



## USTR INITIATES NEW SECTION 301 INVESTIGATIONS ON 16 MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS (March 12, 2026)

On March 11, the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) [announced](#) new Section 301 investigations targeting the acts, policies, and practices of 16 major trading partners alleged to be creating structural excess capacity in manufacturing sectors, namely China, the European Union (E.U.), Singapore, Switzerland, Norway, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Mexico, Japan, and India. As to the E.U., the USTR singled out Germany and Ireland trade surpluses.

These investigations represent the first wave of Section 301 actions which USTR may initiate throughout 2026. As was experienced with the China Section 301 actions in 2017-2020, the Section 301 law provides the President with significant flexibility to raise or lower duty rates after final action.

Key short deadlines outlined in the [Federal Register Notice](#):

- March 17, 2026 (dockets open for comments)
- April 15, 2026 (deadline for written comments and testimony summaries)
- May 5-8, 2026 (public hearings)

These timelines suggest USTR potential tariff actions by summer 2026, effectively replacing the Section 122 Tariffs, which are set to expire on July 24, 2026.

USTR has identified a wide range of sectors impacted by foreign structural overcapacity, including aluminum, animal and vegetable fats and oils, apparel, automobiles, auto parts, batteries, cement, chemicals, construction goods, electronics, energy goods, footwear, furniture, glass, health, information technology products, leather products, machine tools, machinery, mineral fuels, non-ferrous metals, oils, optical apparatuses, paper, photo, pharmaceuticals, plastics, processed food and beverages, refined gold, robotics, rubber, satellites, seafoods, semiconductors, ships, solar modules, sporting goods, steel, textiles, travel goods, toys, and transportation equipment.

Clients should evaluate potential impacts and consider submitting, either by the company or through trade associations, detailed specific public comments and public hearing testimony. Comments and hearing requests may be submitted through the official [USTR Comments portal](#).

Please contact [Marshall Miller](#), [Brian Murphy](#), [Sean Murray](#), or [David Ostheimer](#) with questions or for assistance with comments.

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Miller & Company P.C. | 4929 Main Street | Kansas City, MO 64112 US

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