



Crown  
Commercial  
Service  
*Supplier*

# RM6360 Legal Services Panel

## Lot 4b: International Trade Disputes

Van Bael & Bellis Prospectus

Version 1.0 | 6 November 2025



## CONTENTS

Supplier Introduction	3
Team Structure	4
Social Value	5
MANDATORY SPECIALISMS	7
No. 1: International trade disputes	7
No. 2: WTO practice	8
No. 3: WTO litigation and dispute resolution	9
No. 4: Prevention of disputes	10
No. 5: Trade remedies	11
No. 6: Compliance with international law	12
No. 7: Domestic law of jurisdictions for trade	13
OPTIONAL SPECIALISMS	14
No. 1: Trade remedies investigations	14
No. 2: Wider trading arrangements	15

## Supplier Introduction

Van Bael & Bellis (VBB) is a leading independent law firm, operating across Brussels (its headquarters), London and Geneva. Expertise in trade law has been a defining characteristic of the firm since it was set up in 1986 as one of Europe's first competition and trade law boutiques. Since then, the firm has developed its client offering to include a wide range of business law-related services, with trade law remaining a core practice area. Clients include multinationals, international trade associations and governments.

We have the largest team (30+ lawyers) of specialised trade lawyers in Brussels. The team handles a broad range of trade work, including anti-dumping, anti-subsidy and anti-circumvention investigations, WTO dispute settlement, customs, sanctions and export controls and trade policy.

We also advise on novel issues arising in the context of international trade law and policy, including sustainable development. For example, our lawyers have expertise in questions related to climate change, carbon border adjustments, human rights, labour and environmental protection, digitalisation and data protection, essential medicines and new medicinal products in the context of international trade and investment obligations under WTO law and free trade agreements.

What sets us apart from other suppliers is our deep bench, our multicultural team with strong multilingual capabilities (90+ lawyers from 20+ countries, speaking 20+ languages) and established breadth and depth of expertise in providing pragmatic and creative trade disputes legal and strategic advice, informed by an understanding of client priorities and wider geopolitical and other considerations. We are public international law and EU law experts. For matters needing expertise in other jurisdictions, e.g. Scots law, we can call upon a network of 'tried and tested' local counsel.

When you work with us you can expect a team dedicated to providing you with clear and actionable legal advice that really adds value. We invest time in understanding what you are seeking to achieve and your risk appetite so that we can best support you. We work collaboratively with your internal teams and external advisers and are sensitive to the need to ensure value for money and control of costs. We allocate tasks across our team as efficiently as possible, while ensuring that you receive an exceptional degree of senior team member care and attention, and deliver top quality work to required timescales. We aim to field diverse teams and strongly believe that this contributes to the generation of great ideas for clients.

Our track record of supporting sovereign governments in handling challenging, often politically sensitive, trade and investment issues and disputes makes us confident that we can support the UK Government on its needs under the International Trade and Disputes lot of the RM6360 Legal Services Panel.

Key team leads are:

**Philippe De Baere**, a senior trade partner, who is the Framework Manager. Philippe has been advising on major EU and international trade matters, including WTO issues and trade remedies, for the past 30 years. He has experience of representing clients on major trade cases before the European Commission, the EU Courts, WTO Panels and the WTO Appellate Body.

**Joanna Redelbach**, who is Deputy Framework Manager. She is a trade counsel who has particular expertise in WTO dispute settlement proceedings, trade negotiations and FTAs, including the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. She also counsels clients on regulatory issues at the intersection of trade and sustainability.

## Team Structure

Our core team is led by Philippe De Baere, our Supplier Relationship Manager. Joanna Redelbach is our key point of contact for bid/tender opportunities. Associate Jason Houston-McMillan (a former WTO Dispute Settlement Lawyer with experience of working on all major WTO Agreements (7 WTO cases), FTAs and advising on regulatory consistency and risk mitigation under the UK-EU TCA) is also a core team member. They will work alongside Emily Greenaway, Sophie Sundaram and Lucas Verborgh. All three are associates in our trade team, with expertise aligned to the needs of RM6360.

For specialist areas requiring senior expertise, we can also call upon trade partners Fabrizio Di Gianni, Richard Luff, Yuri Rudyuk (trade remedies), Pablo Muniz (customs) and Michelle Linderman (sanctions). Where additional resources are required for particularly complex cases, we can call upon our broader trade team (30 lawyers in total) which has specialist experience across a wide range of trade disputes-related workstreams. Core team members will remain involved throughout to ensure consistency and alignment with the Government's needs and priorities.

We staff matters to ensure high-quality execution and cost-efficiency, aligning tasks with appropriate seniority and with strict quality review. Team roles and responsibilities are clearly identified at the outset.

