51 European organisations call for fair competition through more ambitious EU Trade Defence

The fight for industrial capacity is reshaping the global landscape. EU upstream and downstream industries face the same challenges: unfair trade practices and persistent overcapacity/oversupply induced by state-driven distortions. This comes at a time when European producers are already confronted, among others, with high energy costs that put the EU's competitiveness under strain.

The EU needs to operate on a level playing field that ensures fair, rules-based competition. For instance, it is well-known that China's imports to the EU are skyrocketing: in 2025, the EU goods deficit with China was about €359.8 billion (almost €1 billion every day)[1]. This reflects a broader, structural imbalance that distorts competition, weakens Europe's industrial base and increases strategic dependencies.

Europe cannot maintain and grow its industrial base, quality jobs, and attract investment without the ability to respond effectively to unfair trade practices and distortions. This is key, next to improving framework conditions to improve EU competitiveness. We therefore call on Member States to support three actions for faster and more effective use of the EU trade defence toolbox:

- **Immediately allocate sufficient, additional human resources to DG TRADE**. A swift allocation of additional staff is urgently needed within DG TRADE to bolster its units dealing with trade defence[2]. This will allow to conduct quicker, and more, investigations. Timely opening and concluding investigations are essential, as they are usually excessively slow compared to those in other countries. Increasing staff and strengthening technical and legal expertise will ensure a high level of analytical rigour and enable the more efficient handling of increasingly complex cases. Together with other facilitating measures, this is also key to improving SMEs' and mid-sized companies' use of trade defence.

- **Immediately use Trade Defence Instruments (TDIs) more effectively**. The Commission should make full use of the possibilities afforded by the existing legal framework (including anti-dumping measures, anti-subsidy measures and safeguards) to quickly and effectively deploy trade defence measures where justified. This includes addressing circumvention practices, further integrating environmental and social costs in the calculation of dumping margins and duties and addressing threats to entire value chains through a value-chain approach. In light of the closely integrated value chains, it is crucial to avoid negative impacts between the EU and close European partners, such as Norway, Switzerland and

[1] Trade in goods with China in 2025 - News articles - Eurostat

[2] Today, the DG TRADE's trade defence workforce is roughly the same size as that of the United Kingdom — around 140 staff — even though the EU covers 27 Member States and an economy about five times larger than the UK's

the UK. Effective trade defence instruments serve to strengthen European competitiveness, safeguard industrial value chains and support quality jobs.

- **Propose a new policy toolkit to address state-driven distortions**. The EU industry is paying the price of broad state-driven distortions from third countries and the increased investments by those countries in production facilities in third-country markets, which have contributed to additional surges in underpriced exports to the EU. Against this background, the EU needs a new, targeted policy toolkit to address such distortions of competition in line with a full value chain approach and the EU's international obligations.

List of Signatories:

EUROPEAN METALS
industriAll EUROPEAN TRADE UNION
cefic
EUROFER THE EUROPEAN STEEL ASSOCIATION
European Aluminium
orgalim EUROPE'S TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRIES
CLEPA European Association of Automotive Suppliers
PLASTICS EUROPE Enabling a sustainable future
EURATEX THE EUROPEAN APPAREL AND TEXTILE CONFEDERATION
Cepi RENEWABLE RECYCLED RESPONSIBLE EUROPEAN
Cement Europe
Fertilizers Europe
AEGIS EUROPE MANUFACTURING FOR THE UNION
Cerame-Unie The European Ceramic Industry Association
EURO ALLIAGES COMITÉ DE LIAISON DES INDUSTRIES DE FERRO-ALLIAGES
RECHARGE ADVANCED RECHARGEABLE & LITHIUM BATTERIES ASSOCIATION
Recycling Europe
TYRES EUROPE
CEMA European Agricultural Machinery Association
IMA Europe
EUROFORGE
FEAD European Waste Management Association
esmc EUROPEAN SOLAR MANUFACTURING COUNCIL
SEA Europe Shipyards' & Maritime Equipment Association
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CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT


European
Footwear
Confederation


cecimo
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ECMA
European Candle Manufacturers Association


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