

# EU plans to cut steel imports by 15% as Trump tariffs bite

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THE EUROPEAN UNION will tighten steel import quotas to reduce inflows by a further 15% from April, a senior EU official said on Wednesday, in a move aimed at preventing cheap steel flooding the European market after Washington imposed new tariffs.

European steel producers already battling high energy prices and competition from Asia and elsewhere warn that the EU risks becoming a dumping ground for cheap steel diverted from the U.S. market, which could kill off Europe's plants.

"During a period when nobody is respecting WTO (World Trade Organization) rules and everyone refers to national security...the EU can't be the only continent that lets its industry fall apart," European Commission Executive Vice-President Stephane Sejourne told Reuters.

Given the U.S. market was now making less commercial sense with a 25% tariff imposed by President Donald Trump's administration in place, Sejourne forecast that producers from Canada, India and China would look to sell increasing volumes in Europe.

The CEO of Europe's No. 2 steel maker, Thyssenkrupp, said on Wednesday the United States imported around 23 million metric tons of steel last year, volumes that were now looking for other destinations, including Europe, as a result of import tariffs.

Shares of ArcelorMittal, Europe's top steel producer, rose after the Reuters report, hitting their highest for the session. They were up 0.9% at 124.7 GMT.

The Commission will on Wednesday propose a raft of trade-related measures to boost its ailing metals industry, part of a new European Steel and Metals Action Plan. A draft of the plan seen by Reuters earlier this week



Stephane Sejourne, European Commission Executive Vice-President

showed the EU was studying import curbs. The Commission will also consult aluminium producers, facing similar headaches to steelmakers, on whether to launch a fast-track investigation for safeguards.

Sejourne, who is responsible for defining the bloc's industrial strategy, said a first measure would be to reduce import quotas, known as safeguards, for multiple steel grades from April 1, which would cut inflows by approximately 15%.

Volumes imported within the quotas reflect established trade flows and are not subject to tariffs. Any steel imports outside the quota will be hit by a 25% tariff. Since July 2019, the quota volumes have increased by over 25% as the bloc complies with WTO rules. In 2024, the EU imported about 60 million metric tons of steel out of which 30 million tons were within the tariff-free quota.

The Commission will also set out new measures in the third quarter to replace the reinforced safeguards, which under WTO rules cannot be extended beyond June 30, 2026.

—REUTERS