US tariffs on European cars: A step back for global automotive trade

Brussels, 27 March 2025 – **In response to the Trump administration's announcement of a 25% tariff on European car imports to the US, CLEPA calls on policymakers to prioritise solutions over trade barriers. Regulatory cooperation and mutual standards would enhance competitiveness on both sides of the Atlantic.**

The transatlantic automotive supply chain is deeply interwoven, supporting thousands of businesses and jobs across Europe and North America. Protectionist tariffs threaten to unravel this long-standing partnership, disrupting the flow of goods, increasing production costs, and ultimately driving up car prices for consumers

Matthias Zink, CLEPA President, stated:

“The United States’ decision to impose a 25% tariff on non-U.S. passenger cars and light commercial vehicles, effective 2 April, is misguided and harmful for everyone – including the U.S. itself.

Modern vehicle manufacturing is not confined to national borders. Components often cross borders multiple times before final assembly – whether in the USA or the EU. Automotive transatlantic value chains today are deeply interwoven.

These protectionist tariffs risk breaking apart a trading partnership built over decades — one that supports thousands of businesses and thousands of jobs across both Europe and North America.

Tariffs of this scale will disrupt the flow of goods, raise production costs, and ultimately make cars more expensive for consumers — including in the United States. I can only repeat: This is not just a European problem. It’s a threat to the economic and industrial resilience of the western world.

We urge policymakers to focus on solutions, not trade barriers. A forward-looking agreement between the EU and the U.S. on regulatory cooperation and mutual standards would strengthen competitiveness on both sides of the Atlantic. Protectionism only delays progress — collaboration drives it.“

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