



EU Commission head discusses U.S. tariff response with auto, steel and pharma leaders

ReutersBy Julia Payne and Maggie FickBy: Reuters | Apr 07 2025 at 09:55 AM | [International Trade](#)

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen held a call with metals industry representatives on Monday and was speaking to the automobile sector later to discuss how to respond to U.S. tariffs.

The calls aimed to collect data for further counter-measures beyond Brussels' upcoming response to Washington's steel duties, which will be voted on later this week. A call with the European pharmaceuticals industry is planned for Tuesday.

European and Asian shares and oil prices plummeted on Monday on fears that U.S. President Donald Trump's duties could push up prices, weaken demand and even trigger a global recession.

Von der Leyen's invitation said the EU would this year propose "a trade measure replacing the steel safeguards as of 1 July 2026" to protect against "negative trade-related effects caused by global overcapacities".

A source who attended the metals call said the group asked for measures to deal with "indirect impacts" from the tariffs, and urgent action to keep aluminium and steel scrap in the EU.

The Commission said last month it would consider export duties on EU scrap sales. It also tightened existing safeguards on steel to cut imports by 15% on April 1.

"Constructive meeting ... Sense of urgency, clarity of purpose is much increased compared to a few months ago," the source said.

The call with the auto industry was scheduled for 3:30 p.m. (1330 GMT), according to ACEA, the industry group in Brussels.

The group have requested a negotiated solution, a spokesperson added. Carmakers have been pushing the EU to lower its tariffs on U.S. car imports. BMW in January urged a cut to 2.5% from 10%.

The call was set to include lobby groups as well as CEOs and chairs from BMW, Volkswagen, Stellantis, Scania, Daimler Truck and Bosch.

The Commission initially invited the chief executives of EU-headquartered pharma companies for a meeting, three industry sources said.

A fourth source said the Commission may have later invited Swiss-based firms such as Novartis and Roche. Reuters was not immediately able to confirm this. A Roche spokesperson said the company was an active member of EFPIA but declined to comment further.

The European big pharma trade lobby EFPIA and the European biotech group Europabio both said their directors general were attending. An invitation letter said the meeting was scheduled for 10:30 a.m. (0830 GMT) on Tuesday.

Pharmaceuticals were exempt from the duties Trump announced last week, but he says they will face separate tariffs.

The industry will push the Commission to spell out how it plans to enable pharma and biotech firms to manufacture more in Europe, a source attending Tuesday's meeting said.

They said that could include streamlining regulatory processes that have recently discouraged some companies from conducting clinical trials in Europe.



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