Senior members lead on litigation strategy and oversee legal arguments. Experienced counsel and mid-level associates handle complex legal research and drafting. They delegate suitable research and procedural tasks to juniors, who support administrative and document management tasks. The same lawyers work on the written and oral phases, ensuring continuity and efficiency.

Delegating tasks by expertise and complexity, with lean teams supplemented as needed, ensures optimal resource use. Our team regularly collaborates on international disputes and employs highly effective, efficient working processes. We hold regular team meetings to track milestones (avoiding task duplication), identify roadblocks and efficiencies, track costs and ensure team member value delivery.

Our internal knowledge-sharing system, practice briefings and case updates, enable experience transfer and smooth transitions during unavailability (maintaining firm-wide confidentiality and information security). At least one point of contact is always available.

## Social Value

### Equal opportunity/tackling economic inequality

We aim to reduce the barriers faced by disabled people in accessing and progressing in the legal sector, and to tackle inequality of opportunities faced by women and Under-Represented Groups, including those facing economic inequality. This is a key element of our promotion of an accepting and inclusive firm culture, open to diverse candidates, where people can be themselves, feel heard and have opportunities for in-work progression.

Associated supporting policies include an equal opportunities policy reflecting our commitment to recruiting, retaining and developing talented diverse people, whatever their identity characteristics and backgrounds, an anti-bullying and harassment policy with clear reporting, investigation and appeal procedures, a transparent professional development policy with clear goals and expectations and a flexible working policy for colleagues with disabilities and/or caring needs.

We provide regular firm-wide training on issues such as unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, and the power of allies. In the wider legal sector, we are engaged in a number of initiatives, such as assisting ethnic minority students with legal sector access issues, through our membership of the Legal Diversity & Inclusion Alliance (LDIA), a Brussels-based cross-law firm network that we co-founded in 2019. We also partner with Be.Face, a not-for-profit network that promotes inclusiveness in the world of work by creating opportunities for diverse and economically disadvantaged students and are an active member of groups such as the Women & Law Empowerment Group, tackling obstacles to gender equality, e.g. equity in partnerships and disparities in matter allocation, and the Women in Trade Network Brussels.

Planned improvements include:

- refining our recruitment processes to make it clearer that disabled candidates can ask for special arrangements to be made in applications and interviews;
- including a session on increasing disability diversity in a third-party DE&I training programme for the firm;
- ensuring any new disabled joiner interested in being part of the Contract Workforce receives any upskilling or other training required;
- appointing a Contract Workforce team member as diversity champion, to lead discussion on potential actions to increase equality for women and Under-Represented Groups, including those facing economic inequality;
- making it clear that suitably qualified members of Under-Represented Groups are welcome to apply to join the Contract Workforce;
- ensuring a balanced workload and access to equal opportunities for Contract Workforce team members, allowing development of new skills;
- evaluating compensation data of Contract Workforce team members to ensure equality.

### Wellbeing

We actively promote internally the need to maintain a healthy work/life balance and apply a supportive culture and policies to better equip team members to cope with the demands of working in the legal sector. We encourage open discussion of mental health and other health and wellbeing issues, invest in the health and wellbeing of our workforce and apply generous associated policies. Initiatives in place include internal mental health champions available for confidential 1:1 discussions and an accredited confidential counsellor (a Belgian law concept), available as first-line confidential support and guidance to employees for workplace and mental health issues.

Externally, we use our membership of organisations such as LDIA to raise awareness of health and wellbeing issues, e.g. sessions on building a respectful workplace and on World Mental Health Day. We encourage team members to

develop additional skills and get involved in social projects by pro bono legal work in, e.g. protecting human rights, and advancing access to justice.

We apply inclusive and accessible recruitment practices, development practices and retention-focused activities, including involving diverse senior lawyers in shortlisting in the candidate selection process to remove risk of bias, running mentoring programmes to aid career development and fostering a strong learning and development culture. We regularly measure staff engagement and have processes in place to deal with identified issues.

Planned improvements include:

- drawing up a firm-wide mental/physical health and wellness plan;
- developing participation in community health-related projects;
- running an internal awareness campaign to encourage open conversations;
- reviewing hiring processes to eliminate bias;
- implementing refreshed firm-wide training on unconscious bias;
- implementing inclusive leadership training for all line managers and mentors;
- running a project with diverse employees on how best to improve inclusiveness and accessibility of recruitment/retention;
- providing line managers with additional training on how to look out for/handle potential (mental) health issues;
- to the extent possible under Belgian law, preparing an overview of findings of staff engagement from available data, with focus groups to discuss issues and suggest solutions;
- improving transparency around processes, with regular refreshers on policies and training.

