

**Question for written answer E-002460/2021/rev.1
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE), **Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel** (Verts/ALE), **Henrike Hahn** (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Questions about China's rare earths export restrictions

Rare earth elements are a key part not only of digital and sustainable technology, but also of military systems, meaning that the steady supply and recycling process of rare earths is a paramount task for EU economic policymakers. China, the world's biggest supplier of refined rare earths, recently threatened, through its Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), to effectively restrict the export of these materials¹. Against this backdrop, we would like to ask the following questions:

1. Is the Commission aware of the MIIT's statement, and has it contacted the relevant Chinese officials in order to clarify and assess the credibility of this threat?
2. What is the Commission's evaluation of EU's dependency on China for these materials and the risks and challenges that could arise for EU technology and military companies if China were to restrict access to rare earth elements, and how will it tackle them?
3. What actions will the Commission take in order to secure EU's supply of rare earths and does it have plans to strengthen its mining and refinement capacity to make it less vulnerable to volatile market changes? Will it engage with China or other rare earth suppliers on more sustainable mining of rare earths, including the recycling and disposal of toxic by-products?

¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/d3ed83f4-19bc-4d16-b510-415749c032c1>.