

# Investigations

## What does the investigation involve?

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A safeguard investigation must normally be completed in 9 months but, in exceptional circumstances, may be extended to 11 months.

The investigation examines:

- import trends
- the conditions in which they take place
- whether they cause (or threaten) serious harm to EU producers.

The main conclusions of the finished investigation are published as a regulation in the EU's Official Journal.

## When can safeguard measures be imposed?

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If the investigation shows that imports have increased so much that they cause (or threaten) serious harm to EU producers.

## Which safeguard measures can be imposed?

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Safeguard measures can take various forms, e.g. increased customs duties or quotas (including tariff quotas). Quotas are normally set at least as high as the average level of imports over the last 3 representative years.

- Provisional measures (max. 200 days) may be imposed in critical circumstances and if a preliminary determination provides clear evidence of harm or impending harm.
- Definitive measures must not exceed 4 years (including the duration of any provisional measures) – unless extended, to a total maximum of 8 years.

## Who do the measures apply to?

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Measures apply to all countries without discrimination, although developing countries with low import shares can be excluded.

## How does the consultation procedure and decision making process work?

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Before and during the investigation, the Commission consults the national authorities in the Safeguard Advisory Committee (representatives of each EU country).

The Commission must notify member governments of any decision it takes on safeguard measures. Any government that disagrees may refer the decision to the Council, which can confirm, amend or revoke it (by qualified majority).

If the Council fails to react within 3 months, the Commission decision is automatically revoked.