

Report on EU trade defence – effective protection against unfair trade

The Juncker Commission has strengthened Europe's trade defence toolbox through two major reforms. Since 2014, it has also applied 95 measures to ensure that European companies and workers can compete on fair terms. Two-thirds of all the 135 measures in place concern imports from China.

In 2018 the EU completed the biggest overhaul of its anti-dumping and anti-subsidy legislation since 1994. The reform strengthened the EU's defences against dumped and subsidised imports. Against this background, the EU continued its intense activity and finalised a high number of investigations resulting in new protection measures, in particular in the steel sector. The year 2018 was also notable in that the EU imposed three safeguard measures, the first since 2002.

President of the European Commission Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: *"We are open traders, but we cannot afford to be naïve. Not all of our trade partners want to play by the same rules that we do – we must not be taken advantage of and must protect the EU, its companies and its workers against unfair trading practices. Our intense work in this field in the past few years bears fruit: we have now in place tools that are better-suited for today's global economy and we will continue working to ensure our companies and workers are shielded from any unfair practices."*

Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** said: *"Open economies need effective tools to enforce fair competition, especially at a time where some countries don't want to play by the rules. This report shows that our trade defence team is working harder than ever to safeguard jobs and protect the EU from unfair trade practices around the world. Thanks to our recent reforms, we are able to act quicker and our tools are more suited to the current global economic challenges."*

According to today's report, since the beginning of the mandate of the Juncker Commission in November 2014 until December 2018, the Commission has imposed 95 trade defence measures. At the end of 2018, the EU had 93 definitive anti-dumping measures and 12 anti-subsidy measures in place. Almost 44% of them were measures applying to imported steel products. Of all the measures in force, over two-thirds (68%) concern products imported from China.

EU trade defence measures provide welcome relief to European companies. In some cases, the duties resulted in a decrease of unfairly priced imports of up to 99%. At the same time, the duties are set at a level that is sufficient to restore competitive conditions on the EU market, without overburdening EU consumer and industries that rely on imports.

The main highlights of 2018:

- **Major overhaul of TDI legislation:** The EU reformed its anti-dumping and anti-subsidy legislation in 2018 to react more effectively to unfair trade practices that harm EU producers. The changes have made investigations faster and more transparent, with an additional focus on helping smaller companies. These new rules, which started applying for new investigations in 2018, include the possibility to impose higher duty levels in cases where there are more serious market distortions.
- **Continued high EU trade defence activity:** In 2018, the EU initiated 10 new investigations, of which four concerned imported steel products. There were 14 decisions taken regarding new measures. The EU also initiated 17 investigations to review existing measures, with seven decisions taken to keep measures in place. Furthermore, the Commission initiated three safeguard investigations, one in the steel sector and two bilateral ones on rice with Cambodia and Myanmar.
- **Resolute action to safeguard EU steel producers:** Following the imposition of measures by the US on steel and aluminium, the EU took action to address the disruptive effects of the measures on the EU steel sector. This was necessary to avoid global trade diversion towards the EU that threatened to damage EU steel producers.
- **Strong and continuous defence of EU exporters targeted in foreign investigations:** the Commission intervened in around 70 foreign trade defence investigations targeting EU exporters in cases of unwarranted or abusive use of trade defence instruments. This led to the successful removal or non-imposition of duties in many cases. The number of trade defence measures targeting EU exporters now stands at 174, as compared to 162 in 2017. This upward trend is expected to continue over the next years.

For more information

[2018 EU trade defence report](#)

[Supplement to the report](#) (Commission Staff Working Document)

[EU trade defence – factsheet](#)

[More information about EU trade defence procedures and existing cases](#)