, with a population of 440 million and [16% of global trade](#). International trade and investment are the backbone of its economy.

Total EU trade (imports and exports) accounts for more than a third of the EU's output, with exports supporting [1 in 7 jobs](#) across the 27-country bloc. The EU trades almost €16 billion worth of goods and services every day and is the world's biggest single market in terms of total spending power, ahead of the US and China.

EU firms' exports of goods and services to countries outside the EU support millions of jobs. The EU's trade agreements make it easier and cheaper for firms to export and import. The EU helps small and medium-sized businesses in particular with [practical information about exporting and importing](#). EU business, workers and consumers have benefitted enormously from the EU's integration in an open rules-based trading system. And this is why the Trade Policy Review strongly re-affirms the EU's commitment to open global trade and resilient supply chains.

**35,000,000**

Total EU jobs supported by trade outside the EU.

**14,000,000**

Nearly [14 million](#) of these workers are women

**1/7**

of EU jobs depend on trade

**€5.9 trillion**

Total combined value of EU exports and imports is over €5.9 trillion

**16%**

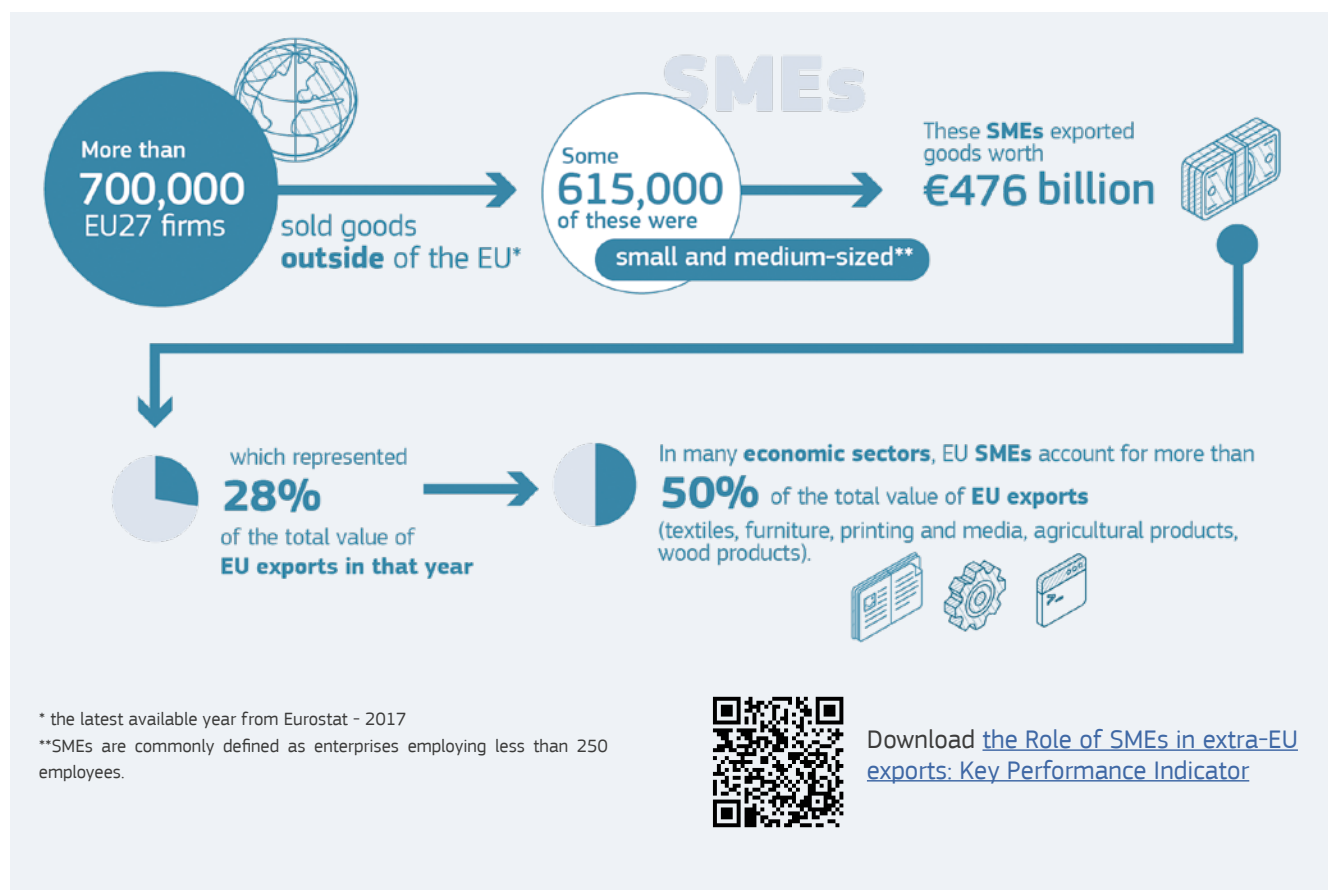
EU trading bloc as a percentage of global trade



## SMEs IN THE EU

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)\* are a pillar of the EU economy. They represent **99%** of all EU companies and **87%** of EU companies exporting.

