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Russia Imposes Higher Duties on Parallel Imports Routed via EAEU

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Yaroslav Chingaev / Moskva News Agency

Russian customs authorities have begun charging higher import duties on goods purchased within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) but produced in what Moscow calls "unfriendly" countries, business representatives and lawyers told Forbes Russia.

Parallel imports — which allow Russia to import Western goods without the trademark holder's consent — have been widely used to maintain supplies following sanctions imposed over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Previously, such goods — once cleared and granted "union goods" status within the EAEU — were not subject to additional duties when circulated across member states.

The change could push up prices for everyday consumer goods and force companies to rethink supply chains, as authorities tighten oversight of imports routed through EAEU partners and seek to boost budget revenues.

The higher tariffs apply to products included in a government-approved list adopted in December 2022 and will remain in force through the end of 2027. Rates range from 15% to 50%, depending on the category.

Some items are seeing a steep increase. Duties on French perfumes are set at 20%, while lipstick faces a 35% tariff, up from a base rate of 6.5%, according to the report.

Analysts cited by Forbes said the shift reflects efforts by authorities to curb indirect imports from "unfriendly" countries via EAEU states and to raise fiscal intake.

Some companies are cutting product ranges to exclude higher-risk items, while stricter inspections and delays at the border are driving up logistics costs.

"This practice could lead to a significant increase in retail prices for certain goods, and some products may become unavailable to consumers," Anastasia Trubochkina, a senior manager in the tax and legal department at DRT, was quoted as saying.

Non-food consumer goods could rise in price by 10% to 15%, and by as much as 30% in some segments, said Andrei Glushkin, a member of the Moscow regional council of business group Delovaya Rossiya.

Clothing and cosmetics sold on online marketplaces are among the most vulnerable categories, he added.

However, the extent to which retail prices will reflect the additional duties remains unclear, Marina Volkova, who heads customs advisory services at TeDo, told Forbes Russia.

She said the shift in enforcement could force companies to overhaul procurement processes, adding further costs for importers.

In the current environment, firms may be better off sourcing goods directly from "friendly" countries such as China and Turkey, whose exports are not subject to the higher tariffs, said Anna Fomicheva, head of the international trade committee at Opora Russia's Moscow branch.

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