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Russia Slaps Duties on Moldovan Imports in Mounting Trade Offensive

By The Moscow Times

August 01, 2014



Russia will impose import duties on products from Moldova.

Russia said Friday that it will impose import duties on products from Moldova in its latest move to limit trade with the former Soviet republic, while restrictions on trade with other estranged neighbors continue to mount.

The move follows Russia's decision to suspend imports of fruit and limit meat imports from Moldova after the country of 3.5 million — one of Europe's poorest states — ratified its free-trade and political cooperation agreement with the EU in early July.

Russia is currently Moldova's third-largest export market after the European Union and Ukraine.

Ukraine, which has also signed an association agreement with the EU, has in recent weeks been subject to a growing series of import bans that now extend to dairy, fruit and vegetables

preserves and, as of Friday, soy, soymeal and sunseed imports.

On Wednesday, Russia banned fruit and vegetables imports from Poland, an EU member state. Russia's food safety watchdog has said that it is considering restricting all or some fruit imports from the EU, where Russia buys 2 billion euros ($2.7 billion) of fruit and vegetables a year.

The wave of trade restrictions picked up pace after EU countries and the United States tightened sanctions on Russia over its role in the Ukraine crisis following the downing of Malaysian airliner over territory held by pro-Russian rebels on July 18.

In a statement Friday, the Russian government said import duties at ost favored nation" rates will be introduced for Moldova starting from Aug. 30, covering 19 products such as meat, vegetables, sugar and wine.

Under this import regime, Russia applies basic import duties to products from countries that are not members of its free-trade zone and do not enjoy any other preferences. Moldova currently supplies products to Russia with a zero duty, according to a free-trade agreement.

Former soviet republic Georgia may soon face a similar measure: The Russian government on Wednesday published an unsigned resolution that would abolish a 20-year-old free-trade regime between the two countries.

Material from The Moscow Times is included in this report.

See also:

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Russia Bans Fruit and Veg Imports From Poland, May Extend to EU

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