## **Fighting climate change**

VBB is strongly committed to continuously trying to improve its environmental performance and has adopted a range of measures that contribute to reducing our environmental impact. These include our Carbon Reduction Plan, available on our website [here](#).

Core components of our environmental management framework include:

- identifying the environmental aspects of our business that we are able to control and influence – applying a life cycle perspective – and setting reasonable measurable objectives and targets to reduce our negative impact on the environment;
- regularly reviewing our progress on achieving our objectives and targets and considering solutions to identified issues, improvements and other initiatives we could adopt;
- continuing to aim to influence a greener approach to energy use in our leased office spaces by seeking and taking opportunities to discuss and advocate improved energy performance, such as improving isolation and making use of biogas, with our landlord;
- applying sustainability as a major criterion for sourcing goods, services and supplies and, where possible, giving preference to those consuming less energy and causing less environmental harm;
- promoting the use of more environmentally friendly business travel where possible;
- investigating opportunities to work with the wider legal sector and/or with clients and other key stakeholders on sustainability initiatives.

## MANDATORY SPECIALISMS

### No. 1: International trade disputes

We handle offensive and defensive international trade disputes before international and national courts and tribunals, including the WTO dispute settlement bodies, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and arbitral bodies established under free trade agreements (FTAs). We deal with both the written and oral elements of a dispute, often acting on behalf of a primary party sovereign state.

Our advocacy is informed by an understanding of how bodies adjudicating trade disputes work and think: several of our lawyers have previously worked at the WTO Appellate Body Secretariat and Legal Affairs Secretariat, as well as at other relevant courts and tribunals.

CJEU cases include representing clients in several annulment proceedings concerning EU restrictive measures adopted in the context of the European Common Foreign and Security Policy and handling the first case in which a non-EU State has directly challenged before the EU Courts restrictive measures adopted by the EU in the context of its external policy.

#### Case studies

Case/Project	Role/Description	Outcome/Impact
<b>EU–Korea FTA Dispute on Labour Standards</b>	Advised Korea in the first dispute under the sustainability chapter of an EU FTA, involving a Panel of Experts on labour provisions. With no prior procedural framework or precedent, the dispute raised complex jurisdictional issues. We developed novel jurisdictional and interpretative arguments to determine whether “trade-related aspects of labour” extended to obligations under ILO Conventions and freedom of association.	Established a key precedent on how trade and sustainable-development obligations interact; confirmed that FTA sustainability chapters can serve as effective tools to enforce labour and environmental standards.
<b>EU – Palm Oil (Indonesia) (DS593)</b>	Represented Indonesia in the first WTO dispute examining the WTO-consistency of EU Green Deal measures restricting high ILUC-risk biofuels and France’s TIRIB tax scheme. Designed offensive strategy, including oral & written advocacy and managed a complex evidentiary record (700+ exhibits). Addressed the EU’s novel combined environmental, health and public morals defences under Art. XX of the GATT Required close coordination with technical experts and strategic handling of <i>amicus curia</i> and third-party rights requests.	The Panel found the EU’s administration of ILUC measures and France’s TIRIB scheme inconsistent with WTO rules; the ruling clarified the boundaries of Article XX defences and set a global benchmark for assessing climate-related trade measures.
<b>Advising on Potential SPS Dispute and Forum Selection</b>	Advised a sovereign client on a potential challenge to SPS measures imposed by its largest trading partner on key agricultural imports. Conducted comparative analysis of procedural and substantive advantages of WTO dispute settlement versus a newly signed FTA.	Delivered a comprehensive forum selection memorandum on the client’s strategic decision on whether and how to initiate proceedings as well as advice on the merits.
<b>Arbitration under the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA)</b>	Advised a government in the first arbitration procedure under the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement concerning procurement of essential medicines, medical devices and personal protective equipment. Assisted in drafting submissions, managing evidence and coordinating with technical experts.	Contributed to the successful conduct of the first GPA arbitration, clarifying procedural aspects of GPA dispute settlement and demonstrating the client’s compliance with international procurement obligations.

## No. 2: WTO practice

We act for clients on the full range of WTO-related issues, from compliance and risk mitigation advice to implementation of agreements and representation in offensive and defensive WTO disputes, where we act for the main parties and third parties. Clients come to us for our comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the WTO substantive and procedural framework. This includes our unique experience with *ad hoc* appeal arbitration proceedings under Article 25 of the DSU allowing WTO Members to continue appeal proceedings in the absence of a functioning Appellate Body.

