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## EU signals readiness to respond to US tariff threat



Published on July 16, 2025

Document Date: Sun, Dec 28 2025 05:45:30 am

Category: ,English,International - ,Snippets

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BERLIN July 16 — German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has warned that the European Union is fully prepared to respond with countermeasures if the United States proceeds with new tariff hikes. Speaking at a joint press conference with Bavarian Minister-President Markus Soeder Merz urged the US administration not to underestimate the EU's willingness to act. He emphasized that while the EU hopes to avoid escalation it is ready to defend its economic interests if necessary.

“We are prepared but still believe in a negotiated solution,” Merz said. He noted ongoing communication with both US President Donald Trump and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen aimed at reaching a compromise that would reduce trade tensions and restore lower tariff levels.

Merz pointed out that negotiations remain possible until the end of July but acknowledged that progress will be difficult.

President Trump announced on Saturday that the US will impose 30 percent tariffs on EU exports beginning August 1. In response von der Leyen confirmed that the European Union would introduce countermeasures if the tariffs are enforced.

The EU’s firm but measured stance reflects growing concern across European capitals about rising transatlantic trade friction and its potential impact on key sectors.

Efforts to resolve the dispute diplomatically remain ongoing.