

EU trade

Brussels imposes tariffs on imports of Chinese electric bicycles

Regulators say dumping caused ‘material injury’ to European manufacturers



An e-bike in Milan: The European sector generates turnover of around €1.3bn © Reuters

Michael Pooler in London and Jim Brunsden in Brussels JULY 18, 2018

The EU has imposed tariffs on imports of Chinese electric bicycles, in an effort to shield the bloc’s manufacturers against dumping at a time of rising trade tensions around the globe.

Brussels decided to impose provisional anti-dumping duties of between 21.8 per cent and 83.6 per cent on inbound shipments of [e-bikes from China](#), without which it said a further deterioration of the industry’s economic and financial situation was “very likely”.

Regulators found evidence of dumping — selling a product below home market prices — as a result of which the region’s e-bike producers suffered “material injury”.

The move is the latest EU measure against Chinese exports deemed to be unfairly undercutting the region’s own businesses, ranging from steel and solar panels to

ceramics. It comes as the US and China are embroiled in a [full-scale trade war](#), targeting tens of billions of dollars worth of each other's goods with punitive levies.

Moreno Fioravanti, secretary-general of the European Bicycle Manufacturers Association (EBMA), said Chinese e-bikes had “flooded the EU at an alarming rate and artificially low prices”.

“Today's decision by the EU should send a clear signal to Chinese e-bike companies to stop their dumping, and give European e-bike manufacturers an opportunity to recover lost sales.”

Europe's e-bike industry generates annual turnover of around €1.3bn (\$1.5bn) and employs 3,500 people, at companies including [Accell Group](#) in the Netherlands, Romania's Eurosport DHS and Derby Cycle of Germany. The British brand Brompton also sells an [electric model](#) of its fold-up bikes.

The EU's €1.8bn market for e-bikes has grown by more than 70 per cent over the past four years. Imports account for almost €510m of that, of which €295m come from China. According to a person close to the European Commission, the “vast majority” of Chinese e-bike imports would be subject to a duty of 37 per cent or less.

The China Bicycle Association could not be reached for comment.

However, the decision drew a strong rebuke from a trade body representing European importers. The Light Electric Vehicle Association said no evidence of dumping had been established and duties would limit consumer choice.

“Most e-bike components are imported from China, and then only assembled by European ‘manufacturers’. This assembly procedure amounts to €25 to €35, and that is the only difference between so-called European ‘manufacturers’ and ‘importers’,” it added.

The European Commission will now decide whether the measures are to become definitive, with a final decision expected around the end of this year.