We are experts in WTO case law with deep and often first-hand knowledge of past disputes and likely future policy directions, developed through significant practice at the WTO. Our expertise includes advising on negotiations to accede to the WTO, advising sovereign clients on the drafting of WTO-consistent regulations, and assisting stakeholders facing market access issues on how best to frame WTO arguments in their interactions with foreign governments.

### Case Studies

Case/Project	Role/Description	Outcome/Impact
<b>Russia – Traffic in Transit (DS512)</b>	Represented Ukraine in the first WTO dispute interpreting “security exceptions” under Article XXI of the GATT, challenging Russian restrictions on transit to third countries. The case raised fundamental procedural questions on the Panel’s jurisdiction to review measures sought to be justified under the “security exceptions”. The team developed a comprehensive interpretation of Articles V and XXI, addressing justiciability, burden of proof, and the standard of review.	The Panel confirmed its jurisdiction and established the analytical framework for security defences, setting a precedent for all subsequent cases under Article XXI (and corresponding provisions in other WTO agreements). The findings continue to guide advice on trade restrictive measures related to national security concerns.
<b>Turkey – Pharmaceutical Products (EU) (DS583)</b>	Represented Türkiye in the first WTO appeal arbitration under Article 25 of the DSU, following a dispute over localisation and procurement requirements for pharmaceuticals. The team negotiated the first <i>ad hoc</i> appeal arbitration procedures with the EU, selected arbitrators, and managed the appellate submissions and hearing strategy. The case also required interpreting the scope of the government procurement derogation in Article III:8(a) and exceptions under Article XX of the GATT.	The Arbitrators upheld Türkiye’s interpretation of Article III:8(a), confirming that purchases by non-governmental entities for governmental purposes fall within the derogation, and set a procedural model for future Article 25 appeal arbitrations.
<b>US – Steel and Aluminium Products</b>	Represented Switzerland in its challenge to the US duties on steel and aluminium imposed under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act. Involved coordination of cases with other complainants regarding the same measures; and focused on the limits of panel review of measures justified under the “security exception” as well as the applicability of the Agreement on Safeguards and its relationship with Article XXI.	The Panel clarified the limits of Article XXI by finding that global excess capacity in steel and aluminium does not qualify as an “emergency in international relations” within the meaning of that provision.
<b>EC – Fasteners (China) (DS397)</b>	Represented China in the original and Article 21.5 compliance proceedings challenging the EU’s Basic Anti-Dumping Regulation and anti-dumping measures on steel fasteners. We developed arguments supporting “as such” claims against the EU anti-dumping legislation and procedural issues regarding compliance and burden of proof, amongst others.	Our advice led to findings that the EU’s review investigation breached WTO due process obligations by withholding key product information and denying exporters access to relevant evidence. The ruling reinforced transparency and fair comparison standards in anti-dumping investigations and clarified exporters’ evidentiary rights.

### No. 3: WTO litigation and dispute resolution

VBB has an impressive track record in WTO dispute settlement proceedings, having successfully handled 35 WTO disputes, including many landmark cases. Our assistance covers all stages of the proceedings, from consultations to implementation, as well as alternative methods of dispute resolution. We advise on the likelihood of successful challenge and help design effective offensive and defensive litigation strategies, advising on substantive and procedural points throughout the dispute. We collaborate closely with other expert advisers, including economists and scientific experts, where required.

We understand the practice of WTO dispute settlement and are experienced in oral advocacy at both panel and Appellate Body hearings. The team has assisted numerous WTO Members acting as complainant, respondent or third party in panel and Appellate Body original and compliance proceedings.

We also assist with retaliation proceedings and have experience with the novel appeal arbitration mechanism. Our experience extends to disputes across a wide range of WTO agreements and covers issues from anti-dumping, subsidies, and safeguards to technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, customs valuation and classification, and trade-related investment measures.

