

European companies

US tells European companies to comply with Donald Trump's anti-diversity order

Move signals push by American president to widen his ideological campaign abroad



Documents appear to signal that Donald Trump's administration is expanding its campaign against DEI to foreign companies © AFP/Getty Images

Leila Abboud and **Adrienne Klasa** in Paris and **Henry Foy** in Brussels

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The Trump administration has sent a letter to some large companies in the EU warning them to comply with an executive order banning diversity, equity and inclusion programmes.

The letter, sent by the American embassy in Paris and others around the EU, said that Donald [Trump](#)'s executive order applied to companies outside the US if they were a supplier or service provider to the American government, according to three people familiar with the matter.

The embassies also sent a questionnaire that ordered the companies to attest to their compliance. The document, which the Financial Times has seen, is titled "Certification regarding compliance with applicable federal anti-discrimination law".

The document said: "Department of State contractors must certify that they do not operate any programs promoting DEI that violate any applicable anti-discrimination laws and agree that such certification is material for purposes of the government's payment decision and therefore subject to the False Claims Act."

The letter was also sent to the US diplomatic missions in France, Italy and Belgium, the

The letter was also sent out by US diplomats in eastern EU states and Belgium, the people said.

The documents appear to signal that the Trump administration is widening its campaign against DEI to foreign companies after launching a crackdown against [US media groups such as Disney](#).

A senior banker in Paris said he was shocked by the letter. "It's crazy . . . but everything is now possible. The rule of the strongest now prevails."

"American interference in the inclusion policies of French companies — such as threats of unjustified tariffs — is unacceptable," the French foreign trade ministry said in a statement.

"France and Europe will defend their companies, their consumers, and also their values."

The existence of the letter was first reported by Les Échos newspaper.

The extraterritorial move may not be enforceable according to initial legal assessments, so some executives and their advisers have decided not to respond for now, said two of the people.

It comes amid escalating tensions between the Trump administration and Europe over economic and security policy as America pivots away from its traditional allies, especially on trade and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Trump this week imposed an additional 25 per cent levy on auto sector imports into the US and has increased tariffs on European steel and aluminium imports. The EU is working on reciprocal tariffs in response, but has not yet decided which products to target.

Trump officials' attitude towards Europe was cast into stark relief this week when messages about US attack plans in Yemen were leaked to American media. "I just hate bailing Europe out again," vice-president JD Vance wrote in a Signal chat group. "It's PATHETIC," responded defence secretary Pete Hegseth.

France has not traditionally been a place where DEI programmes have taken root because of legal limitations on the collection of racial and ethnic data. Employers are not allowed to factor people's origins into hiring or promotion decisions.

French companies that are potentially exposed to the US demands include aviation and defence groups, consulting providers and infrastructure companies. The FT

could not immediately determine which companies had received the letter.

According to Les Échos, the letter concluded: “If you do not agree to sign this document, we would be grateful if you could kindly provide us with detailed reasons, which we will forward to our legal department.”

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