

EN

E-002330/2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Ribera
on behalf of the European Commission
(24.7.2025)

In 2018, the Commission approved the acquisition of Ilva by ArcelorMittal. This approval was conditional on the sale of several steel plants in Europe to preserve effective competition. ArcelorMittal suggested Liberty House Group as a suitable purchaser of the said steel plants. The Commission thoroughly assessed the suitability of Liberty House Group as a purchaser in 2019. As a general matter, the Commission thoroughly assesses all foreseeable effects of all reportable acquisitions, including in the steel sector, in its merger control approvals.

At the time of the Commission's merger control approval, it was not possible to foresee the issues that would arise in the following years. Most notably, in 2021, Greensill Capital, a financial backer of Liberty House Group, filed for insolvency. As a result, Liberty House Group started to face material financial difficulties.

Beyond the merger control aspects, the Commission has carefully assessed the EU interest in several reviews of measures related to steel imports, most recently the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/612 of 24 March 2025¹, and is confident that a fair balance of interests has been achieved.

During the latest review of this measure, the Commission carried out a detailed analysis of all submissions to bring short-term relief to the EU industry in categories facing significant import pressure, while not unnecessarily restricting sourcing opportunities for EU user industries and other stakeholders in categories where import pressure is not present.

More generally, building on the Clean Industrial Deal, the Commission adopted the Steel and Metals Action Plan² that aims to strengthen the sector's competitiveness and safeguard the industry's future.

¹ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/612 of 24 March 2025 amending Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/159 imposing a definitive safeguard measure on imports of certain steel products, OJ L, 2025/612, 25.3.2025.

² COM(2025) 125 final.