

Washington Tariff & Trade Letter

Vol. 43, No 52

wttonline.com

December 25, 2023

WTO: Progress on E-Commerce JSI Hailed

Members of the World Trade Organization Joint Statement Initiative on E-commerce announced Wednesday that they have reached “the substantial conclusion on a number of global digital trade rules.”

But the three countries leading the negotiations – Singapore, Australia and Japan – admitted that “challenging proposals” like data flows and localization and source code will require more time for discussion as “divergent approaches and sensitivities remained.”

In a press release issued by the three co-convenors from their respective capitals, they said that “as of 20 December 2023, participants have substantially concluded negotiations on 13 articles.” [READ MORE](#)

CFIUS: US Steel Review Draws Attention

The planned acquisition by Nippon Steel of what used to be America's preeminent steelmaker has stirred up a hornet's nest of jingoism and grandstanding in Washington and the Rust Belt, promising for a contentious review by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the US (CFIUS).

“President Biden welcomes foreign investment that creates new US manufacturing jobs,” National Economic Council Director Lael Brainard said. “However, he also believes the purchase of this iconic American-owned company by a foreign entity – even one from a close ally – appears to deserve serious scrutiny in terms of its potential impact on national security and supply chain reliability,” [READ MORE](#)

UK Follows Europe With CBAM by 2027

Goods imported into the UK from countries with a lower or no carbon price will have to pay a levy by 2027, ensuring products from overseas face a comparable carbon price to those produced in the UK.

The carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM) will ensure highly traded, carbon intensive products from overseas in the iron, steel, aluminium, fertiliser, hydrogen, ceramics, glass and cement sectors face a comparable carbon price to those produced here. [READ MORE](#)

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[OECD Pillar I Comments Released](#)

The Treasury Department announced it has published public comments received on the draft Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/G20 Inclusive Framework Multilateral Convention to Implement Amount A of Pillar One and accompanying documents.

Pillar One aims to tax corporate profits to countries based on customer location, not the entity's legal domicile. [READ MORE](#)

[US-Chile Tax Treaty Takes Effect](#)

The comprehensive income tax treaty between the United States and Chile entered into force yesterday, according to the Treasury Department.

The Chile tax treaty is the first new comprehensive bilateral tax treaty signed by the United States to enter into force in over ten years. The treaty will reduce tax-related barriers to cross-border investments between the United States and Chile and is only the second US comprehensive bilateral tax treaty in force with a South American country. [READ MORE](#)

[Know Your Cargo Advisory Issued](#)

Five Federal trade enforcement agencies issued a "Know Your Cargo" announcement to industry Monday, describing best practices for shippers to comply with the current enforcement regime.

The Department of Justice, Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Investigations, State's Directorate of Defense Trade Controls (DDTC), and Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) issued the joint compliance note, advising entities in maritime and transportation industries to implement compliance measures against illicit practices, particularly in high-risk areas and cargo types. [READ MORE](#)

[EU, US Tariffs Cease Fire Extended](#)

The European Union has agreed to extend a tariffs cease fire with the United States to give the two sides more time to negotiate a global arrangement on steel trade.

Brussels and Washington now will have until March 31, 2025 to reach a deal without having to worry about reimposition of tariffs the EU imposed on US products in response to Washington's imposition of Section 232 tariffs on global steel and aluminum imports. [READ MORE](#)

[WTO: Turks Retaliatory Tariffs on US Goods Dismissed](#)

A World Trade Organization dispute settlement panel report has found that Türkiye acted inconsistently with its WTO obligations by imposing additional duties on certain imports from the United States. Türkiye had imposed the duties on US goods in response to the Section 232 duties adopted by the United States in 2018 on imports of steel and aluminum products on national security grounds.

The United States filed a dispute against Türkiye's duties, arguing that Section 232 is a national security measure, and therefore its use does not fall under WTO rules. [READ MORE](#)

[USMCA: CAT Plant Dispute Resolved](#)

The United States announced the resolution of another USMCA Rapid Response Labor Mechanism (RRM) dispute at a Caterpillar, Inc. subsidiary in Nuevo Laredo, that produces remanufactured auto parts. The plant's workers remain on strike.

After the United States requested Mexico's review of the matter, Mexico and the company took several actions to address the denials of rights the United States found, including actions to reinstate dismissed workers and correct other employer interference in union activities. [READ MORE](#)

The year-end meeting of the World Trade Organization's General Council appears to have kicked the can on several mandated issues for trade ministers to decide at the upcoming 13th ministerial conference, raising serious questions on the utility of the GC meetings to find any solutions or compromises, said people familiar with the discussions. [READ MORE](#)

[OFAC: Russian Sanctions Target Foreign Banks](#)

Friday, the President signed a new Russia-related Executive Order advising financial institutions and payments processors that "Foreign financial institutions that conduct or facilitate significant transactions or provide any service involving Russia's military-industrial base run the risk of being sanctioned by OFAC."

Under these new authorities, OFAC can impose full blocking sanctions on, or prohibit or restrict the maintenance of correspondent accounts in the United States for, foreign financial institutions. [READ MORE](#)

[Russian Oil Price Cap Rules Tightened](#)

The United States and other countries participating in the Price Cap Coalition announced new rules aimed at making it harder to Russia to circumvent the price cap imposed on Russian oil in response to its invasion of Ukraine.

"These changes will further complicate efforts by Russian exporters to circumvent the price cap while deceiving Coalition service providers, and further raise costs for any Russian exporters that need premier services but are unwilling to sell oil under the cap," according to the coalition's announcement December 21..

The changes include requiring that relevant Coalition service providers receive attestations from their counterparties each time they lift or load Russian oil.

The coalition also is introducing changes that will require supply chain participants with access to itemized ancillary costs (e.g., insurance and freight) to share these upon request with entities further down the supply chain. [READ MORE](#)

[More Iran UAV Sanctions](#)

The Administration imposed sanctions on 10 entities and four individuals in order to disrupt a procurement network across the Middle East and East Asia supporting Iran's unmanned aerial vehicle production.

Being targeted by the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control December 19 are entities and individuals based in Iran, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Indonesia. [READ MORE](#)

[Three Chinese Firms Barred for Missile Work](#)

In coordination with Treasury and Justice, the State Department named three Chinese firms for the proliferation of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivering them.

The three firms, based in Hong Kong, Beijing and Changzhou, respectively were cited by the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security added the entities to the the list of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons. [READ MORE](#)

[EU Adopts 12th Sanctions Package](#)

The European Council adopted Monday a twelfth package of economic and individual restrictive measures in view of the continued Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. [READ MORE](#)

[Luxury Insurer Fined for Oligarch Coverage](#)

The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) announced a \$466,200 settlement with Privilege Underwriters Reciprocal Exchange (PURE). PURE agreed to settle its potential civil liability for 39 apparent violations of OFAC's Ukraine-/Russia-Related sanctions.

Based in White Plains, New York, PURE primarily offers insurance policies and coverages for luxury homes, automobiles, art collections, jewelry, and watercraft [READ MORE](#)

[State Names Corrupt Central American Elites](#)

The United States announced new listings of four Nicaraguan, four Guatemalan, three Honduran, and three Salvadoran individuals under the Section 353 Corrupt and Undemocratic Actors report.

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