

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3849/08

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to the Commission

Subject: Merger of BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto

The Commission has received prior notification of a merger between raw materials giants BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto.

1. Given the great direct and indirect significance of this for competition in the raw materials markets (in particular precious metals and iron ore) for many European industries, does the Commission intend to initiate merger control proceedings?
2. What action does the Commission plan to take in order to ensure that competition in these markets is not further restricted, and that a merger which would result in a virtual monopoly for the resultant undertaking – e.g. in international iron ore trading – does not take place?