#### Case studies

Case/Project	Role/Description	Outcome/Impact
<b>India – Iron and Steel Products (DS518)</b>	Represented Japan in its WTO challenge to India’s safeguard measures on hot-rolled steel products, focusing on the consistency of India’s investigation and duties with the Safeguards Agreement and GATT Article XIX. We addressed issues relating to unforeseen developments, import trends, injury, and causation, as well as procedural obligations for expired measures.	The Panel upheld Japan’s claims that India’s measures breached core provisions of the Safeguards Agreement. The decision clarified the evidentiary standards applicable to injury and causation analyses.
<b>Russia – Railway Equipment (DS499)</b>	Represented Ukraine in its challenge to Russian restrictions on imports of railway equipment and parts under the GATT 1994 and the TBT Agreement. The team addressed systemic questions regarding the characterization of unwritten measures and the evidentiary requirements for demonstrating these measures.	The Panel found that Russia’s measures were inconsistent with its WTO obligations. Case clarified key procedural and evidentiary standards under the TBT Agreement, particularly in relation to conformity assessment obligations and the objective assessment of evidence.
<b>EC – IT Products (DS376 / DS377)</b>	Assisted Japan and Taiwan in their challenges to the EU’s tariff treatment of certain IT products in light of the obligations under the 1996 Information Technology Agreement (ITA). The disputes required detailed technical and legal analysis of the EU’s tariff schedule, its narrative commitments under the ITA, and the consistency of its classification practices with WTO law.	The Panel found the EU’s classification practices inconsistent with its ITA commitments and GATT obligations. Case ensured uniform application of ITA commitments, and strengthened legal certainty for global technology trade.
<b>EC – Seal Products (DS400 / DS401)</b>	Advised Japan as a third party in disputes brought by Canada and Norway challenging the EU’s measure on seal products. We addressed complex issues including the definition of a “technical regulation,” and argued on the extent of the “public morals” exception under Article XX(a) of the GATT.	The Panel found the EU’s measure inconsistent with WTO obligations and not justified under Article XX(a), clarifying the scope of the public morals exception and the analytical distinction between the TBT Agreement and the GATT 1994.

## No. 4: Prevention of disputes

Leveraging our experience in WTO litigation, we provide strategic guidance on minimising the risk of international trade disputes. We advise governments and multinational corporations on trade negotiations and assist governments in evaluating the compliance of existing and proposed domestic legislation and policies with WTO agreements and FTAs and designing appropriately compliant rules. We also help clients manage dispute risk, through comprehensive risk assessments and litigation mitigation strategies, and support governments in exploring mutually agreed solutions within the WTO dispute settlement framework.

We assess all available options, including constructive dispute resolution approaches aligned with policy objectives. For WTO Members seeking to enforce their rights and obligations, we provide strategic advice on the implementation and enforcement of WTO and FTA commitments, aiming to achieve, where possible, a resolution to the dispute without resorting to litigation.

Our team is experienced in helping governments with novel and cross-cutting legal issues which entail risk of international trade disputes, including in the context of trade and environment (e.g. carbon border tax adjustments), trade facilitation and government procurement. We also advise governments on negotiating new, or reforming existing, dispute settlement procedures under trade agreements as well as alternative methods of dispute resolution and dispute prevention.

### Case studies

Case/Project	Role/Description	Outcome/Impact
<b>Advising WTO Members on the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)</b>	Advised several WTO Members on the WTO and FTA consistency of the EU's CBAM, assessing its design, implementation, and reform options. We analysed its compatibility with the GATT 1994 and TBT Agreement, potential justifications under Articles XX(b) and XX(g), the treatment of FTA-based exemptions under MFN and Article XXIV, and the feasibility of a collective WTO climate waiver.	Strengthened clients' capacity to engage with the EU on climate trade policy; informed the development of WTO-consistent carbon pricing frameworks and positioned the firm as a leading adviser on the intersection of climate policy and international trade law.
<b>Chinese Taipei – Offshore Wind Installations (DS625)</b>	Represented Taiwan in WTO consultations initiated by the EU concerning alleged local content requirements for offshore wind investments and advised during bilateral negotiations towards a mutually agreed solution. We addressed complex issues under WTO non-discrimination and investment obligations, balancing Taiwan's industrial policy objectives with its WTO commitments while maintaining constructive relations with the EU.	Negotiations led to a mutually agreed solution allowing Taiwan to maintain key elements of its renewable energy framework. The approach avoided costly litigation, safeguarded EU relations, and demonstrated effective use of WTO consultations to achieve desired diplomatic and policy outcomes.
<b>Advising on Draft Measures Promoting Investment in the Offshore Wind Sector</b>	Advised a WTO Member on the WTO consistency of draft domestic measures designed to promote investment in the offshore wind sector. The work involved assessing the compatibility of proposed local content and subsidy provisions with the SCM and TRIMs Agreements, as well as the GATT 1994, and recommending amendments to reduce exposure to potential challenge.	Advice allowed redesign of support scheme, ensuring greater alignment with WTO obligations. These changes minimised the risk of legal challenge and effectively prevented potential disputes while allowing the Member to maintain its renewable energy policy objectives.
<b>Design of Foreign Investment Screening Legislation</b>	Advised a WTO Member on drafting legislation establishing a foreign investment screening mechanism. Evaluated the scope of permissible restrictions under WTO law, including the general exceptions in Article XX of the GATT 1994.	The advice guided legislative drafting to ensure compliance with WTO obligations while preserving the Member's regulatory space, substantially reducing the risk of future dispute settlement proceedings.

