

**Question for written answer E-003540/2022  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Mathilde Androuët (ID)**

**Subject:** What are the Commission's environmental responses in respect of the extraction and processing of rare-earth metals?

Our industries are more than 90% dependent on Chinese imports for permanent magnets, which are used in some wind turbines and electric cars, and which contain the rare-earth metal neodymium. On 24 May 2022, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, stated more broadly that the dual green and digital transition would massively increase our needs for rare-earth metals<sup>1</sup>.

The European Raw Materials Alliance (ERMA), which was set up in 2020 by the Commission, has submitted its action plan<sup>2</sup> for the creation of a European permanent magnet industry to the Commission. In this report, ERMA notes that Europe can reduce its dependence on imports by investing in recycling capacity and in extraction and processing facilities.

However, many scientists and NGOs warn that the mining of rare-earth metals causes catastrophic human and environmental damage.

1. Can the Commission confirm this statement?
2. What is the state of play as regards a responsible purchasing policy at European level, through the establishment of a central purchasing body for raw materials that would guarantee that the minerals were extracted under decent conditions?
3. Does the Commission have information on possible innovations that would make extraction methods less harmful to the ecosystem?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/events/world-economic-forum-annual-meeting-2022/sessions/special-address-by-ursula-von-der-leyen-president-of-the-european-commission-c8e6bd0b6d>

<sup>2</sup> <https://erma.eu/eu-policy/>