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Notice of initiation of a safeguard investigation concerning imports of certain new hybrid vehicles for the transport of persons

(C/2026/5780)

The information available to the European Commission ('the Commission') has revealed a recent significant increase of imports of certain new hybrid vehicles for the transport of persons. These trends in imports appear to call for safeguard measures. The Commission has therefore decided to initiate *ex-officio* a safeguard investigation, pursuant to Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2015/478 of the European Parliament and of the Council [1] and Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2015/755 of the European Parliament and of the Council [2].

1. PRODUCT UNDER INVESTIGATION

The product subject to this investigation is certain new hybrid vehicles, principally designed for the transport of nine or less persons, including the driver, with both internal combustion piston engine and [one or more] electric motor[s], as motors for propulsion, (regardless of the number of wheels set in motion), whether capable or not of being charged by plugging to an external source of electric power, currently falling under CN codes ex 8703 40 10, ex 8703 50 00, ex 8703 60 10, and ex 8703 70 00 (TARIC code 8703 40 10 10, 8703 40 10 90, 8703 50 00 10, 8703 60 10 10, 8703 60 10 90, 8703 70 00 10).

Vehicles with an electric power source that is used only for non-propulsion functions, L-category vehicles according to Regulation (EU) No 168/2013, and motorcycles are excluded from the investigation.

2. INCREASE IN IMPORTS AND THREAT OF INJURY

The analysis of the information available indicates that total imports of the product concerned increased from 957 965 pieces in 2023 to 1 423 691 pieces in the period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026. In other words, imports of the product concerned increased by 49 % over that period. The increase in imports appears to be the result of unforeseen developments, such as rapidly growing production in third countries, the closing of markets as a result of trade-restrictive measures adopted by a number of third countries in recent years, making the Union an attractive export destination, and the ensuing risk of further increased imports on the Union market.

There is also sufficient evidence showing that the volumes of these imports are threatening to cause significant overall impairment of the position of the Union industry, based on economic indicators specified in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2015/478 and Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2015/755. In particular, this evidence shows that imports of the products concerned have had, among other consequences, a negative impact on the market share of the Union producers in the most recent period and on the profitability. Furthermore, imports are entering the market at prices that are significantly below Union producers' prices. In addition, the rate of the increase in low-priced imports is accelerating, and stocks are increasingly present. A continued surge of low-priced imports is likely to cause serious injury to Union producers in the very near future.

3. PROCEDURE

Having determined, after informing the Member States, that there is sufficient evidence to justify the initiation of an investigation, the Commission hereby initiates an ex-officio investigation pursuant to Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2015/478 and Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2015/755.

The investigation will determine whether, as a result of unforeseen developments, the product concerned is being imported into the Union in such increased quantities and/or under such terms or conditions as to cause, or threaten to cause, serious injury to the Union producers.

[1] Regulation (EU) 2015/478 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2015 on common rules for imports (OJ L 83, 27.3.2015, p. 16).

[2] Regulation (EU) 2015/755 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2015 on common rules for imports from certain third countries (OJ L 123, 19.5.2015, p. 33).

3.1. **Procedure for the determination of injury and investigating Union producers**

A determination of serious injury or threat of serious injury to the Union producers shall cover in particular the factors listed in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2015/478 and Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2015/755.

In order to establish whether the Union industry is injured or facing a threat of serious injury, Union producers of the product under investigation are requested to participate in the Commission investigation.

For the purpose of this investigation, interested parties may request anonymity.

3.2. **Written submissions, questionnaire replies and correspondence**

In order to obtain the information necessary for the investigation, the Commission will collect questionnaire replies from producers, associations of producers, importers and dealers in the Union. The questionnaires will be published on the day of publication of this Notice on the website of the Directorate-General for Trade and Economic Security https://tron.trade.ec.europa.eu/investigations/ongoing. The completed questionnaires must reach the Commission within 21 days from the date of the date of publication of this Notice.

All interested parties including exporting producers, importers and dealers of the product concerned, their associations and third country representations are invited to make known their views in writing, submit information and to provide supporting evidence. Written submissions in a free format should be submitted within 21 days of the date of publication of this Notice in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Interested parties may make themselves known by contacting the Commission, preferably by email, immediately but no later than 15 days after the publication of this Notice in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Any submission of views and information after the above deadlines may be disregarded.

3.3. **Instructions for making written submissions, for sending completed questionnaires and correspondence**

Information submitted to the Commission for the purpose of trade defence investigations shall be free from copyrights. Interested parties, before submitting to the Commission information and/or data which is subject to third party copyrights, must request specific permission to the copyright holder explicitly allowing a) the Commission to use the information and data for the purpose of this trade defence proceeding and b) to provide the information and/or data to interested parties to this investigation in a form that allows them to exercise their rights of defence.

Interested parties may request that their identity is not disclosed. Anonymity will be granted based on good cause shown in the request.

All written submissions, including the information requested in this Notice, completed questionnaires and correspondence provided by interested parties for which confidential treatment is requested shall be labelled 'Sensitive' ([3]). Parties submitting information in the course of this investigation are invited to reason their request for confidential treatment.

Parties providing 'Sensitive' information are required to furnish non-confidential summaries of it pursuant to Article 8 Regulation (EU) 2015/478 and Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2015/755, which will be labelled 'For inspection by interested parties'. Those summaries should be sufficiently detailed to permit a reasonable understanding of the substance of the information submitted in confidence and must reach the Commission at the same time as the 'Sensitive' version.