## No. 5: Trade remedies

VBB advises on all aspects of trade remedies law. We have advised governments, including China, the Dominican Republic, Egypt and Kazakhstan, on the drafting of WTO-consistent trade defence regulations. We have also assisted WTO Members, including Bangladesh, Egypt and South Africa, in establishing authorities to investigate unfair trade practices.

We regularly advise governments on wider matters concerning trade remedies, including the practical aspects of implementing internal trade regulations, and have trained the anti-dumping and anti-subsidy units of several WTO Members on the practical and legal intricacies of trade remedies. We also advise governments on whether their actions in specific investigations or their broader practice are consistent with WTO rules as well as on possible mitigation strategies.

Our team assists private clients and governments at all stages of trade remedy cases, including anti-dumping, anti-subsidy and safeguard investigations, in numerous jurisdictions. We regularly represent clients before domestic and EU courts in challenging trade defence measures.

### Case studies

Case/Project	Role/Description	Outcome/Impact
<b>EU – Biodiesel (Argentina) (DS473)</b>	Advised Argentina and its biodiesel industry in parallel EU trade remedy, EU court, and WTO proceedings challenging EU anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures. Coordinated legal and evidentiary strategies across all fora, addressing cost adjustments, injury analysis, and WTO consistency, and negotiated a rare price undertaking that preserved market access.	Achieved annulment of the EU anti-dumping regulation and a favourable WTO ruling upheld on appeal. The negotiated price undertaking preserved export opportunities for Argentine producers, while the Appellate Body's findings prompted amendments to the EU Basic Anti-Dumping Regulation, influencing future EU trade remedy practice.
<b>EU – Safeguard Measures on Steel (Türkiye) (DS595)</b>	Represented Türkiye in its WTO challenge to the EU's safeguard measures on steel imports, contesting the EU's justification under the Safeguards Agreement and GATT 1994. Developed Türkiye's legal strategy, drafted submissions, and managed complex procedural issues, including virtual hearings during the COVID-19 pandemic.	Panel's findings reinforced evidentiary standards for safeguard investigations and strengthened Türkiye's position in global steel trade.
<b>EU Anti-Dumping Investigation on imports of Glass Fiber Reinforcements (Egypt)</b>	Represented Jushi Egypt for Fiberglass Industry S.A.E. and the EU association of importers and users in the EU anti-dumping investigation on imports of glass fiber reinforcements originating in Egypt. Prepared questionnaire responses, coordinated verification visits, and presented submissions before the Commission.	Our advice guided the client throughout the proceedings which were eventually terminated without imposition of anti-dumping measures.
<b>Advising Governments on Rebalancing Measures under Article 8 of the Safeguards Agreement</b>	Advised several governments on the legal and procedural framework for adopting rebalancing measures under Article 8 of the Safeguards Agreement in response to the EU's steel safeguard measures.	The advice guided the actions relating to the EU steel safeguards and other safeguard measures adopted by third countries.

## No. 6: Compliance with international law

VBB helps clients to successfully address compliance with WTO law, preferential trade agreements and domestic legislation implementing those agreements. With extensive experience advising both governments and the private sector, our team combines in-depth legal expertise with practical insights gained from direct engagement with domestic authorities and a comprehensive knowledge of global supply chain issues.

Our team has a deep understanding of public international law and vast expertise in matters at the intersection of trade law and other areas of international law. Our work is at the forefront of developments linking trade to sustainable development. We assist clients with negotiations, litigation and compliance management in that area. We also advise industry associations and corporations on the implications of FTAs, international sanctions, and multilateral export controls, ensuring they remain compliant and competitive in an evolving regulatory landscape.

### Case studies

Case/Project	Role/Description	Outcome/Impact
<b>Advising on Preferential Tariff Treatment under the EU–Japan EPA</b>	Advised an industry association on compliance strategies for claiming preferential tariff treatment under the EU–Japan EPA, including retroactive claims. Analysed the interaction between EU customs law, the EPA, and WTO rules on non-discrimination and free trade agreements, clarifying importers' rights to post-importation preferences.	The advice enabled exporters to secure post-importation preferential treatment, safeguarding export interests and promoting consistent application of FTA preferences in EU customs practice.
<b>Representation of Morocco's Agricultural Confederation (Comader) before the CJEU</b>	Represented Comader in proceedings before the CJEU concerning the territorial scope of EU–Morocco treaties and their application to Western Sahara. We researched and advised on complex questions of international treaty interpretation and the EU's obligations under international law.	The CJEU held the treaties at issue do not extend to Western Sahara. The ruling clarified treaty interpretation on territorial scope (self-determination, relative effect of treaties) and guides EU practice on Western Sahara.
<b>Advising the Government of Belgium on Implementation of UN and EU Sanctions</b>	Represented Belgium in a dispute involving the implementation of UN and EU sanctions against Libya and advised on the government's position before UN bodies.	Advice strengthened Belgium's compliance framework and supported its effective representation before UN bodies in line with Security Council resolutions.

