

(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-003051/26
to the Commission
Elena Donazzan (ECR)
(17 July 2026)

Subject: EU car sector crisis: Chancellor Merz's statements on potential Chinese buyouts and the urgent need to set up working groups with European manufacturers

On 15 July, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz stated that he is not opposed to the potential sale of German car factories to Chinese buyers. His comments come at a time when Europe's foremost car manufacturer, Volkswagen, is considering a restructuring plan that could result in as many as 100 000 redundancies and the closure of several plants. There are concerns about giving away strategic industrial capacities to manufacturers who, as the Chancellor himself has stated, are supported by massive state subsidies and are taking advantage of a currency that is undervalued by 25 to 30% ⁽¹⁾.

Economic policy should not be the preserve of the Commission's decision-makers and experts. Rather, determining where and how the European economy should be defended is a process that must be guided by the industrial sector. As stated by the trilateral Confindustria-BDI-MEDEF working groups, European car manufacturers and stakeholders representing the entire supply chain must be consulted as a matter of urgency.

In the light of the above, I ask the Commission:

1. Will it urgently convene a working group involving European manufacturers and industrial stakeholders representing the automotive supply chain as a whole with a view to protecting this vital sector?
2. Will it follow up on this round table by drafting a plan which protects the European car sector and gives due consideration to the needs of industries and manufacturers that are grappling with unfair third-country competition?
3. What will it do to keep European plants, brands, jobs and strategic technologies in European hands and safe from predatory acquisitions involving non-EU entities that are backed by distortive subsidies — an approach that would emulate the arrangements that are currently preventing European actors from attempting similar buyouts in China and the US?

Submitted: 17.7.2026

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

The Commission engages continuously with the entire automotive value chain. The Strategic Dialogue on the Future of the European Automotive Industry ⁽¹⁾ launched on 30 January 2025, brings together vehicle manufacturers, suppliers, social partners and other stakeholders across the supply chain, and provides a high-level forum to identify emerging risks and coordinate timely responses.

The dialogue has already been followed up. The Industrial Action Plan for the European automotive sector ⁽²⁾, the Automotive Package ⁽³⁾ and the proposal for an Industrial Accelerator Act ⁽⁴⁾ together cover the entire value chain.

The latter puts forward EU content requirements for motor vehicles and their components in public procurement and public financial support, so that public money generates demand for production in the EU. The Commission also continues to act against unfairly traded imports through its trade defence instruments.

The Foreign Subsidies Regulation ⁽⁵⁾ allows the Commission to, among others, review acquisitions of EU companies benefiting from distortive foreign subsidies and to impose measures or prohibit them. The Industrial Accelerator Act proposal would attach further conditions to foreign direct investments in EU emerging strategic sectors.

¹ <https://www.milanofinanza.it/news/crisi-volkswagen-il-cancelliere-merz-apre-ai-cinesi-possono-comprare-fabbriche-tedesche-ma-e-l-ultima-202607151850266486>.

⁽¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_378.

⁽²⁾ COM(2025) 95 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0095>.

⁽³⁾ COM(2025) 995 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0995>; COM(2025) 994 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0994>; COM(2025) 993 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0993>; C(2025) 8950 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2026/682/oj/eng>.

⁽⁴⁾ COM(2026) 100 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52026PC0100>.

⁽⁵⁾ Regulation (EU) 2022/2560 on foreign subsidies distorting the internal market, OJ L 330, 23.12.2022, p. 1. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2560/oj>.