### SMEs in numbers





## HOW WILL EU TRADE POLICY HELP ME AS A BUSINESS OWNER OR WORKER?

Whether you own a business or work in a firm that exports – or even in a firm that supplies goods or services to one that does – you can benefit from EU trade policy.

### EU trade policy:

- Removes or cuts tariffs
- Removes barriers to trade created by red tape
- Provides companies with practical information on [importing and exporting](#)
- Ensures that names of traditional European foods and drinks ('Geographical Indications') cannot be used on imitations produced outside the EU
- Applies faster, simpler and more predictable customs procedures
- When companies report unjustified trade barriers in countries outside the EU, the EU acts to get them removed
- Ensures fairness by enforcing EU rules against dumped imports, harmful subsidies and unsustainable trading practices

### As a result of the Trade Policy Review, the EU will:

- Prioritise the reform of the World Trade Organization to ensure the stability and predictability of the trading environment
- Create new opportunities by strengthening the focus of trade policy on fuelling the economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and supporting the green and digital transformations of our economy
- Conclude ongoing talks for trade agreements with non-EU countries so as to create more opportunities for EU firms to export, grow and create jobs
- Better implement and enforce the EU's current trade deals
- Fight harder against unfair trade practices by firms and countries outside the EU that harm people, and European businesses and jobs
- Level the playing field for EU firms from unfair foreign competition in the EU and on global markets
- Help EU firms, in particular smaller firms, take full advantage of EU trade agreements
- Tackle illegal or harmful subsidies by countries outside the EU



## HOW WILL EU TRADE POLICY HELP ME AS A CONSUMER?

As well as supporting millions of businesses and tens of millions of jobs, global trade also offers European consumers unparalleled choice and access to quality goods and services from all over the world.

### EU trade policy:

- Provides better access to affordable, quality products and services from around the world while recognising demand for more diversified local production and consumption
- Protects standards – imports into the EU must meet our criteria for health, safety and quality. They must also satisfy all EU product rules and regulations.
- Uses trade agreements to promote and protect consumer rights
- Ensures consumers can buy goods and services online in a secure way

### As a result of the Trade Policy Review, the EU will:

- Work more closely with key trading partners and in international bodies so that EU regulatory standards continue to be adopted ever more widely and to provide the basis for international standards
- Work towards an ambitious and comprehensive WTO agreement on digital trade, including rules on data flows, in line with the EU's data protection framework, and provisions on enhancing consumer trust and a high level of consumer protection
- Remain fully committed to ensuring that trade policy is transparent and inclusive through the publication of targeted, [well explained information](#) and [listening](#) to what stakeholders and civil society have to say



## HOW WILL EU TRADE POLICY AFFECT THE THINGS I CARE ABOUT?

Sustainable development and combatting climate change are two of the greatest challenges the world faces. For its part, the EU has pledged to green its economy. Europeans care about workers' rights, environmental standards and good business standards.

### EU trade policy:

- Requires countries negotiating trade agreements with the EU to commit themselves to implementing the United Nations Paris Agreement on Climate Change
- Supports the global transition towards a climate neutral economy
- Obliges countries signing trade agreements with the EU to implement [basic workers' rights, environmental standards and international environmental agreements](#), for example on biodiversity,
- Promotes value chains that are circular, responsible and sustainable, including by promoting responsible business conduct and respecting environmental, human rights and workers' rights
- Promotes the respect for core human rights and workers' rights standards set out in United Nations and international Labour Organization conventions

### As a result of the Trade Policy Review, the EU will:

- Push for World Trade Organization member countries to agree to support efforts to tackle climate change
- Ensure that the tools of trade policy accompany and support a global transition towards a climate neutral economy
- Promote value chains that are circular, responsible and sustainable, including by promoting responsible business conduct and respecting environmental, human rights and labour standards, in particular regarding child labour and forced labour
- Work more closely with the United States on the green and digital transformations of our economies



## HOW CAN I HAVE A SAY?

Trade policy is only legitimate if it is transparent and inclusive, and if everyone who is concerned and has a stake can contribute and is heard. [Transparency](#) and [involving civil society](#) is essential for building public trust. In recent years, the EU has intensified its outreach and transparency efforts.

### EU trade policy:

- Is the most [transparent](#) in the world
- [Reflects the views](#) of business, workers, consumers and citizens alike
- Is based on sound analyses and data

### As a result of the Trade Policy Review, the EU will:

- Continue to strengthen engagement with civil society and stakeholders
- Encourage enhanced concrete collaboration with civil society on key questions following the review of the Civil Society Dialogue on Trade
- Work to better understand how trade policy impacts men and women differently, and affects jobs and social development, including through substantive input from stakeholders