

Review of trade measures on electrical steel imports “very disappointing”

The European Commission today announced the start of an Expiry Review of the Minimum Import Price/anti-dumping measures on imports of grain-oriented electrical steel that have been in place since 2015.

Grain-oriented electrical steel, or GOES, is used in the manufacture of transformers, which are used for all forms of electricity transmission and distribution, as well as in wind turbines.

The measures will be extended in their current form for the duration of the review, which could take a year or more. If the Commission finds evidence of dumping or injury for the EU industry the measures will be extended until 2025.

It is estimated that the measures have caused up to a double-digit percentage increase in the costs for transformers, substantially increasing the cost of the clean energy transition and directly impacting the viability and competitiveness of the EU transformer industry. T&D Europe and WindEurope previously asked the Commission to allow the measures to lapse without review.

WindEurope CEO Giles Dickson said, “This is disappointing. It increases costs for both the transformer and wind turbine industries - and this increases the costs of the energy transition and undermines the Green Deal. We will fight hard to ensure that these measures are not extended for another 5 years.”

The transformer industry is dependent on imports of high-permeability domain refined GOES, which is a premium category of GOES that leads to lower energy losses, more compact transformers (and by extension wind turbine nacelles) and a lower environmental impact e.g., by achieving the same performance while using less natural resources. The EU has set EcoDesign standards with mandatory efficiency requirements for transformers, and new minimum efficiency values come into effect on 1 July 2021. The high-permeability domain-refined GOES used to meet these values is not available from EU GOES producers in sufficient quantity and quality and they will provide only a minor share of the EU demand for the foreseeable future, especially for the highest permeability grades available on the global market

T&D Europe Secretary General Diederik Peereboom said: “These measures have not supported the competitiveness of the European GOES industry; on the contrary, the number of EU suppliers has actually fallen since the measures have been in place. If the Commission is serious about supporting European steel producers it needs to look at new measures, such as support for research, innovation, energy prices and targeted state aid. These kind of measures should take into account the view of all the stakeholders related to GOES, looking for a neutral approach on all sides.”

WindEurope and T&D Europe regret the start of an Expiry Review and are prepared to continue their action against any extension of the period for the Minimum Import Prices on GOES.

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T&D Europe is the European association of the electricity transmission and distribution equipment and services industry. Our scope includes the complete range of products and services necessary to transmit and distribute electricity in high and medium voltages, between the producers and the end users. T&D Europe members provide all types of smart grid technologies, including advanced, smart systems suitable for interaction with renewable energies and ICT. The companies represented by T&D Europe account for a production worth over €25 billion, and employ over 200,000 people in Europe.

WindEurope is the voice of the wind industry, actively promoting wind power in Europe and worldwide. We have over 400 members, active in over 35 countries. In addition to wind turbine manufacturers with a leading share of the world wind power market, our membership encompasses component suppliers, research institutes, national wind and renewables associations, developers, contractors, electricity providers, finance and insurance companies, and consultants.

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