



EU-U.S. trade talks: European Commission publishes progress report

Brussels, 30 January 2019

The European Commission has today published a report on the implementation of the 25 July 2018 Joint Statement agreed by Presidents Juncker and Trump.

In line with the Commission's commitment to transparency, the report provides a detailed overview on the state of play of the talks so far. The document was sent today to the European Parliament and Member States.

The [Joint Statement](#) launched a new phase in EU-U.S. trade relations, preventing an escalation in trade tensions and setting out a positive transatlantic trade agenda. The EU and the U.S. agreed to set up an Executive Working Group in order to take this work programme forward. On the EU side, the Executive Working Group is headed by Cecilia **Malmström**, the EU's Commissioner for Trade, and on the U.S. side the talks are led by U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer.

EU Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** said: "*Trade discussions and negotiations in which the EU is involved have to be transparent and inclusive and the ongoing talks with the United States are no exception. After publishing the Commission's draft proposals for negotiating mandates, today we are making available this detailed report. It is all out there for everyone to see what we are discussing and, as importantly, what we are not discussing. For instance, we are not proposing any negotiations with the US to reduce or eliminate tariffs on agricultural products. It is my firm intention to ensure the highest level of transparency throughout this process.*"

Commissioner **Malmström** and Ambassador Lighthizer launched talks in Brussels on 10 September 2018 and took part in further meetings in New York on 25 September and in Washington on 14 November and on 8 and 10 January 2019. A number of technical level meetings have also taken place since.

With the letter and the spirit of the Joint Statement in mind, the EU has proposed a number of both short-term and medium-term actions to take work forward. The main focus of the talks in the first few months has been exploring how to deliver results on regulatory issues. On the EU side, progress has also been made on facilitating imports of U.S. soya beans. Imports of U.S. soya beans by the European Union increased by 114% over the current market year (July-end January 2019), compared to the same period in the previous year. With a share of 77% of EU soya beans imports, the U.S. is now Europe's main supplier and the Commission [just concluded](#) that U.S. soya beans meet the technical requirements to be used in biofuels in the EU, a decision that will further expand its market opportunities in Europe.

For the implementation of some elements of the Joint Statement the Commission needs specific negotiating mandates authorised by the Council. For negotiations on industrial tariffs and on how to facilitate the process by which companies have their products tested (conformity assessment), the Commission submitted [draft mandates](#) to the EU Member States on 18 January 2019.

The Joint Statement also makes clear that these talks are based on the condition that the U.S. will impose no new tariffs or taxes on EU exports, including on cars and car parts. The Commission is also clear that the conclusion of negotiations on the elimination of industrial tariffs is dependent on the US lifting their current measures on EU steel and aluminium, in place since June 2018.

Next steps

On 7 February Commissioner **Malmström** will be taking part in a meeting of the Expert Group on EU Trade Agreements that will have EU-U.S. relations on the agenda. This group was set up in 2017 as a new forum for civil society organisations to advise on the Commission's trade policy.

For More Information

[Interim Report on the work of the Executive Working Group](#)

[Joint statement](#)

[EU-U.S. Trade Talks: European Commission presents draft negotiating mandates](#)

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