

EU, UAE launch free trade talks amid US tariff pressure

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The European Union (EU) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have formally launched negotiations for a bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA), marking a potential breakthrough towards the EU's first comprehensive trade deal in the Gulf region, said the European Commission.

This initiative also aims to expand further the EU's global trade network, which currently comprises 44 agreements with 76 countries, said the Commission on Wednesday.

According to a press release of the Commission, Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security Maros Sefcovic and UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi met in Dubai to reaffirm their shared vision for the agreement and agree

on a roadmap, with substantive work expected to begin as early as June.

The first meetings of negotiating teams will focus on reducing tariffs on goods and facilitating services, digital trade and investment flows reports Xinhua news agency.

Talks will also explore ways to boost trade in strategic sectors, such as renewable energy, green hydrogen and critical raw materials.

Sefcovic emphasized that a bilateral FTA would unlock "tremendous business

opportunities" for both European and Emirati enterprises, while also bolstering the EU's regional engagement with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen hailed the launch of the talks as a "significant milestone," noting that the agreement would deepen EU-Gulf ties, create new opportunities for European businesses, and strengthen cooperation in key areas such as renewable energy and digital technologies.

