**Question for written answer E-003755/2021**
**to the Commission**
Rule 138
**Tiemo Wölken** (S&D)

Subject: Sulfur hexafluoride use in electrical switchgear – exemption in F-Gas Regulation

Sulfur hexafluoride ($SF_6$) is the most potent greenhouse gas known. It has a global warming potential of 23 500 times that of $CO_2$ and remains in the atmosphere for up to 3 200 years. According to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, $SF_6$ concentrations in the atmosphere are at an all-time high. Around 80 % of all $SF_6$ gas produced is used in power distribution, and the global devices installed base is predicted to grow by 75 % by 2030.

The F-Gas Regulation banned many uses of $SF_6$ gas in the EU, but provided an exemption for use in electrical switchgear. The upcoming revision of the F-Gas Regulation will address the continued use of this harmful gas in electrical switchgear. Regarding this gradual approach:

1. Is the Commission aware of the alarming rise in banked $SF_6$ emissions, and what will continued use of $SF_6$ gases in electrical switchgear mean in terms of $SF_6$ gas accumulation in the atmosphere, according to the Commission's assessment?

2. How much $SF_6$ gas is manufactured and imported in the EU, and exported from the EU?

3. Does the Commission consider the phasing out of F-gases with a global warming potential of more than one critical to achieving EU's ambition of greenhouse gas neutrality and to maintaining EU leadership in green technologies?