

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000670/25
to the Commission
Tomas Tobé (PPE)
(12 February 2025)**

Subject: Countermeasures in response to the unjustified Chinese suspension of graphite exports to Sweden

Since 2020, the Chinese ministry of commerce has stopped issuing export licences for artificial graphite products to Sweden ⁽¹⁾, without apparent justification, in a seemingly hostile act targeted specifically against Sweden.

Graphite is an important mineral for the production of, among other things, batteries and is therefore a critical raw material for the green transition. In view of this, China nevertheless chooses to act in a manner which is causing electrification processes in Europe to become unnecessarily burdensome.

Sweden has large deposits of graphite ⁽²⁾, and the Swedish Government is committed to ensuring that Europe diversifies its supply of critical raw materials ⁽³⁾. Notwithstanding this, China's hostile actions against an EU Member State are unacceptable, and furthermore fragment EU trade policy. We therefore urge the Commission to clarify the following points:

1. What actions is the Commission taking in response to these discriminatory practices, which fragment EU trade policy, against an EU Member State?
2. What is the Commission's assessment of the availability of critical raw materials in Europe, and what measures does it consider essential to ensure the long-term availability of graphite?

Submitted: 12.2.2025

**Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(5 May 2025)**

The Commission registered China's apparent refusal to issue export licenses for the export of artificial graphite to Sweden as an official trade barrier in 2023 following an internal investigation.

The Commission has thereafter been in close contact with Sweden and has raised the issue with China on multiple occasions, during both bilateral contacts with China and at the World Trade Organisation.

On these occasions, the Commission has also expressed its deep concern regarding the overall increase in Chinese licensing requirements targeting critical raw materials in recent years, and the negative effects these measures have on the perception of China as a reliable trading partner.

To ensure secure, resilient and sustainable supply of strategic raw materials, the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA) ⁽¹⁾ sets out benchmarks for extraction, processing, recycling and diversification and introduces measures to achieve these.

Regarding the long-term availability of graphite, designated as a strategic raw material under the CRMA, the Commission *inter alia* maps with Member States the projects in the EU; calls for strategic projects; develops and implements strategic partnerships on raw materials; invests in innovative raw material production projects under Horizon Europe ⁽²⁾; and concludes EU bilateral trade agreements for fair and unrestricted trade in raw materials.

Further improvements on recycling can equally increase the availability of critical raw materials. The first list of strategic projects was published on 25 March 2025 ⁽³⁾. three of them are located in Sweden, and two concern graphite.

Regarding overall availability of raw materials, the Geological Surveys of Europe provide a detailed overview of minerals deposits in the EU ⁽⁴⁾.

¹ https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/barriers/details?barrier_id=17542&sps=false.

² <https://www.sgu.se/mineralnaring/kritiska-ravaror/grafit/>.

³ <https://www.regeringen.se/presmeddelanden/2025/01/regeringen-forelaggar-kiruna-kommun-att-anta-detaljplan-som-mojliggor-grafitgruva/>.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1252, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1252/oj/eng>

⁽²⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

⁽³⁾ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/raw-materials/areas-specific-interest/critical-raw-materials/strategic-projects-under-crma_en

⁽⁴⁾ <https://maps.europe-geology.eu/>