



PRESS RELEASE

Business Coalition Urges Ambitious, Open Trade Policy to Boost EU Competitiveness and Prosperity

Brussels, 15 July 2024 – Today, a coalition of 31 leading European business associations has come together to call for an ambitious and open trade policy to support the EU's competitiveness and economic prosperity. In a Joint Declaration, they highlight the importance of trade openness in driving economic growth, creating jobs, and enhancing resilience in the face of global challenges.

Trade remains a cornerstone of the EU's economic strength, directly supporting one in five EU jobs through exports. It significantly benefits consumers by expanding choices—a sentiment shared by 60% of Europeans—and attracts foreign investments that drive growth and innovation. Furthermore, diversified sourcing and export strategies strengthen the EU's ability to navigate and overcome crises.

These facts reinforce the necessity of maintaining openness and growth as fundamental components of the EU's trade policy. Achieving this requires deliberate prioritisation of policies that open new and diversified markets through trade agreements and reduce technical barriers to trade.

In their Joint Declaration, the 31 associations outline their vision for a successful EU trade policy in the upcoming institutional cycle. The coalition's primary call to action is to enhance trade openness by pursuing new and renewed trade agreements to improve market access.

Additionally, the coalition advocates for the appointment of a dedicated Commissioner for Trade to oversee this exclusive EU competence, ensuring focused leadership and strategic direction.

The coalition calls on the EU to continue supporting The World Trade Organization (WTO) and the international rules-based system, which are key to ensuring a fair and predictable trade environment.

Lastly, the open trade coalition calls for increased collaboration with third-country partners and a more robust trade diplomacy to support an ambitious open trade policy.

The coalition firmly believes that these priorities related to strengthening trade openness, appointing a dedicated trade Commissioner, supporting the WTO and enhancing Cooperation and Trade Diplomacy are crucial for the EU to maintain its global economic leadership and secure a prosperous future for its citizens.

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Note to Editor:

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- The Joint Declaration and the full list of signatories are available [here](#).
- 1 in 5 jobs in the EU depend on EU exports to third countries alone, equivalent to 38 million jobs, up two thirds from 2000 ([EU trade statistics](#)).
- Sharp progression in the percentage of the EU GDP represented by trade - [From 25% in 2000 to 51% in 2022](#)
- 40% of the EU agri-food high value and high-quality exports rely on imports of raw materials (e.g. for the production of chocolate or coffee) or feed items (e.g. for the production of meat or milk). Calculated based [on FAO data available](#).