
EU FLEXES GEOPOLITICAL MUSCLE WITH NEW TRADE WEAPON

- 07.12.2021

Politico (6 December 2021)

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Brussels will on Wednesday attempt to increase the EU's geopolitical heft by proposing a new policy weapon that would allow it to impose sanctions more easily on economic rivals such as China — and even the U.S.

While the form of economic howitzer that the EU has in mind is certainly novel, free-trading European countries and trade experts are already warning it could blow up in the face of the world's biggest trade bloc.

The European Commission's proposal for an "anti-coercion" weapon comes after years of the EU complaining that it is vulnerable to economic blackmail from countries that exploit divisions between European nations because retaliatory sanctions can only be imposed by unanimity. To counter that weakness, this new tool will allow the Commission to impose commercial sanctions against a country outside the bloc, which the 27 EU nations could only block with a majority vote.

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