

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003930/25
to the Commission
Niels Flemming Hansen (PPE)
(7 October 2025)

Subject: Concerns regarding the proposed export ban on European scrap metal under the Commission's European Steel and Metals Action Plan

Following the recent presentation of the European Steel and Metals Action Plan ⁽¹⁾, both academic experts and representatives of the scrap metal sector have raised serious concerns about its potential implications. Europe already suffers from significant overcapacity in steel production. A ban on exports of scrap metal outside the EU risks exacerbating this structural imbalance and could prove catastrophic for the European steel industry.

Such a measure would drastically reduce the market value of scrap metal, thereby undermining the economic viability of collection, sorting, and upgrading activities. This, in turn, would disincentivise further investments in recycling and innovation, leading to a loss of jobs and ultimately weakening the Union's efforts to build a circular economy. Moreover, restricting exports would concentrate market power in the hands of the relatively few smelters operating within the EU, potentially granting them quasi-monopolistic control. It is likely that this distortion would push prices down further and shift value away from the many SMEs that currently transform scrap into new raw materials.

1. Given this situation, what measures will the Commission take to avoid worsening steel overcapacity?
2. How will it prevent the emergence of quasi-monopolistic market structures?
3. How will it safeguard European jobs in the recycling sector?

Submitted: 7.10.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné on behalf of the European Commission
(17 December 2025)

The European Steel and Metals Action Plan ⁽¹⁾ does not propose a ban on the export of scrap metal. It puts forward a comprehensive set of measures aimed at addressing steel capacity, that includes among others a possibility for the Commission to consider trade measures to ensure sufficient availability of scrap in the EU.

The purpose is to strengthen the circular economy and reduce dependence on imports of primary raw materials. The action plan clearly identifies global overcapacity, mainly caused by subsidised production outside the EU, as the source of market imbalance.

In this context, the Commission has proposed a dedicated trade measure to tackle these negative trade-related effects of global overcapacity and stabilise the EU steel market ⁽²⁾.

Furthermore, as part of the action plan, the Commission is promoting investments in high-quality recycling, better sorting and treatment of scrap, and the creation of a single market for secondary raw materials. Such measures will be reinforced under the forthcoming Circular Economy Act.

Throughout all workstreams the Commission is committed to supporting recyclers and small and medium-sized enterprises, maintain jobs in the recycling sector, and ensure that value creation remains within the EU.

Accordingly, the action plan will help build a resilient and competitive European recycling and metals ecosystem that underpins quality industrial employment.

¹ COM(2025)0125.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0125>.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0726>.