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European Union Approves Tariff Relief for 80% of Armenian Exports

The two-year measure suspends duties on many goods to support Armenia after Russia tightened trade restrictions.

Friday, September 25, 2026



The Council of the European Union on Thursday formally approved temporary trade measures that will lower import tariffs on a broad range of Armenian products, a move the bloc said is meant to support Armenia’s economy after recent trade restrictions

imposed by Russia.

The new arrangement will liberalize about 80% of Armenian exports to the European Union, according to the Council. Import duties will be suspended on a wide set of goods, including some agricultural products, for a two-year period. The Council said the plan is intended to help maintain and strengthen trade flows from Armenia to the EU at a time when Yerevan is facing pressure on other export routes.

The decision marks the final EU approval after the European Parliament backed the European Commission’s proposal without amendments in a plenary vote. The regulation will now be signed and published in the Official Journal of the EU. It will take effect the day after publication and remain in force for two years from that date.

EU officials presented the measure as both an economic step and a political signal. In a statement released with the decision, Ireland’s foreign affairs and trade minister, Helen McEntee, said the bloc was increasing its support for Armenia and its people as the country follows what she described as a pro-European path despite outside pressure. She said the decision was designed to help an economy hit by trade restrictions and to show that EU partners can count on the bloc.

The Council said the temporary tariff cuts are aligned with the goals of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement, the framework that governs closer political and economic ties between the two sides. That agreement has been a central part of the EU’s effort to deepen its relationship with Armenia, including through trade, regulatory cooperation and broader political engagement.

At the same time, the tariff relief is not unconditional. The Council said the preferential arrangement includes specific conditions as well as safeguard measures to protect the EU market if imports from Armenia were to harm European producers. Such safeguards are common in temporary trade liberalization measures and give the EU room to reimpose protections if a sudden rise in shipments disrupts the market.

The measure could also draw attention in parts of the beverage industry because the list of products covered includes wine-related byproducts such as wine lees and grape marc. Those materials are used in parts of the drinks supply chain, including distillation

and other industrial processes. Lower tariffs on those imports could, over the next two years, affect sourcing options, pricing and logistics for companies that work with wine and grape-processing byproducts, although the scale of any impact will depend on actual trade volumes.

That detail matters because the regulation goes beyond finished consumer goods and reaches into agricultural and processing inputs. For beverage producers and traders, even a narrow tariff change on byproducts can alter purchasing patterns if importers decide Armenian supply has become more competitive inside the EU market. Any shift is likely to be limited at first, but businesses in wine-related segments will be watching how quickly Armenian exporters can make use of the preferential access.

For Armenia, the immediate value of the decision lies in market access. Russia has long been an important economic partner for the country, and recent trade restrictions there have increased the urgency of finding alternative destinations for Armenian goods. By removing duties on most exports covered by the measure, the EU is giving Armenian producers better terms to compete in one of the world’s largest consumer markets.

For the EU, the move fits a broader pattern of using trade policy as a tool of foreign and economic policy. The bloc has increasingly relied on temporary tariff measures, safeguard clauses and preferential arrangements to support partners under economic strain while also preserving the ability to protect domestic industries if import flows rise too sharply. In this case, the Council’s language makes clear that support for Armenia is being paired with market protections for EU producers.

The adoption comes several months after an EU-Armenia summit held in May and amid a wider push to strengthen relations under the partnership agenda already in place. Once the regulation is published and enters into force, Armenian exporters and EU importers will be able to begin using the lower-tariff regime immediately for covered products.