

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003328/25
to the Commission
Piotr Müller (ECR)
(28 August 2025)

Subject: Commission folly: damaging the steel industry's competitiveness with regulations and then saving it with public aid

The Commission has announced plans to amend the guidelines on state aid for rescuing and restructuring firms to allow support for the steel sector. Alongside the coal and financial sectors, the steel sector is currently excluded from receiving this aid.

The reason behind this change is geopolitical and related to global competition, especially from China. However, the real problem lies elsewhere: the EU's climate and energy policy, which for many years now has increased production costs in Europe and weakened the competitiveness of strategic industries.

The ETS, high energy prices and additional regulations make European steel more expensive, while Asian competitors benefit from cheaper production and lower environmental standards. The Commission is now proposing to save the industry with taxpayers' money, instead of correcting its own mistakes.

In light of the above:

1. How does the Commission justify the authorisation of state aid to the steel sector, given that the EU's own regulatory decisions are the main source of the problems?
2. Does the Commission see a contradiction between 'green transition' policy and the need to save industry with public funds?
3. Why is the Commission proposing to subsidise consequences instead of correcting the climate policies that undermine the foundations of the European steel industry?

Submitted: 28.8.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Ribera on behalf of the European Commission
(26 November 2025)

In the European Steel and Metals Action Plan ⁽¹⁾ presented in March 2025, the Commission identified the challenges of the steel sector and other metals sectors and proposed concrete solutions to address them. These challenges include high energy costs, exposure to an unlevel playing field in international competition, decarbonisation investment needs and regulatory burden.

Under the framework for state aid measures to support the Clean Industrial Deal ⁽²⁾, sectors that are particularly exposed to international trade and heavily dependent on electricity may receive aid in form of temporary price relief. Moreover, aid for decarbonisation is also possible.

In addition, the Commission has initiated the process of the revision of the 2014 Guidelines on state aid for rescuing and restructuring non-financial undertakings in difficulty (R&R Guidelines) ⁽³⁾ and, on 22 August 2025, it launched a call for evidence and a public consultation to seek input on the scope and content of the revision.

The consultation concerns in particular the potential inclusion of the steel sector into the scope of the R&R Guidelines. While state aid to the steel sector is and has been possible in general, overcapacities that existed back in 2014 justified the exclusion of steel producers in difficulty from the benefit of rescue and restructuring aid. While there is no longer structural overcapacity in steel in the EU itself, global overcapacities still exist. Therefore, the Commission contemplates a modification of the R&R Guidelines which would address a potential unequal treatment of companies in sectors that have similarities (e.g. aluminium).

The Commission welcomes the views from stakeholders and other interested parties in response to its consultation.

⁽¹⁾ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/publications/european-steel-and-metals-action-plan_en.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 3602, 4.9.2025, p.1.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 246, 24.9.2015, p. 9.