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ANTIDUMPING ON SHOE IMPORTS: STOP THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF PROTECTIONISM

PRESS RELEASE

EuroCommerce, BEUC and AEDT urge the EU to terminate the antidumping duties currently levied on leather shoe imports from China and Vietnam. The European Commission and the Member States are due to take this decision on Wednesday, 17 September 2008.

After 14 years of quotas and antidumping duties, the EU should now refrain from granting a further extension of protectionist duties at the request of companies who have failed to adapt to the challenges and opportunities of open markets.

"In a time when overall prices are increasing, do we really need further increases, which are wholly artificial and unjustified?" asked Monique Goyens, BEUC Director General. "For European consumers, the prolongation of the footwear duties would put a further strain on their purchasing power. This would particularly hit low income households," she added.

"Imposing higher prices on consumers by way of anti-dumping duties is inherently inefficient. In the current case, we fear that the duties are anti-competitive, anti-consumer and protectionist," commented Xavier Durieu, EuroCommerce Secretary General.

On top of the higher costs (16.5% for leather shoes from China and 10% for Vietnam), traders are also damaged by the lack of clarity attached to such duties. Even today, less than one month ahead of 8th October, the foreseen expiry date of the duties, traders have no concrete information – merely rumours. Such lack of predictability creates an untenable situation for importers who order merchandise months in advance. They are left in a position where they must gamble on hearsay.

Such conditions make it impossible for businesses to properly plan ahead and highlight the urgent need for more transparency in the EU trade defence system.

"It is regrettable that under the current EU anti-dumping procedures, expiry reviews result de facto in an automatic extension of the duties (usually fifteen months). Expiry reviews are most often requested simply to prolong the duration of the measures", said Sjang van Hout, Chairman of AEDT Footwear.



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From a development point of view, these duties are particularly harmful for Vietnam. After the recent withdrawal of the EU trade preferences for footwear, the continuation of antidumping duties would be another regrettable setback for the industry in this developing country.

BEUC, The European Consumers' Organisation. In 2008 our members include 41 reputed, independent national consumer organisations from some thirty countries. BEUC acts as a sort of embassy for these organisations in Brussels and our main task is to represent our members and defend the interests of all Europe's consumers.

EuroCommerce represents the retail, wholesale and international trade sectors in Europe. Its membership includes commerce federations and companies in 30 European countries. Commerce is the closest link between industry and the 493 million consumers across Europe. It is a dynamic and labour-intensive sector, which plays a significant role in the European economy, generating 11% of the EU's GDP through nearly 6 million companies. Over 95% of these small & medium-sized enterprises. Over 30 million Europeans work in commerce, and the sector supports millions of dependent jobs throughout the supply chain.

AEDT – European Association of Fashion Retailers – represents more than 400.000 large, medium and small-sized European retail enterprises specialised in fashion and footwear.

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