

Press release
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FTA
Foreign Trade Association

FINAL DECISION ON SHOES SAGA IMMINENT

The long running story on the anti-dumping duties imposed on shoes from China and Vietnam will be finally concluded tomorrow when Member States will vote on the European Commission's proposal to extend the measures. However, it is still not clear what the outcome will be following changes to the voting intentions by several Member States since the initial vote on 19 November which resulted in a 15 to 12 majority against continuation.

The Foreign Trade Association, which represents European retailers and importers, has been following the case since measures were imposed more than three years ago and has been intimately involved in the expiry review since it started in October 2008. Stuart Newman, the FTA's Legal Advisor said "when Germany changed its mind and notified its intention to abstain from the vote (which effectively counts as a vote of support) we were surprised since German consumers, German retailers and even German industry do not want the measures to continue. When Austria and Malta also changed to abstention we were both surprised and disappointed since both countries had previously been very firmly against continuation."

Last week saw a further change in the voting intentions of Member States when Slovakia announced it would vote against continuation when it was previously in favour and Hungary said it would abstain. Some commentators, not least the FTA, have taken this as vindication for their argument that the investigation and subsequent proposal was poorly executed and unfairly biased toward European industry. It is also known that the Commission sought to actively persuade certain Member States (Austria and Malta included) to vote in favour of the its proposal or to at least abstain.

Jan Eggert, the FTA's Secretary General said "these duties are completely unnecessary and have hurt our members for too long. They cannot and should not be allowed to continue. With the voting standing at 13 against and 14 in favour of continuation I look to Germany, Austria and Malta in particular to see sense and vote against the Commission's proposal and finally put an end to this sorry saga."

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The FTA is the association for European commerce that specialises in foreign trade issues. It is committed to achieving its goal of a true free trade environment. For 30 years it has supported its members, consisting of national trade associations and companies from all over Europe, by providing expertise and up-to-date information and by campaigning on their behalf against protectionist measures in the European and international arena.

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