

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001192/25
to the Commission**

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(20 March 2025)

Subject: Is the Commission aware of the serious trade difficulties faced by French wines and spirits?

On Wednesday 12 March, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Maroš Šefčovič, the Commissioner for Trade, Economic Security, Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency, unveiled retaliatory measures in response to the new US tariffs on steel and aluminium imports.

While these measures are laudable in principle, it is regrettable that the US bourbon is targeted, exposing French wines and spirits to potential US taxes. French spirits are already suffering from the recent increase in Chinese taxes, which severely penalises them.

1. Is the Commission aware of the serious trade difficulties faced by the French spirits sector?
2. Can it explain why it is exposing the wine and spirits sector to US taxes, given the serious difficulties it is facing?

Supporters ⁽¹⁾

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Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(15 May 2025)

The Commission regrets the decision of the United States (US) to impose tariffs on EU exports of steel and aluminium on 12 March 2025. The Commission sees no justification for these tariffs. The Commission has emphasised to the US its wish to work together to address global overcapacities in these sectors and that the EU is not the problem — but is part of the solution. The Commission's policy for the promotion of agricultural products allows specific promotion arrangements in case the markets would be disturbed. The recently published Commission legislative proposal to support the wine sector ⁽²⁾, includes an amendment to increase the duration of support for promotion operations under wine sectorial interventions, to allow for better market consolidation.

The Commission has also removed all the alcoholic products which were part of the package of countermeasures to the US steel and aluminium tariffs and of the published list for consultation. This includes bourbon, wine, and other spirits. The current exclusion keeps space for de-escalation and preserves room for negotiation. However, the Commission remains fully committed to defending its interests.

Finally, in light of the decision by the US to delay by 90 days its country-specific universal tariffs on EU exports at a level of 20%, the EU has decided to put its countermeasures on EUR 21 billion of US exports on hold for the same length of time.

The Commission's priority remains to achieve a mutually beneficial negotiated solution.

⁽¹⁾ This question is supported by Members other than the authors: Jean-Paul Garraud (Pfe), Julie Rechagneux (Pfe).
⁽²⁾ COM(2025)0137 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0137>.