

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-000033/25
to the Commission
Silvia Sardone (PFE)
(7 January 2025)**

Subject: Global coal use at an all-time high as China tops international coal consumption rankings

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), global coal consumption reached record levels in 2024. China continues to be both the world's biggest coal consumer — its power plants use a third of all the coal extracted worldwide — and producer, the country's output peaking at 14 million tonnes a day in November 2024. Over the last 25 years, China has used 30% more coal than the rest of the world combined to sustain its ever-growing energy needs, while it accounts for 56% of global coal consumption to generate energy for its battery-powered vehicles and AI technology.

In the light of the above:

1. Does the Commission not think it paradoxical that the transition to electric cars, a sector in which China is a global leader, is predicated on using massive quantities of coal?
2. Given the above coal consumption data, is the Commission planning to revise the EU's trade agreements with China by adding an environmental clause?
3. What will the Commission do to prevent the EU from losing competitiveness as a result of its environmentally-friendly policies at a time when China is securing a growing market share by upping its consumption of polluting energy sources?

Submitted: 7.1.2025

**Answer given by Mr Jørgensen on behalf of the European Commission
(5 March 2025)**

The decarbonisation of energy systems is a key element of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) reductions. At COP28 in 2023 in Dubai ⁽¹⁾, parties agreed, among others, to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems.

In the EU, the electricity used to power electric vehicles is increasingly produced from renewable sources. As a result, the amount of GHG emitted per unit of electricity has halved between 1990 and 2023, and emissions are set to decrease further. These developments will be reflected in the carbon footprint of products, as required by EU legislation ⁽²⁾.

The EU does not have a trade agreement with China. The Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) concluded in principle in 2020 is put on hold.

The Commission decided not to put the agreement to ratification when China sanctioned Members of the European Parliament, the Subcommittee on human rights, think tanks, and the Political and Security Committee of the Council.

Those sanctions are still in place. To encourage China to decarbonise swiftly and peak their emissions before 2030, the EU continues to engage bilaterally under the High-Level Environment and Climate Dialogue, and the Energy Dialogue.

On 26 February 2025, the Commission adopted a Clean Industrial Deal ⁽³⁾ to accelerate the decarbonisation of EU industry while strengthening its competitiveness. In addition, the Affordable Energy Action Plan ⁽⁴⁾ will help reduce energy costs while strengthening EU's industrial base.

Further, the Global Energy Transition Forum ⁽⁵⁾, launched by the President of the Commission in 2025 in Davos, seeks to unlock new clean energy investments opportunities for EU business abroad.

In parallel, the Commission works to ensure that the EU continues playing a leading role in energy and climate diplomacy.

⁽¹⁾ Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

⁽²⁾ As required by Regulation (EU) 2023/1542 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2023 concerning batteries and waste batteries, amending Directive 2008/98/EC and Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and repealing Directive 2006/66/EC, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/1542/oj>; or by implementing legislation under Regulation (EU) 2024/1781 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 establishing a framework for the setting of ecodesign requirements for sustainable products, amending Directive (EU) 2020/1828 and Regulation (EU) 2023/1542 and repealing Directive 2009/125/EC (Text with EEA relevance), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1781/oj>

⁽³⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/9db1c5c8-9e82-467b-ab6a-905feeb4b6b0_en?filename=Communication%20-%20Clean%20Industrial%20Deal_en.pdf

⁽⁴⁾ The Plan has been announced most recently in the EU Competitiveness Compass: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_339

⁽⁵⁾ https://energy.ec.europa.eu/news/president-von-der-leyen-launches-global-energy-transition-forum-davos-2025-01-23_en