## No. 7: Domestic law of jurisdictions for trade

With a team of lawyers from more than 20 countries, we are able to assess the domestic law of numerous jurisdictions, including nearly all EU Member States. We have particular expertise in the areas mentioned below. Where required, we also work with local counsel on domestic law issues arising in the context of trade disputes and advisory work. We have extensive experience in advising on, and challenging, the domestic law of different jurisdictions in the context of WTO disputes. Notably, we have successfully challenged elements of the EU and Canadian domestic trade defence legislation, which led to their amendments.

Our expertise in advising on domestic law in different jurisdictions includes:

- Customs law: advising on tariff classification,, preferential and non-preferential origin, tariff quota and duty suspensions, customs valuation, and repayment or remission requests. We represent clients before authorities and courts and have assisted companies and governments in mitigating the customs implications of Brexit.
- sanctions and export control: led by our Trade Co-Head with 20+ years' sanctions experience, we help clients with all steps of the compliance process for all types of operation, products, end-use, or intended country of destination.
- foreign direct investment (FDI) control: we assist with regulatory scrutiny of cross-border transactions, including compliance with foreign investment notification requirements.
- EU data protection law: we advise on the application of EU data protection rules to clients' operations, including cross-border data transfers, access requests from non-EEA authorities, and compliance with the extraterritorial provisions of the GDPR.
- regulatory matters affecting international trade, including circular economy legislation, food safety and labelling requirements to chemicals regulations.

### Case studies

Case/Project	Role/Description	Outcome/Impact
<b>Swiss Export Control Compliance</b>	Advised a newly established Swiss company trading in military goods on compliance with Swiss export control laws including goods classification, licence applications, and the design of a comprehensive compliance framework aligned with Swiss and EU best practices.	Enabled the client to obtain required export licences and establish fully compliant operations in Switzerland, supported by a tailored compliance manual and internal export control processes.
<b>Canada – Welded Pipe (DS482)</b>	Represented Taiwan in a WTO challenge to Canada's anti-dumping duties on steel pipes, including "as such" claims against provisions of Canada's Basic Anti-Dumping Act, analysing its consistency with WTO rules on <i>de minimis</i> dumping margins and the conformity of domestic legislation with the WTO Anti-Dumping Agreement.	The Panel found the challenged provisions "as such" inconsistent with WTO rules, prompting legislative amendments in Canada and producing lasting systemic effects on the global application of anti-dumping laws.
<b>Advising on Peruvian Tax Measures on Alcohol</b>	Advised a WTO Member, in cooperation with local counsel, on Peru's taxation of alcoholic beverages in relation to its WTO obligations. Prepared a detailed memorandum analysing the design, structure and operation of the relevant Peruvian legislation and related domestic court decisions.	Established links with local counsel and informed the Member's engagement with Peru, helping to address concerns without initiating formal dispute proceedings.
<b>EC – Fasteners (China) (DS397)</b>	Represented China in a WTO challenge to EU's anti-dumping measures on steel fasteners including an "as such" challenge of certain provisions of the EU Basic Anti-Dumping Regulation.	The Panel and the Appellate Body found that the challenged provisions of the EU Basic Anti-Dumping Regulation were "as such" inconsistent with the Anti-Dumping Agreement, prompting legislating changes in the EU.

## OPTIONAL SPECIALISMS

### No. 1: Trade remedies investigations

We have handled more EU trade remedies (anti-dumping, anti-subsidy, and safeguard) investigations than any other Brussels firm, including around 500 anti-dumping and most anti-subsidy cases initiated by the European Commission. Our experience spans sectors such as steel, aluminium, biofuels, fertilisers, glass, food, textiles, and pharmaceuticals, as well as investigations by non-EU authorities.

We advise on all stages of trade remedies proceedings, from questionnaire responses to hearings and disclosures, combining procedural strategy advice with strong written and oral advocacy. We have a comprehensive understanding of how best to frame and run trade remedies cases, from using the procedural rules strategically to structuring and advancing substantive arguments to optimum effect.

We also assist clients in setting up dumping monitoring schemes and participating in interim, sunset, anti-absorption, and anti-circumvention reviews. Our expertise also covers preparing for or responding to anti-dumping, anti-subsidy, or safeguard actions, including post-measure strategies and refund applications. In parallel, we support governments on the design and conduct of trade remedies investigations, ensuring WTO compliance and mitigating dispute risks.

