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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis
on behalf of the European Commission
(16.11.2023)

The Commission recognises the importance of the European solar industry for achieving the EU's sustainable ambitions and its open strategic autonomy as well as the serious challenges posed by China in this sector.

The Commission received information from the industry about low-priced photovoltaics (PV) modules, starting in early 2023, and on estimated excess capacity from China directed at the EU market and is closely monitoring the situation.

The Commission is ready to use its trade defence instruments, if it receives evidence that solar modules are imported under unfair and injurious conditions. In this regard, the Commission is in close contact with the EU industry.

To strengthen the open strategic autonomy of the EU, the solar sector is listed as a strategic net-zero technology in the Net Zero industry Act¹ proposed by the Commission on 16 March 2023. This includes initiatives to promote the manufacturing of these technologies in the EU, including facilitating access to finance, shorter permitting deadlines, and the establishment of a European Solar Academy.

Finally, international cooperation on solar with selected third countries to promote diversification of the supply-chain is part of several strategic dialogues that take place regularly² as well as the Commission trade action in the context of free-trade agreements³.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023PC0161>

² For EU/United States Trade and Technology Council (TTC) see https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/eu-us-trade-and-technology-council_en#areas-of-cooperation
For EU/India cooperation, see <https://www.cecp-eu.in/>

³ The Commission is negotiating free-trade agreements (FTAs) containing specific chapters on energy and raw materials with Australia, India, Thailand and Malaysia and has concluded FTAs with Chile, New Zealand, the United Kingdom as well as Azerbaijan and Ukraine.