

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000246/25
to the Commission
Nora Junco García (ECR), Diego Solier (ECR)
(21 January 2025)**

Subject: Revitalising Spanish industry

Despite recent newspaper reports with misleading headlines such as ‘Spain: Europe’s economic engine’, the reality is quite different. Spain continues to face significant challenges, such as one of the highest unemployment rates of the OECD member countries, an economy dependent on low value-added sectors and a growing public debt.

Moreover, the lack of political and social will to harness strategic natural and energy resources such as lithium are limiting its ability to lead Europe’s industrial transition. Continued tax hikes, interventionism and bureaucracy are stifling business competitiveness, driving away key investments. Efficient use of EU funds must be ensured, and urgent action must be taken to correct these structural problems.

In this regard:

1. What measures is the Commission taking to ensure that EU funds earmarked for Spain are used efficiently in strategic sectors such as the technology industry?
2. How could the Commission encourage greater regulatory flexibility in Spain to attract key industrial and energy investment?
3. What action does it consider necessary to encourage the exploration and exploitation of strategic resources such as lithium in Spain?

Submitted: 21.1.2025

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné on behalf of the European Commission
(24 April 2025)**

1. The Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)⁽¹⁾ is a Commission initiative to boost investment in manufacturing of critical technologies, digital and deep-tech innovation, clean and resource-efficient technologies, and biotechnologies. Spain can amend its Cohesion Policy funding towards these priorities under the STEP Regulation. Furthermore, Spain is currently setting up a Member State compartment under InvestEU⁽²⁾ using their Recovery and Resilience Facility⁽³⁾ funds and the national budget to mobilise additional private and public investments in Spain under the sustainable infrastructure, research, innovation and digitisation and the small and medium-sized enterprises policy windows.

2. The Net-Zero Industry Act⁽⁴⁾ and the Critical Raw Materials Act⁽⁵⁾ strengthen the EU's manufacturing capacity for net-zero technologies while ensuring access to critical raw materials. The Commission has engaged with Spain to ensure their early implementation.

The new Competitiveness Compass⁽⁶⁾ places competitiveness as a core principle for EU action. The Commission’s Clean Industrial Deal is a key deliverable in this regard⁽⁷⁾. The Commission counts on Spain to contribute to the simplification effort. The Commission will also present a Quality Jobs Roadmap to improve working conditions and labour market participation.

3. The Commission considers it important for Spain to design and implement a national exploration programme⁽⁸⁾ to improve critical raw material potential. The Commission has published the first list of strategic projects on 25 March 2025⁽⁹⁾. Five of them are located in Spain and one concerns lithium. To support these projects, including early-stage exploration, Spain could develop financing instruments such as a national critical raw materials fund.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/795 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 February 2024 establishing the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/795/oj/eng>

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:4516649>

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02021R0241-20240301>

⁽⁴⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=OJ:L_202401735

⁽⁵⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02024R1252-20240503>

⁽⁶⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0030>

⁽⁷⁾ COM(2025) 85 final.

⁽⁸⁾ Art. 19 2024/1252 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1252/oj/eng>

⁽⁹⁾ Strategic projects under the Critical Raw Materials Act https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/raw-materials/areas-specific-interest/critical-raw-materials/strategic-projects-under-crma_en