

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002692/26
to the Commission**

Alberico Gambino (ECR), Carlo Fidanza (ECR), Mariateresa Vivaldini (ECR), Francesco Torselli (ECR), Daniele Polato (ECR), Stefano Cavedagna (ECR), Francesco Ventola (ECR), Paolo Inselvini (ECR), Chiara Gemma (ECR), Sergio Berlato (ECR), Alessandro Ciriani (ECR), Michele Picaro (ECR)

(29 June 2026)

Subject: China's dominant position in Latin America and the possible emergence of further threats to the EU's supply of raw materials

Global demand for copper is set to grow in the coming years as a result of the energy transition, e-mobility and digitalisation.

Chinese companies are expanding their presence in key extraction projects in Latin America, and are even investing in the extraction infrastructure required.

Beijing's strategy is to increase its control over global critical raw material value chains, from the extraction phase to the processing stage.

Itself no stranger to relying on external suppliers for critical resources in key sectors, Europe could, as a result of the green and digital transition, once again find itself in a vulnerable economic and geopolitical position.

Given the foregoing:

1. How does the Commission assess the risk that China's increasingly tight grip over the copper industry and the supply chains of other critical raw materials could undermine the Union's strategic autonomy?
2. How will the Commission strengthen the EU's economic and industrial presence in Latin America with a view to ensuring more secure and diversified supply chains that are less dependent on Chinese operators?
3. Has it conducted an assessment of the geopolitical and industrial impact of the potential concentration of critical raw material supply chains in the hands of operators linked to the People's Republic of China?

Submitted: 29.6.2026

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission

(19 August 2026)

The Commission is aware of China's increasing refining capacity and the involvement of Chinese companies in many copper mining operations outside China.

As copper demand in the EU is projected to grow by over 50% by 2050, the Commission designated several copper projects as 'strategic projects' under the Critical Raw Materials Act ⁽¹⁾, including 11 in the EU ⁽²⁾ and one in Norway. These projects should contribute to strengthening the EU's strategic autonomy in the sector, including by boosting recycling.

The Commission is strengthening the EU's economic and industrial presence in Latin America through strategic partnerships, trade agreements and targeted investment to build secure, resilient and diversified supply chains.

It has concluded Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) on critical raw materials with Chile and Argentina — a similar MoU is under negotiation with Brazil — and dedicated roadmaps to deliver projects. The conclusion of the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement ⁽³⁾ will improve market access and predictability for EU firms.

The Commission continuously assesses supply chain vulnerabilities and geopolitical risks, including risks linked to market concentration and the role of operators from third countries. This work feeds into the EU's broader approach on economic security, resilience and risk management.

The Commission's assessment is that excessive concentration at any stage of the value chain — whether in extraction, processing, transport, recycling or technology ownership — can create industrial and geopolitical vulnerabilities for the EU.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L, 2024/1252, 3.5.2024; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1252/oj/eng>.

⁽²⁾ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/raw-materials/areas-specific-interest/critical-raw-materials/strategic-projects-under-crma/selected-projects_en.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A2026A00186&qid=1772192739535>.

Thus, the Commission is pursuing a policy based on diversification, domestic capacity-building, circularity, sustainability, strategic partnerships and increased risk monitoring.
