

EU Trade Defense Focuses on Dumped or Unduly Subsidized Chemicals and Plastics

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The European Commission (EC) has published its [Report](#) on its 2023 Anti-Dumping, Anti-Subsidy and Safeguard activities. Along with the Report, the Commission has also shared a more detailed [Staff Working Document](#).

Different trends emerge. First, EU trade defense activity was intense in 2023. In particular, the number of new investigations initiated by the EC jumped from five in 2022 to 12 in 2023 (10 anti-dumping investigations and two anti-subsidy investigations). Anti-circumvention investigations also increased significantly, from two to 10.

Second, EU trade defense investigation initiations presented a clear sectoral and geographical focus in 2023.

Four out of 12 initiations concerned the chemical sector, and three the plastics sector. This is a departure from previous years. Between 2019 and 2022, 22 out of 50 initiations concerned iron and steel, versus only five for chemicals and plastics. There were no iron and steel-related initiations in 2023.

Geographically, nine out 12 initiations in 2023 concerned imports from China, as did 82 out of 141 anti-dumping and anti-subsidy countervailing duty measures in place at the end of the year.

Overall, the EC intensified its initiation of trade defense investigation in 2023, with consequences for sectors already affected by the EU's sustainability agenda. In particular, the chemical and plastics sectors became the primary target of investigation initiations (although the iron and steel sector stopped being a priority). As measures are adopted, anti-circumvention investigations could follow.

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