

Letter of intent between Switzerland and the United States about additional customs duties

Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and the United States reached an understanding on a trade agreement on 14 November 2025. For the time being, it is a non-binding memorandum of understanding. Among other things, the cumulative additional tariff for goods originating in Switzerland and Liechtenstein is to be capped at a maximum of 15%. Until now, numerous Swiss products exported to the United States were subject to additional tariffs of 39%. Liechtenstein, which forms a customs union with Switzerland, had previously been comparatively less affected, facing additional tariffs of 15%.

With this non-binding memorandum, the states aim to ease the ongoing tariff dispute and create clearer frameworks for bilateral trade. It is also intended as a signal of deeper economic cooperation.

According to the official press releases, the non-binding memorandum includes the following points:

- The United States will limit the country-specific additional tariff for Swiss and Liechtenstein products to a maximum of 15%.
- In return, Switzerland and Liechtenstein will lower import tariffs on various U.S. products, including industrial goods, fish and seafood, and non-sensitive agricultural goods.
- Switzerland will grant duty-free quotas for certain U.S. meat products (beef: 500 t, bison: 1,000 t, poultry: 1,500 t).
- Switzerland and Liechtenstein will reduce non-tariff trade barriers—for example through simplified rules for U.S. dairy products, opening markets for U.S. medical devices, and facilitating customs and import procedures for U.S. goods.
- Swiss companies plan to make around USD 200 billion in direct investments in the United States by 2028, including USD 67 billion already planned for 2026.
- Strengthening digital and strategic cooperation through joint digital trade rules without special taxes, more resilient supply chains, closing procurement loopholes, and closer cooperation on export controls, sanctions, and investment screening.

The non-binding memorandum is to be developed into a full trade agreement in the coming months, which will then be submitted to Parliament for approval. If a referendum is held, the agreement would be put to a vote by the Swiss electorate. When the trade agreement will enter into force is currently unclear. The exact timing of the introduction of the new 15% additional tariff has also not yet been determined. According to the Federal Council's press conference of 14 November, this step is expected to take place in the coming weeks.

The negotiated reduction in U.S. tariffs will provide significant relief once it takes effect on imports from Switzerland and Liechtenstein and will eliminate the current competitive disadvantage compared to European competitors. However, given the continuing political uncertainties, companies are well advised to consider alternatives to further reduce customs burdens (e.g., through adjustments in supply and distribution contracts, first-sale rules, etc.). It is also unclear how the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on the legality of the additional tariffs imposed under the IEEPA will impact the situation. Companies should therefore prepare organizationally to respond quickly to current developments in the United States.

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