Don’t let tariffs block access to medical technologies

The European Commission has recently closed its public consultation on a list of EU countermeasures that could be applied to both imports from and exports to the United States, paving the way for a second package of retaliatory measures. MedTech Europe is deeply concerned that this draft package targets a broad range of finished medical devices, *in vitro* diagnostic medical devices, and a variety of essential components used in their manufacture.

We urgently call on European policymakers to exempt medical technologies from any trade tariffs or export restrictions. We also call for medical technologies to be included and prioritised in a “Zero for Zero” tariff agreement on industrial goods or as part of any negotiated settlement seeking to eliminate tariffs on both sides of the Atlantic. Action is needed now to protect patients and preserve access to critical healthcare solutions.

Medical technologies are indispensable to patients and healthcare systems. Diagnosis, treatment, and recovery heavily depends on them. The sector is also a strategic driver of Europe’s economic strength and industrial resilience. Trade disruptions and tariffs risk undermining access to these crucial technologies. The recently proposed EU package of countermeasures includes over 800 trade codes related to medical technologies, covering finished goods as well as a variety of core components necessary for the functioning of medical devices and diagnostics.

Medical technologies depend on complex global supply chains and advanced material sciences. Some devices require up to a thousand components sourced from various regions, e.g., patient monitoring, dialysis systems, *in vitro* diagnostic analysers, magnetic resonance imaging machines and many more. Raw materials and semi-finished parts are often moved between international production sites for specialised processing. Introducing tariffs or restrictions would disrupt these intricate processes and harm the medical technology industry across multiple dimensions.

Replacing components is not a simple option. In some cases, no alternative exists. Where substitutes are possible, the process of revalidation is lengthy and resource-intensive to ensure the same high standards and safety are met. Delays to access to medical technologies ultimately affect patients.

MedTech Europe continues to urge policymakers to consider the real-world implications of tariffs on life-saving medical technologies. Patients must not become collateral damage in a trade dispute. Safeguarding their access to the technologies they depend on must remain a shared priority.

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About MedTech Europe

MedTech Europe is the European trade association for the medical technology industry including diagnostics, medical devices and digital health. Our members are national, European and multinational companies as well as a network of national medical technology associations that research, develop, manufacture, distribute and supply health-related technologies, services and solutions.
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