

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002999/25
to the Commission
André Rougé (PFE)
(18 July 2025)**

Subject: Strategic autonomy and EU support for the New Caledonian nickel sector

Nickel is vital for the strategic and industrial autonomy of Europe, which is dependent on production from China and Indonesia (in partnership with China) for 80% of its nickel. That figure rises to 90% for refined nickel.

With Greek and Cypriot production shutting down and Finnish mineral reserves only meeting a small proportion of our countries' needs, the New Caledonian nickel deposit is the main, if not the only, one in the world that is under EU sovereignty. In fact, the overseas territory is home to 25% of the world's lateritic nickel reserves.

At a time when the EU is aiming to secure its supply chain with the Critical Raw Materials Act, New Caledonia is the only territory in a position to ensure that the EU stands a chance of producing 30 to 40% of net-zero technologies.

1. In light of this, what action does the Commission intend to take to restore the competitiveness of French nickel from New Caledonia?
2. What trade measures does the Commission intend to adopt to counter the influx of Indonesian nickel — produced without complying with environmental, social and governance standards — and to prevent the objectives established in the Critical Raw Materials Act from becoming more and more difficult to achieve?

Submitted: 18.7.2025

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

The Commission is taking measures to support the development of a sustainable and competitive nickel industry that also brings added value in New Caledonia.

The Commission recognised the CaledoNi Project as a Strategic Project under the Critical Raw Materials (CRM) Act on 4 June 2025 ⁽¹⁾.

The project will benefit from support to coordinate its access to finance and offtakes. New Caledonian CRM projects can also benefit from the CRM Facility, a technical assistance facility to integrate raw materials value chains between EU and partner countries and overseas territories.

The current Commission's Multiannual Financial Framework allocates EUR 30.9 million to New Caledonia via the 2021-2027 Budget Support programme on energy transition ⁽²⁾.

One of its Specific Objectives is to green the industrial sector to position New Caledonia as a global leader in green nickel. The programme seeks to increase the share of renewable energy in the mining and metallurgy electricity mix, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lower electricity costs, a key factor affecting the sector's competitiveness compared to jurisdictions such as Indonesia.

The EU's regulations on environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards strengthen the position of ESG-compliant businesses on the EU market.

For example, the Batteries Regulation (EU) 2023/1542 ⁽³⁾ includes human rights and environmental due diligence obligations on the sourcing, processing and trading of nickel. The Commission also promotes these ESG standards in negotiations and implementation of EU trade agreements.

The Commission also takes trade defence action to defend EU industry from unfairly traded imports when it receives complaints with evidence of dumping or subsidisation harming that industry.

⁽¹⁾ C(2025) 3491 final — COMMISSION DECISION of 4.6.2025 recognising certain critical raw material projects located in third countries and in overseas countries or territories as Strategic Projects under Regulation (EU) 2024/1252 of the European Parliament and of the Council

⁽²⁾ Decision on the Overseas Association, including Greenland (DOAG), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2021/1764/oj/eng>.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/1542/oj/eng>.