



**Press Release**  
Luxembourg, 28 May 2019

## Auditors inspect EU trade defence instruments

The European Court of Auditors is conducting an audit to assess how successful the European Commission has been in enforcing the EU's trade defence policy. In particular, the auditors will examine whether decisions related to trade defence instruments are appropriate and whether EU action is conducive to proper and efficient implementation.

Through its participation in the World Trade Organisation, the EU is committed to an open and rules-based trading system. Practices that are not compliant with international rules, such as dumping (export sales below domestic prices) and subsidisation (unjustified state support for export products), may be sanctioned. Trade defence instruments allow the European Commission to react to such unfair competition.

The auditors have today published an Audit Preview on the EU's trade defence instruments (TDIs). Audit Previews provide information on an ongoing audit task. They are designed as a source of information for those interested in the policy or programmes being audited.

*“Open trade creates opportunities for European companies. But it also needs to have instruments in place to respond to illegal practices”, said Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz, the member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the audit. “This is the responsibility of the European Commission to effectively protect EU producers against unfair competition.”*

Trade defence measures usually take the form of extra duties to compensate for losses suffered by EU industry as a result of unfair practices. Between 2013 and 2017 in the EU, 142 anti-dumping or anti-subsidy measures were applied. Two thirds of these concerned China. In most cases, these measures targeted industrial (metal and chemical) rather than consumer products, with bicycles (both electric and standard) being a notable exception.

*The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors' audit preview. The full preview is available at [eca.europa.eu](http://eca.europa.eu) in English.*

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The audit will assess whether the European Commission has been successful in enforcing the EU's trade defence policy. In particular, the auditors will examine whether the Commission's Directorate-General for Trade:

- o ensures due and efficient process in applying TDIs;
- o takes appropriate decisions related to TDIs;
- o makes full use of its tools to ensure the effectiveness of TDIs;
- o is appropriately equipped to ensure that TDIs are properly applied.

**Note to Editors**

The audit report is expected to be published in 2020.