

Strasbourg 8 October 2025

Dear President von der Leyen,

In December 2024, the Commission opened a safeguard investigation on imports of manganese and silicon-based alloying elements (SAFE010). This was rightly welcomed as a clear signal of determination to address global overcapacity threatening the European market.

Yet in July, provisional measures were not adopted due to insufficient support from Member States. As a result, from the last quarter of 2025, Ferroglobe, the largest EU silicon producer, will suspend its European production. Once lost, this capacity will not return.

Silicon and ferro-alloys are indispensable. Without them, no steel or aluminium can be produced. They are vital for defence – no drone can be built without silicon – and for the energy transition through aluminium alloys, silicones, electronics, photovoltaics and batteries. The Commission has listed silicon and manganese as Critical Raw Materials, with silicon further identified as a Strategic Raw Material. Both are recognised in the EU Steel and Metals Action Plan.

Europe already meets only 15% of its silicon demand, far below the 40% benchmark set by the Commission for critical and strategic raw materials. The remaining 85% comes from imports, most of which originate in China's Xinjiang region and carry a high risk of forced labour.

The cost of safeguards for end users would be minimal, around 2%. If European production disappears, as already happened with rare earths, magnesium and strontium, China will dictate global prices, leaving Europe without alternatives. By contrast, the United States secures domestic silicon production with anti-dumping duties exceeding 100%.

At a time of new US tariffs, intensifying Asian competition and accelerating global overcapacity, Europe cannot afford inaction. To weaken our industrial base is to undermine defence, prosperity and climate objectives.

We urge you to act without delay. Effective safeguard measures for silicon and manganese alloys are essential to prevent irreversible closures, job losses and the collapse of a sector vital to Europe's security and autonomy.

Sincerely,

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Brando Benifei, MEP, S&D, Italy  
Florence Blatrix-Contat, Senator, France  
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