

POSITION PAPER

Intergraf deploras the inclusion of printed matter on the product list of US-EU trade dispute

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Last week, the US trade body published the list of products subject to additional duties following the airbus case-related US-EU trade dispute. Printed products are among the products that will be subject to an additional 25% import duty. The targeted printed products by the US administration are printed products in single sheets and transfers¹ the US imports from the UK and Germany.

The US is a key trade partner for the EU when it comes to printed products and so is the EU for the US. The trade balance between the two partners is neutral and more than 50% of the printed products traded are books. The EU is importing € 928 million worth of printed products from the US and exporting € 919 million worth of printed products to the US².

The two targeted countries - the UK and Germany - are the main EU trade partners of the US. 70% of the European printed products exported to the US are originating from the UK and Germany³. In total, the proposed additional import duties will impact 14% of the overall EU exports of printed products to the US.

This measure does not only have an economic impact for Europe but it also impacts its cultural values. Intergraf considers that the trade of printed matter between the EU and the US is a sign of strong cultural exchange between our continents. Particularly printed books are an important conveyor of culture and education in the world, whether bound or in single sheets. Governments should avoid using economic instruments to limit their trade and use.

In addition to printed matter in single sheets and transfers, the European printing industry will be further impacted by the product coverage of this trade dispute. Indeed, many listed products are exported with printed packaging and labels, in particular in the food and beverage industries, that are significant markets for the European printing industry.

Pending the effective date of implementation of the additional import duties on 18 October 2019, Intergraf supports the efforts of its members, BPIF, representing the UK printing industry and bvdM representing the German printing industry, against these damaging sanctions.

Intergraf also supports the EU Commission's efforts to resolve this trade dispute and calls on the US administration not to include printed products in the list of product coverage.

¹ In addition to printed matter in single sheets and transfers (decalcomanias), lithographs, pictures, designs and photographs are mentioned in the list.

² 2018 values.

³ In 2018, the UK and Germany exported respectively €487 million and €158 million worth of printed products to the US.

Intergraf represents 21 national printing federations in 20 countries in Europe. Intergraf's main task is to promote and protect the interests of the European graphic industry. The printing industry in the 28 European countries comprises some 117,000 firms and employs around 637,000 people. The turnover in the printing industry is about € 85 billion. The industry throughout Europe consists mainly of small enterprises, as 90% of them employ fewer than 20 persons.