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Seiner Exzellenz dem
Mitglied der Europäischen Kommission
Kommissar für Generationengerechtigkeit,
Jugend, Kultur und Sport
Herrn Glenn Micallef
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Berlin, 2. April 2025

Seiner Exzellenz dem
Mitglied der Europäischen Kommission
Kommissar für Handel und wirtschaftliche
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Herrn Maroš Šefčovič
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Dear Commissioners,

In response to the introduction of new U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from the European Union, the European Commission stated on 12 March 2025 that it intends to launch a package of countermeasures. The Commission suggested a two-stage procedure. The plan is, firstly, to reinstate measures initiated in 2018 and 2020 (volume: 8 billion euros), and, secondly, to introduce a new package of measures (volume: 18 billion euros).

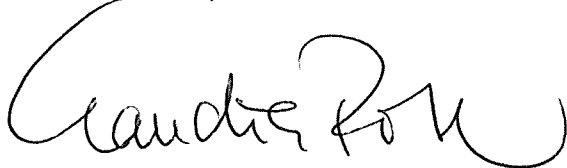
The new package is based on initial considerations, which are summed up in a roughly 100-page list of many types of U.S. goods on which, according to the European Commission, punitive tariffs for their import into the EU could be imposed. According to our information, this list is to be translated into a proposal for a legislative act by the end of this week, to be adopted in the comitology procedure by the end of April.

This approach also includes imposing tariffs on the import of paintings and books from the U.S. – a proposal which I find problematic. As the European Union, we should make sure not to involve in the trade conflict with the U.S. areas that, in Europe's understanding, are vital for democracy and freedom and which, in contrast to many other goods and services, enjoy particular protection for this very reason. In Germany, for instance, they are expressly protected by Article 5 of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz). Through tariffs on paintings and books, we would without an imperative need place burdens on the freedom of culture and the media in a time when cultural and media diversity are under particular threat in the U.S. If we took such a step, the U.S. administration might use the EU measures as a pretext to justify further restrictions of freedoms which we believe are vital for democracies.

I therefore kindly request that you join me in working to make sure that the catalogue of punitive tariffs is not extended to cultural and media goods, such as paintings or books.

I have also sent this letter to my colleagues in the other EU Member States for their information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Claude Rön". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'C' and a stylized 'R'.