#### Case studies

Case/Project	Role/Description	Outcome/Impact
<b>EU Anti-Subsidy Investigations on Electric Bicycles and Stainless-Steel Flat Products (China)</b>	Advised the Government of China in two EU anti-subsidy investigations concerning imports of electric bicycles and stainless-steel hot-rolled flat products. The work involved designing a comprehensive defence, while rebutting the Commission’s prior findings of subsidisation by evidencing legal and economic changes in China’s framework, while coordinating responses, verification visits, and hearings.	The Commission closed its investigation into stainless-steel flat products without imposing countervailing duties (the first such termination of an anti-subsidy probe against Chinese products since 2014) validating the effectiveness of the defence strategy.
<b>EU Anti-Subsidy Investigation on Electric Vehicles (China)</b>	Represented a major EU electric vehicle producer in the EU’s self-initiated anti-subsidy investigation on imports from China and subsequent annulment proceedings before CJEU. We assessed novel procedural issues, including self-initiation, selective sampling, and the first EU “threat of injury” finding, requiring careful coordination across EU and Member State institutions.	Our proactive strategy ensured the client’s interests were protected throughout the investigation and in the annulment action. The case will clarify key concepts such as “clearly foreseen” and “imminent” threat of injury and is expected to shape future EU trade defence practice.
<b>Advising on Procedural Compliance under the Anti-Dumping Agreement</b>	Advised a WTO Member on potential procedural breaches of the Anti-Dumping Agreement’s notification requirements identified in three significant anti-dumping investigations. Analysed the legal consequences of potential breaches and proposed corrective measures to ensure conformity with WTO obligations and strengthen the transparency and defensibility of future investigations.	Our advice informed senior policymakers’ strategic decisions in respect of legal options following a potential breach of international obligations. Our advice strengthened the Member’s capacity to conduct future investigations in full compliance with WTO procedural standards.
<b>UK Transition Review on Welded Tubes from Belarus</b>	Represented Mogilev Metallurgical Works, the largest Belarusian steel-tube producer, in the first transition review conducted by the UK Trade Remedies Authority. The review examined whether the UK should continue collecting EU anti-dumping duties post-Brexit.	Our advice helped shape the post-Brexit trade remedies framework and clarified procedural and evidentiary standards. Drawing on our EU and UK trade defence expertise, we guided the client through the UK’s developing system and contributed to a new consistent practice on product scope, domestic production evidence, and the treatment of legacy EU measures.

## No. 2: Wider trading arrangements

VBB has substantive experience in advising governments and the private sector on agreements relating to mutual recognition of conformity assessment with technical regulations and sanitary and phytosanitary measures, in particular in the context of preferential trade agreements. Our lawyers also advise on bilateral and multilateral arrangements related to equivalence recognition of data protection regulations and free flow of data.

### Case studies

Case/Project	Role/Description	Outcome/Impact
<b>Advising on EU–Japan Data-Transfer Arrangements</b>	Advised on the reciprocal EU–Japan adequacy findings for personal data protection adopted under the EU–Japan FTA framework. Analysed the interaction between the GDPR, Japan’s APPI and international data transfer obligations, including the incorporation of <i>Schrems II</i> jurisprudence into the review process.	Findings informed consultations between Japanese authorities and the European Commission, facilitating the annual review of the adequacy decision and improving cross-border data transfer certainty for EU and Japanese businesses.
<b>Advising on Equivalence Recognition for Organic Products</b>	Advised an Asian government on securing improved EU market access for organic products through recognition of equivalence under the EU Organic Regulation. Evaluated the feasibility of a bilateral agreement and analysed the relevance of WTO TBT obligations to strengthen the client’s negotiating position.	The advice guided the client’s bilateral discussions with the EU, supporting efforts to obtain equivalence recognition and facilitating greater access for organic agricultural exports to the EU market.
<b>Advising Governments on Mutual Recognition Agreements and the Pan-Euro-Mediterranean (PEM) Convention</b>	Advised several governments and private sector stakeholders on the negotiation and implementation of mutual recognition agreements, bilateral trade facilitation arrangements and the PEM Convention on rules of origin, including issues of grandfathering and continuity of existing trade preferences.	The advice ensured smooth continuation of preferential arrangements and enhanced legal certainty for traders relying on regional cumulation and origin recognition mechanisms.
<b>Advising Governments on the Extraterritorial Application of the GDPR</b>	Advised governments on the applicability of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to processing of personal data by public authorities outside the EU, and on mechanisms for cross-border data transfers.	Our analysis helped governments adapt their data protection regimes to comply with EU requirements, facilitating continued digital trade and avoiding potential conflicts with EU data transfer rules.