If a party providing confidential information fails to show good cause for a confidential treatment request or does not furnish a non-confidential summary of it in the requested format and quality, the Commission may disregard such information unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated from appropriate sources that the information is correct.

([3]) A 'Sensitive' document is a document which is considered confidential pursuant to Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2015/478, Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2015/755 and Article 3.2 of the WTO Agreement on Safeguards. It is also a document protected pursuant to Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 145, 31.5.2001, p. 43).

Interested parties are invited to make all submissions and requests via TRON.tdi (https://tron.trade.ec.europa.eu/tron/TDI) including scanned powers of attorney. By using TRON.tdi or e-mail, interested parties express their agreement with the rules applicable to electronic submissions contained in the document **'CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN TRADE DEFENCE CASES'** published on the website of the Directorate-General for Trade: https://europa.eu/!7tHpY3. The interested parties must indicate their name, address, telephone and a valid e-mail address and they should ensure that the provided e-mail address is a functioning official business email which is checked on a daily basis. Once contact details are provided, the Commission will communicate with interested parties by TRON.tdi or email only, unless they explicitly request to receive all documents from the Commission by another means of communication or unless the nature of the document to be sent requires the use of a registered mail. For further rules and information concerning correspondence with the Commission including principles that apply to submissions via TRON.tdi, interested parties should consult the communication instructions with interested parties referred to above.

Commission address for correspondence:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Trade and Economic Security
Directorate G, Unit G5
Office: CHAR 05/152
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

TRON.tdi: https://tron.trade.ec.europa.eu/tron/tdi

Email address: TRADE-SAFEGUARD-HYBRIDS@ec.europa.eu

3.4. **Hearings**

Pursuant to Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2015/478 and Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2015/755, all interested parties may request to be heard by the Commission's investigation services. Any request to be heard must be made in writing and within 21 days of the date of publication of this Notice in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

4. **INSPECTION OF INFORMATION**

Interested parties who have made known their views or submitted information or requested to be heard in accordance with Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2015/478 and Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2015/755, and representatives of the exporting countries, may, upon written request, inspect all information made available to the Commission in connection with the investigation other than internal documents prepared by the authorities of the Union or its Member States, provided that that information is relevant to the presentation of their case and not confidential within the meaning of Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2015/478 or Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2015/755, and that it is used by the Commission in the investigation. Interested parties which have come forward may communicate their views on the information in question to the Commission and those views may be taken into consideration where they are supported by sufficient evidence.

5. **EXTENSION TO THE TIME LIMITS SPECIFIED IN THIS NOTICE**

Extensions to the time limits provided for in this Notice should only be requested in exceptional circumstances and will only be granted if duly justified upon good cause being showed.

In any event, any extension to the deadline to reply to questionnaires will be limited normally to 3 days, and as a rule will not exceed 7 days.

Regarding time limits for the submission of other information specified in the Notice of initiation, extensions will be limited to 3 days unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated.

6. **NON-COOPERATION**

In cases where any interested party refuses access to or does not provide the necessary information within the time limits, or significantly impedes the investigation, findings may be made on the basis of facts available, in accordance with Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2015/478 and Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2015/755. Where it is found that any interested party has supplied false or misleading information, the information may be disregarded and use may be made of facts available.

7. **HEARING OFFICER**

The Hearing Officer acts as an interface between the interested parties and the Commission investigation services. The Hearing Officer reviews requests for access to the file, disputes regarding the confidentiality of documents, requests for extension of time limits and any other request concerning the rights of defence of interested parties and third parties as may arise during the proceeding.

Interested parties may request an intervention of the Hearing Officer. In principle, these interventions shall be limited to the issues that have arisen during the current review proceeding.

A request for an intervention of the Hearing Officer should be made in writing and should specify the reasons for the request. In principle, the timeframe set out in Section 3.2 of this Notice for submissions to the Commission apply *mutatis mutandis* to requests for intervention to the Hearing Officer. Where such requests are submitted outside the relevant timeframes, the Hearing Officer may also examine the reasons for such late requests, having due regard to the interests of good administration and the timely completion of the investigation.

For further information and contact details interested parties may consult the Hearing Officer's web pages on DG Trade's website: https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/contacts/hearing-officer_en.

8. **SCHEDULE OF THE INVESTIGATION**

If the Commission determines that measures are necessary, the Commission shall take the necessary decisions in accordance with Chapter V of Regulations (EU) 2015/478 and (EU) 2015/755 respectively, no later than nine months from the date of initiation, unless exceptional circumstances exist, in which case that time limit may be extended by a maximum period of two months. If the time limit is extended, the Commission will publish a Notice in the *Official Journal of the European Union* setting forth the duration of the extension and a summary of the reasons.

If critical circumstances so require, the Commission may impose provisional measures where a preliminary determination provides clear evidence that increased imports have caused or are threatening to cause serious injury. The duration of such measures shall not exceed 200 days.

9. **PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA**

Any personal data collected in this investigation will be treated in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council ([4]).

A data protection notice that informs all individuals of the processing of personal data in the framework of Commission's trade defence activities is available on DG Trade's website: https://europa.eu/!vr4g9W.

([4]) Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39).