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COMMISSION STATEMENT ON EC STEEL EXPORTS TO UNITED STATES

A spokesman for the Commission of the European Communities made the following statement to the press at noon in Brussels today:

- " 1. The Commission has taken note of the petitions filed with the United States Treasury on September 18, calling for countervailing duties to be imposed on Community steel exports to the United States.

- " 2. The United States Administration has informed the Commission that the Treasury is examining the complaints in order to determine whether a formal investigation should be initiated. In such a case, a preliminary determination must be reached within six months on the question of whether Community steel products receive a bounty or grant which would require the imposition of countervailing duties.

" 3. The Commission notes that this case is not an isolated one. Countervailing duties against Community cheese exports were threatened earlier this year. A countervailing investigation is currently taking place into Community exports of canned ham, and Community exports of motorcars to the United States are the subject of a separate investigation into allegations of dumping and injury. Investigations into other products are also imminent. Over one-fifth of the Community's traditional exports to the United States are now liable to be affected in one way or another.

" 4. The Commission is concerned at the general drift of these developments. As regards the steel case, where the petitioners are complaining against the remission of value added tax on exports, the Commission recalls that such remission of indirect taxes is expressly permitted by the GATT. In this case, as in the others, the Commission looks to the United States Administration to respect its international obligations and to exercise its general responsibility, with other members of the international Community, to control the forces of protectionism."