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Inside

Spain says it will respond with strength to new U.S. tariffs

Ban diesel and petrol cars

London.—Denmark, backed by 10 other European Union countries, yesterday called for an EU-wide ban on diesel and petrol cars by 2040 to combat climate change.

Denmark made the proposal during a meeting of EU environment ministers in Luxembourg.

The EU aims to cut carbon emissions in the bloc by 40 percent by 2030 while its executive, the Commission, plans to reduce them to zero by 2050 to help stop global warming. “We need to acknowledge that we are in a bit of a hurry,” Danish Climate and Energy Minister Dan Jorgensen told Reuters after the meeting.

He said the diesel and petrol car ban will hopefully put pressure on the Commission to propose a phasing out of fossil fuel.

Madrid.—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 said yesterday.

The World Trade Organisation (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. Washington announced plans for new tariffs on Wednesday.

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.

The U.S. ambassador to Spain could not be immediately reached for comment.

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 or U.S. 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.

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