

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0745/06
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to the Commission

Subject: Aluminium imports to the EU

The issue of a temporary or permanent reduction in customs tariffs on imports into the EU of unprocessed aluminium is of huge importance and not only to Polish industry. The present level of import tariffs is having a negative impact on the internal and international competitiveness of the EU economy. This matter has been raised on several occasions at various levels and meetings. It seems that the Commission has been acting contrary to the position of the majority of Member States instead of supporting and enforcing it. It should be clearly stressed that, following its entry into the EU in 2004, the situation of this industry in Poland has considerably worsened, especially as a result of the real growth in customs tariffs owing to the failure to suspend Community tariffs on processed aluminium imports from the CIS countries. This is why Polish firms are unable, in spite of huge financial outlays, to compete with others on the Community market, which is dominated by international companies that control the entire production cycle. Furthermore, there are great difficulties in obtaining raw materials that are not subject to the full customs tariff, which is due in part to demand for aluminium outstripping supply on the Community market.

What is the Commission's stance on the issue of reducing or even suspending the current tariffs on EU imports of unprocessed aluminium? How does the Commission plan to solve this problem? The Commission's inactivity is causing unemployment to rise, the profitability of aluminium processing plants to fall and has even prompted attempts to transfer production outside the EU. Is the Commission aware of the negative effects resulting from its failure to adopt a clear position on the abolition of tariffs on imports of unprocessed aluminium? What is the current work schedule regarding the suspension of these tariffs?

The Commission President has admitted that he is aware of practices on the Community market that are harmful to the principle of equal competition. Why then is the Commission not taking preventative measures to curb the monopoly of international firms controlling the European aluminium market?

What is the significance for the reduction of customs tariffs on unprocessed aluminium of negotiations with the Gulf States (the Gulf Cooperation Council) on a free trade agreement and work in the context of the WTO Doha Round, bearing in mind that no date has been set for their conclusion?