

EU Trade Defence Modernisation: Importers' perspective key for balanced results

The European Commission has today published its proposals for modernised Trade Defence Instruments. After the failure of a similar, more controversial exercise in 2007, there is now an opportunity to reconcile importers' and producers' interests in a mutually acceptable way.

"Intended to help domestic manufacturers, antidumping duties cause considerable damage to EU importers. To improve the system, it is essential to consider [traders' needs](#) properly", said Ralph Kamphöner, EuroCommerce Director International Trade & Wholesale.

"Today's proposals are a moderate package that will please no economic operator entirely. But, with some amendments, it could well pave the way for a viable compromise to be agreed with the Parliament and the Member States", he added.

Importers need predictability. They need to calculate price, quality and quantity in due time. Orders are binding and paid for a long time in advance. A shipment clause covering average transport times would mitigate the loss of planning certainty incurred by EU trade defence.

The new guidelines on the Union Interest Test (to ensure the respect of overall economic interests in the EU – importers, manufacturers, consumers) and three other procedural issues are an important contribution to more legal certainty. However, they still need to better reflect the reality of an importer's business. The consultation launched today is a good opportunity to get this right.

Finally, optimised rules for reviews and refunds, an upgraded helpdesk for SMEs and facilitated cooperation for importers are helpful additional proposals contained in the package. On the negative side, the Commission intends to water down the lesser duty rule and to initiate trade defence investigations *ex officio*.

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For further information, please contact:

Marjolein Raes
Director of Advocacy & Communications
Tel: +32 2 737 05 99
raes@eurocommerce.be

EuroCommerce and the commerce sector

EuroCommerce represents the retail, wholesale and international trade sectors in Europe. Its membership includes commerce federations and companies in 31 European countries.

Commerce plays a unique role in the European economy, acting as the link between manufacturers and the nearly 500 million consumers across Europe over a billion times a day. It is a dynamic and labour-intensive sector, generating 11% of the EU's GDP. One company out of three in Europe is active in the commerce sector. Over 99% of the 6 million companies in commerce are small and medium-sized enterprises. It also includes some of Europe's most successful companies. The sector is a major source of employment creation: 33 million Europeans work in commerce, which is one of the few remaining job-creating activities in Europe. It also supports millions of dependent jobs throughout the supply chain from small local suppliers to international businesses.