EU rules of origin: Evaluation of current policy

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EU launches public consultation and review of rules of origin

Call for evidence for an evaluation: EU rules of origin [download]

Update

The European Commission has launched a comprehensive review of the European Union (EU) rules of origin - the criteria and mechanisms that are in place to determine where a product comes from in order to establish (for example) the applicable import tariff. The review intends to assess the effectiveness of existing rules, considering their clarity and efficiency for competent authorities and businesses, and to identify areas where the burden could be reduced. It will also consider whether today's rules reflect existing international trading and production practices, and if the goals of the rules of origin are aligned with other EU policy objectives.

The public consultation on the EU rules of origin closed on 2 December 2025.

What is changing?

The European Commission is launching a review of the policy and rules related to the EU rules of origin.

The aim is a comprehensive evaluation that focuses on the following three aspects:

1. definition of the country of origin
2. mechanisms for proving the country of origin of products or goods
3. verification systems for checking rules of origin (taking into account new trade patterns, commercial techniques, and production methods).

The review will take into account the following criteria:

- Effectiveness: whether the current system fulfils its objectives.
- Efficiency: compliance costs to competent authorities and businesses, and where burdens could be reduced.
- Relevance: whether current rules need modernising to take into account changing trade dynamics and evolving rules, including in relation to environmental policies.
- Coherence: whether rules on origin are consistent with other areas of EU policy.

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- EU added value: to what extent the current rules are beneficial to the EU in various sectors.

There is an opportunity for operators in non-EU countries to provide information to the Commission on their experience with EU rules of origin, either as consultation feedback or in response to a questionnaire. The questionnaire includes questions on:

- challenges faced by companies in applying rules of origin (e.g. rules are too complex, too difficult to apply, lack of product-specific rules for all goods, changes in the supply chain, lack of training materials)
- the most appropriate criteria for determining origin
- the most appropriate type of documentation to prove origin
- whether the rules are burdensome.

Why?

The European Commission is undertaking a systematic review to identify gaps in the existing EU rules of origin and to ensure alignment of the rules with other EU objectives.

Timeline

The European Commission is planning to complete its review by the fourth quarter of 2025.

Recommended Actions

The public consultation on the EU rules of origin closed on 2 December 2025. Responses can be viewed via the European Commission's Have your say webpage.

Background

The EU rules of origin aim to define "economic nationality" (that is, where enough value has been added to a product within a country for it to be considered to have been "produced" there). This can determine which tariffs apply when goods are imported to the EU. There are preferential rules of origin that determine whether goods coming from certain countries are eligible for reduced or zero tariff rates. Non-preferential rules of origin are relevant for origin marking, and can be relevant for other areas of EU law such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and the Deforestation-free Products Regulation.

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Previously reviews of EU rules of origin took place in 2003 (European Commission 2003) and 2014 (European Court of Auditors 2014).

Resources

European Commission (2003) Green paper on the future of rules of origin in preferential trade arrangements

European Court of Auditors (2014) Are preferential trade arrangements appropriately managed?

European Commission: Rules of origin for goods

Sources

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