

Question for written answer E-004904/2021
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: Huge-scale purchasing of European timber by Chinese firms

China has banned the felling of oak trees and is now importing European hardwood on a huge scale. According to studies, such as those by Fedustria and the Timber Confederation (both in Belgium), up to 80% of European timber is being bought at auctions by Chinese firms. In many instances, purchasing is handled via large commodity traders, which make enormous profits in the process. To some extent this commodity, which is being exported on a huge scale, returns as finished products, effectively relegating the EU Member States to the status of developing countries as far as the commodity is concerned.

The free market initially gave European firms access to other markets, such as China. An obsessive attachment to the unfettered free market is now beginning to backfire on the European economy, and in particular on firms in the EU. The Members States' economies are suffering greatly as a result.

1. Does the Commission have specific plans for export restrictions, for instance, i.e. giving preference to the domestic timber industry?
2. Does the Commission have specific plans to introduce a rule stipulating that timber felled in the EU must also be initially processed in the EU?
3. How effective is the investigation into government support for buyers of felled European timber proving to be?