

# **Section 1. Geopolitical Landscape and Tariffs**

## **Knowledge Empowers Business – Forum 2025**

*A Workshop on Compliance and Global Market Access*

*Jingjiang, Jangsu, 10/11 July 2025*

## FOREWORDS

Geopolitics is now a key factor for the food supplement industry

Tariffs, sanctions, and local conflicts are shaping global supply chains

Strategic decision — where to manufacture, export, invest?

## ASEAN – THEORY VS REALITY

### Theory (Good Intentions)

Political and economic union inspired by the European model  
Progress towards economic integration and tariff reduction (ATIGA, RCEP)  
Facilitation of intra-regional trade with lowered tariffs  
Free circulation of people and goods

### Reality (Poor Implementation)

Still a *virtual union* with no real political cohesion  
Member states under different geopolitical influences  
Regulatory divergences and bureaucratic delays slow joint projects  
Political fragility: risk of rapid dissolution in case of regional or global crises  
Customs are not relaxed: controls are strict as usual

## **EU – THEORY VS REALITY**

### **Theory (Good Intentions)**

Harmonized single market with clear, shared rules  
Regulations aimed at protecting consumers and the environment (Green Deal, Farm to Fork)  
Strong quality and safety standards for supplements  
FTAs facilitating trade with third countries

### **Reality (Poor Implementation)**

Uneven enforcement at national level, complicating matters for foreign companies  
Overly strict regulations hindering innovation and non-EU SMEs  
General feeling of unsafe environment (social/economical)  
Economic and environmental policies often uncoordinated, creating uncertainty

## **RCEP – THEORY VS REALITY**

### **Theory (Good Intentions)**

Largest trade agreement globally, uniting Asia-Pacific  
Cumulative rules of origin to ease trade among members  
Reduction of tariffs and non-tariff barriers  
Promotion of economic cooperation and regional development

### **Reality (Poor Implementation)**

Internal divide between US-aligned countries (Japan, Korea, Australia) and China-friendly members  
Unresolved geopolitical tensions within the agreement  
Diverging regulations, especially for regulated products like supplements  
Political instability risks undermining trade commitments  
Lack of true regulatory harmonization and limited mutual trust



| Country     | Primary Influence    |
|-------------|----------------------|
| Japan       | USA                  |
| South Korea | USA                  |
| Australia   | USA / UK             |
| Philippines | USA (returning)      |
| Thailand    | Balanced USA / China |
| Malaysia    | Balanced             |
| Vietnam     | USA (emerging)       |
| Indonesia   | Non-aligned          |
| Singapore   | Balanced             |
| Myanmar     | China (de facto)     |
| Cambodia    | China                |
| Laos        | China                |
| Brunei      | Balanced             |
| New Zealand | UK                   |
| India       | Non-aligned          |

## BRICS: A BET FOR THE FUTURE





## **A FRAGILE GLOBAL ORDER“SINCE 2020**

### **Timeline of Collapse: Key Turning Points**

2020 – COVID-19: sudden border closures, export bans, supply chain collapse

2022 – Ukraine War: sanctions, frozen reserves, weaponization of trade and finance

2023 – Gaza Crisis: regional destabilization, pressure on neutral trade zones

2025 – US Tariff War Expansion: renewed tariffs, targeting China, EU, and others

### **Current Reality – Agreements No Longer Mean Security**

Treaties and FTAs can be suspended overnight for political or strategic reasons

Rules of origin, MFN clauses, WTO principles: increasingly ignored or reinterpreted

Unilateral decisions dominate over multilateral frameworks

“Today, no agreement is immune. Any state may override it in the name of national interest.”



## THE STRATEGIC QUESTION

**HOW CAN COMPANIES TRUST ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES  
WHEN THEIR OWN MEMBERS NO LONGER TRUST EACH OTHER?**

### Takeaway Message

In the post-2020 world, geopolitical agility and regulatory flexibility are more valuable than signed treaties.

**Don't build our business on paper agreements. Build it on diversified, adaptive structures.**

