



ETTF on pending import tariffs for wood products originating in USA

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The European Timber Trade Federation ETTF is the umbrella federation for the EU timber trading and importing federations. We unite member federations in 9 EU countries and Switzerland, plus several associated members.

ETTF wishes to point out that these trade measures were initiated by the US administration and that we support the EU Commission in taking the necessary measure to defend the interests of the EU. An escalation of imposed tariffs and counter tariffs would be very harmful to both business and end consumers in the EU – especially if tariffs were applied on raw materials instead of finished goods.

ETTF fears that import related costs such as tariffs or import duties would have to be passed on to customers and consumers, which in turn would lead to a reduced demand of an otherwise very sustainable and sought-after product. Reduced demand in wood products would then lead to an increased demand in less sustainable, less environmentally friendly and less recyclable products.

The absence of affordable species from the US, especially in the decorative hardwood sector (such as Walnut, Hickory, Maple, Black Cherry) cannot be replaced by equivalent species that are available in the EU. Especially (black) walnut does not grow in the EU, the species found in the EU look different in color and grain texture. This would lead to serious market distortions, especially in the wood furniture sector and any sector that uses decorative hardwood veneers as faces. Another example is American oak; of course there are several EU oak species, but these as well look different and are heavily sought after for many years now, so availability is limited, but applications of these species are abundant. Secure and reliable supply is crucial.

Furthermore, imports in the wood sector are overwhelmingly classified by unfinished or semi-finished products, such as logs, timber and veneer. Inherent to these products is a large proportion of the value chain to happen in the EU, not in the US. Adding import tariffs on these products would disproportionately harm EU importers and the EU value chain that that follows and is reliant on imports.

Key messages

- For some EU companies, US imports are crucial for their supply
- Hampering the free trade forms an artificial barrier, also in light of achieving the EU green deal as wood products are widely considered carbon-negative
- In some fields, the imports of US products cannot be interchanged by products of domestic (EU) supply
- The EU has a significant trade surplus in wood products with the United States. EU-tariffs on wood imports would likely result in the US administration having to impose counter tariffs on products going into the US.

Adjustments following import tariffs in foreign trade cannot offset the decline in sales. With the current crisis in many EU construction markets, demand for wood products across Europe remains weak. At the same time, rising raw material prices and labor costs are putting additional pressure on companies, especially given the relatively low prices wood products achieve. Foreign markets, which have always been crucial for a globally oriented industry like the EU timber trade, are of significant importance and must remain open. If tariffs have to be imposed, these should ideally target processed goods manufactured in the US.

Our most urgent questions that we desire to be taken into account:

- If the EU imposes tariffs, when will these come into effect?
- If the EU imposes tariffs, what about goods already in transit?
- What about "old contracts", will there be a transition period?
- What will be the amount of tariffs, will tariffs be the same for all wood HS codes or will they differ in the section of wood products?

Yours sincerely,



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