

S&Ds call on EU leaders to stand firm against Trump's populist and protectionist punitive tariffs

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Reacting to the announcement that US punitive tariffs on steel and aluminium on EU imports would enter into force as of tomorrow, S&D Group leader Udo Bullmann said:

“The imposition of US tariffs on EU steel and aluminium exports is unacceptable and unjustified. These punitive tariffs are in clear breach of international law and it is simply absurd to consider the EU a national security threat to the US. Protectionism and unilateral actions only contribute to the spiralling out of control of a crisis.

“We are not naïve free traders. On the contrary, we are committed to protecting our European workers and industries from unfair competition, dumped imports or foreign take-overs of key industries by state-owned investors. However, the way to do this is by respecting the rule-of-law, not through bullying and illegal actions.

“I am deeply worried about the latest noises coming out of Washington on imposing tariffs on European cars and falsely presenting the EU’s data protection regulation as a trade barrier. We Europeans care deeply about data privacy and data security and will not allow our citizens to be turned into data cows to be milked by digital giants for massive profits. Whoever wants to do trade with us, must respect our values.

“We call on EU leaders to stand firm and united, not to give in to bullying and protect European workers and industries.”

S&D spokesperson for EU-USA trade relationships and chair of the European parliament’s trade committee, Bernd Lange, said:

“Trump has once again proven that ‘America first’ means ‘America alone’- his short-sighted, populist actions will further alienate the United States from former friends and partners. The American President’s reckless decision will be countered by Europe with the entire toolbox of the WTO. Protectionism will only ever cause harm; we can only hope that President Trump wakes up to this realisation in time before he does any more harm to his own citizens.

“Europe needs to stand united. We will not cave in to pressure and will not be bullied into any deal.

“The future of the multilateral trading order is at stake. We cannot twiddle our thumbs while the US President is trying to tear apart the rules that govern international trade. We need to take a stance and counter this aggression.”

S&D Group spokesperson for trade, Alessia Mosca, said:

“The Trump administration has again revealed its true face and it is not a pretty one. To appease American voters, they are imposing punitive steel and aluminium tariffs under the guise of national security concerns. They either don’t understand or don’t care that the American people will be among the first to suffer the consequences of this decision.

“The Socialists and Democrats call on the European Commission and all actors to continue working within the framework of the World Trade Organisation to unblock the current situation. We fully back the European Commission’s decision to protect European workers and industries through a series of retaliatory measures.”