

Brussels, 20 April 2020

Dear Commissioner,
Dear Mr Hogan,

The world is experiencing an unprecedented health and economic crisis, because of the pandemic caused by COVID-19. All over the globe, we are all drifting into the unknown.

In Europe, and especially Spain, Italy and France we are suffering the consequences of this invisible threat. The lockdown and confinement measures, necessary in order to fight the contagion rate of the virus and preserve lives in so far as possible on the one hand, have resulted in unparalleled economic downturn and job losses in the order of hundreds of thousands. Strategic sectors that are key of our economies have been severely hit and the recovery prospects are grim.

It is in this context that we ask you to pursue, by all means available to you, a negotiated solution with the United States Administration concerning the additional tariffs imposed under Section 301 in light of the Airbus' subsidies. These additional tariffs dramatically affect many European exporters, mainly on the agri-food industry. As you are well aware, the current pandemic has added additional pressure on the already existing challenges the agri-food industry is facing, as it struggles to deliver basic products to our citizens in very difficult circumstances.

It is our firm understanding that European exporters not linked to Airbus but affected by Section 301 should not suffer the consequences of a decades-old aeronautical dispute in which it stands to gain nothing, but lose everything. The present health emergency requires a problem-solving approach and measures that guarantee strategic sectors such as agri-food are shielded from being a collateral damage to parallel disputes and to look beyond what has been so far unproductive thinking.

The recovery of our industries will need more than just pouring billions of funds into their comeback: it will require trust and mutual respect in the international trade agenda, a stable environment that fosters investment and a multilateral framework that provides legal certainty for our economic operators.

On both sides of the Atlantic, we share the same vision towards free and open-market economies that works for our citizens and preserves our strategic sectors. We share the same views on the anti-competitive threats that our companies face from China, and only together can we re-steer the international trade agenda in such a way that everyone can benefit from it.

Currently, the public opinion is overtaken by the Chinese para-diplomacy approach to expand and consolidate its global influence, concretely with providing much needed medical material to our strained health systems.

Mr Hogan, in the light of this, we encourage the European Commission to call to call for a gesture of political will from the US Administration, aimed at strengthening confidence in our relations and in the mutually beneficial recovery of our industries can help steer European public opinion to the importance of deepening our long-standing partnership.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Andrews, *Fianna Fáil*, Renew Europe

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