
GERMANY AIMS TO CONFRONT TRUMP'S PROTECTIONISM AT G-20 SUMMIT

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Germany wants to make progress in its presidency of the Group of 20 leading economies on improving free and fair trade and will try to get broad agreement on open markets at next month's leaders' summit, Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Tuesday.

She cautioned, however, that this might not be easy with U.S. President Donald Trump who has made waves with his protectionist rhetoric.

"Open markets and free, fair sustainable and inclusive trade is a key focus of our G20 presidency," said Merkel, who will host the G20 in Hamburg next month.

She added that such conditions were beneficial for everyone and globalization was not just fate but rather a process that could be shaped on the basis of Germany's belief in the social market economy.

"We'll do all we can to get as broad an agreement on this as possible in Hamburg. Given the new American administration that's not easy but nonetheless we need to make the effort," Merkel told an event hosted by the BDI industry association.

She added that G20 leaders would also discuss the steel industry, saying that progress needed to be made on the issues of overcapacity and fair competition in the sector.

"There's not just trade - it must be based on rules and needs to be fair," she said.

The findings of an investigation by Trump's administration into whether foreign-made steel imports pose a risk to U.S. national security are expected to be released later this week.

German Economy Minister Brigitte Zypries has written a letter to U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross in which she criticized Washington's plans to take action against steel imports, a German newspaper reported on Tuesday.

Merkel also said she deeply regretted Trump's decision to quit the Paris climate pact, which she described as an "ecological must."

She added: "I don't think that changes anything about the arguments in favor of this accord ... so we need to continue with this but I think we have set out an ambitious path and implementing that is now the most important task."

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