

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002537/26
to the Commission**

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(18 June 2026)

Subject: New Caledonian nickel industry and Europeans' strategic autonomy

The energy transition and the European defence industry depend on nickel. Our 27 Member States are 80% reliant on Chinese or Indonesian production, while for refined nickel, the figure reaches 90%.

New Caledonia, a French overseas territory, remains the world's largest source of nickel, possessing some 25% of the world's lateritic nickel reserves.

However, the New Caledonian nickel sector is in crisis, with production shut down at two out of three industrial sites and uncertainty about the future of the Eramet group, which includes the French State among its shareholders. There are reports of Chinese buyers.

At a time when Europe is aiming to secure its supplies with the Critical Raw Materials Act, no plan has been put forward to make New Caledonia the natural and secure source of nickel for Europeans. In comparison, Chinese dominance in the battery and rare earth sectors demonstrates that mining groups cannot thrive without the support of their governments.

1. To prevent the Critical Raw Materials Act from becoming a dead letter, will the Commission support the New Caledonian nickel sector, including through strategic stockpiling and support for industrial projects?
2. Are steps being taken to oppose Indonesian nickel produced without compliance with environmental, social and governance criteria?

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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné on behalf of the European Commission
(7 August 2026)

In an increasingly volatile geopolitical context and amid intensifying international competition, the Commission is stepping up its efforts to diversify and secure the EU's supply of critical minerals.

In this context, cooperation with Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) that are endowed with critical minerals, such as New Caledonia, is of particular relevance.

New Caledonia holds significant nickel resources and industrial processing capacities that make it an important actor in global nickel value chains. It also has potential for copper, zinc, manganese, platinum, antimony, magnesium and bismuth.

Given the importance of nickel for energy transition and defence-related industry ecosystems, New Caledonia's nickel sector, its broader mineral potential as well as its privileged position as an OCT in the Indo-Pacific, the Commission recognises the value in promoting closer integration of New Caledonia into European critical raw materials value chains.

Among the Strategic Projects announced by the Commission ⁽¹⁾ the CaledoNi project in New Caledonia will help boost nickel production, address existing environmental disturbances, create both direct and indirect jobs, and generate local value creation.

The Commission is therefore actively working to advance its Strategic Projects, including CaledoNi, to strengthen the EU's security of supply.

The Commission continues to support responsible sourcing. It will continue to use relevant EU instruments to promote sustainable production and to reduce strategic dependencies, including where concerns arise regarding environmental, social and governance conditions in third-country production.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1252 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a framework for ensuring a secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials and amending Regulations (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1724 and (EU) 2019/1020 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1252/oj/eng>.