

UK Steel and Unions respond to EU Commission announcement on steel safeguards

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Commenting on the EU Commission's announcement that it has extended the length of its steel safeguards investigation, UK Steel Director General, Gareth Stace said:

"Whilst it is right that the EU Commission takes sufficient time to ensure the correct safeguard measures are ultimately put in place, for steel producers in the UK this extension will cause major concern. With the introduction of definitive measures now pushed back until February 1st, just 8 weeks before Brexit, the UK Government can no longer prevaricate on what to do on this critical issue in the case of no-deal.

"If no action is taken here, no-deal means no safeguards for UK producers. This at a time when the US has placed 25% tariffs on steel imports, protectionist sentiment is on the increase elsewhere, and global steel making overcapacity remains a major concern. Such a situation, along with all the other chaos a no-deal Brexit would bring, would be truly devastating for the steel sector. It must be avoided at all costs.

"We welcome the creation of the UK Trade Remedies Authority to take on post-Brexit responsibility for this area, but the fact remains it is still not operational. With the UK running perilously close to exiting the European Union with no-deal in just three months, the steel industry needs a contingency plan now. We simply cannot afford to wait in uncertainty any longer. "

Roy Rickhuss, General Secretary of Community, and Chair of the National Trade Union Steel Coordinating Committee, said:

"As British steelworkers brace themselves for a disastrous no-deal Brexit, this announcement raises fresh concerns about whether the Government is adequately prepared to protect our industry when we leave the EU.

"The steel crisis, which cost us thousands of jobs, showed the need for strong action against dumping. The rest of Europe is now preparing to commit to new safeguards, just as we leave the EU and the protection that comes with it.

"Steelworkers will rightly be asking what their government is doing to give them at least the same protections as the EU provides to our European competitors."

ENDS.

Notes:

1. The full announcement can be found here: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:JOC_2018_457_R_0007&from=EN
2. The EU Commission launched a safeguards investigation in March 2018 in response to the introduction of 25% tariffs on imports of steel into the US. Safeguard measures, allowed under WTO agreements, would protect EU industry from a sudden surge in imports as a result of the US action.

About UK Steel

UK Steel, a division of EEF, is the trade association for the UK steel industry. It represents all the country's steelmakers and a large number of downstream steel processors.

EEF, the manufacturers' organisation, is the representative voice of UK manufacturing, with offices in London, Brussels, every English region and Wales. This year we celebrate 120 years of backing Britain's makers.

About Community

Community is the largest trade union within the UK steel industry, having represented steelworkers for over 100 years. Roy Rickhuss is General Secretary of Community, and Chair of the National Trade Union Steel Coordinating Committee, the body representing all unions within the industry.