

Spain will respond strongly to new U.S. imposed tariffs



Madrid, October 5 (RHC)-- Spain has summoned the U.S. ambassador in Madrid to express its complete rejection of any new U.S. tariffs on European Union goods and will press for strong counter measures if they are confirmed, the acting government announced.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) ruled this week that some subsidies EU states paid to Airbus were illegal, giving the United States the right to respond with tariffs on EU goods. The U.S. announced plans for new tariffs earlier this week.

Madrid said it was willing to be an intermediary in talks between the EU and the United States but if negotiations failed, it would call for the reactivation of tariffs from a 2004 WTO dispute won by the EU -- which Spain says are worth more than 4 billion euros (\$4.4 billion).

"If the U.S. government rejects this offer of dialogue on the part of Spain and the European Union, the Spanish government will react immediately with strength and clarity to defend the interests of our citizens and companies," the government said.

Spain estimates the new tariffs, which Washington said it would impose on products including wine and cheese, will affect about 1 billion euros of exports a year.

"It makes no sense that a conflict over the financing and construction of civilian airplanes degenerates into a broad commercial war against the agricultural sector that is neither good for European nor US citizens," it said in a statement.

If the tariffs are confirmed, Spain said it will ask the European Commission to apply various measures to mitigate the impact on its agricultural sector.

The earlier complaint taken to the WTO by the EU was settled in 2006. It accused the United States of establishing special tax treatment for foreign sales corporations. (\$1 = 0.9107 euros)

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