

Background:

In November 2024, the EU Commission initiated an anti-dumping investigation (AD 720) into *fused alumina* (fused aluminium oxide "corundum") originating from China. The complainant is the French company IMERYS with the demand to levy an EU import duty on these Chinese products.

The shock: tariffs of up to 136 per cent.

According to a preliminary report dated 18 July 2025, the EU Commission wants to raise customs duties by **136%**. This means that Chinese raw materials are no longer economically viable.

A violation of the EU's interests:

Trade defence measures are intended to promote and protect the competitiveness of EU industry. This impending result of a tariff increase would only create protection for the French company IMERYS, while penalising the refractories industry in Germany and the EU.

The consequences: Distortion of competition, formation of a monopoly, supply risk, falling tax revenues, job losses.

- This decision would further strengthen the market power of IMERYS - to the point of creating a quasi-monopoly. It is not possible to obtain raw materials from other sources worldwide in terms of quality and quantity.
- We have asked the EU Commission to carry out an impact investigation under competition law that has not yet been carried out.
- The refractories companies will not be able to pass on cost increases. The main customer group steel, the largest customer with over 60 per cent, is experiencing a sustained recession in Germany and the EU coupled with considerable transformation costs as a result of measures to reduce CO₂ emissions. Steel will resist any attempt to increase prices and immediately import cheaper products from other EU countries.
- The refractories market in Europe is open and highly competitive. Non-EU competitors who are not subject to this surcharge will have an immediate and significant price advantage over EU manufacturers.
- These effects represent an existential risk for medium-sized manufacturers with only one factory location. Multinational companies will be prompted to relocate their production outside the EU. This will have the dramatic result of plant closures in Germany, falling tax revenues and job losses. The world-leading German refractories industry would suffer considerable and irreparable damage. It would be almost impossible to restore capacities and expertise, which would make Europe dependent on imports in the long term.

The conclusion:

Against this background and the economic risks for the German refractories industry shown, we must speak out strongly against the planned introduction of anti-dumping measures against imports of corundum from China.