

# ARE YOU FEELING LIBERATED YET?

## Trump tariffs roiled global financial markets

**Markets** experienced sharp declines in the wake of U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement that he would place tariffs of varying levels on almost all trading partners of the U.S. The minimum tariff was set at 10%, however tariffs were calculated for each individual country using an approach best described as novel. Hardest hit initially were Cambodia (46% tariff rate), Vietnam (46%) and China (34%, on top of the existing 20% tariff). In the days following the tariff announcement, markets experienced significant declines, with global equities, U.S. treasuries and the U.S. Dollar all under pressure.

After telling markets that there would be no softening of the tariffs, President Trump duly began the process of softening the tariffs. By April 9<sup>th</sup>, after pressure both publicly and privately from business leaders in the U.S., as well as increasing signs of distress in the Treasury markets, President Trump announced a 90 day pause on any tariffs over 10% except for China. China, which had responded with tariffs on U.S. goods ended with a tariff of over 100%. The rest of April was occupied with a steady series of exemptions for individual products, sectors or markets, with equity markets rallying in response to each rollback.

The MSCI World Index ended the month with a decline of 4.13%. The U.S. market was the weakest major market as expectations grew for significant economic weakness deriving from the tariffs. European markets, after initial volatility, were more measured, with the MSCI Europe ending the month with a decline of 0.82%. Yields on long dated treasuries rose in the month and the dollar weakened, although both markets recovered partially from their mid-month lows.

## Rising economic fears drove a search for safety

**The Portfolio** declined by 5.54% in the month, underperforming the MSCI World Index which declined by 4.13%. The major source of underperformance in the month relative to the MSCI World Index was the style of the fund, as over the course of the month the value style underperformed the broad market. Stock selection was modestly positive in the month, as the portfolio benefited from not only strong performers within the fund but also from some of the largest companies in the index, such as Apple, being particularly exposed to tariffs. The MSCI World Value declined by 6.27% in the month, due to the weakness of the value style. The outperformance of the fund relative to the MSCI World Value Index was due to some positive stock selection as well as geographic and sector allocation, partially offset by the portfolio having more exposure to the value style than the value index.

Energy was the weakest performing sector in the month, as the price of oil plummeted as fears over the strength of the global economy grew. Utilities and Consumer Staples, typically considered defensive sectors, were the best performing in the month.

Despite declining markets and elevated volatility, the portfolio had a number of holdings that performed well during the month. Toyota Industries was a strong performer after receiving an offer to buy out the company. U.S. specialty products company Leggett and Platt also performed well in the month as it reported stronger than expected earnings. French food and nutrition company Danone was a strong performer in the month as it also reported earnings ahead of market expectations.

See performance and fund data

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## Strategy

Ethical Global Value invests in global equities from developed markets, cf. the fund's prospectus. Stocks are selected using the value strategy, meaning that through careful fundamental analysis, the team strives to identify companies that trade at healthy discounts relative to intrinsic value. A risk-aware approach to the portfolio construction ensures a well-diversified portfolio and broad exposure across sectors and regions. Ethix SRI Advisors performs an unbiased screening to ensure that only ethically sound companies are included in the portfolio.

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