

China halts export of some rare earth processing technologies

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China said on Thursday that it would halt the export of a range of rare earth metal processing technologies, potentially hindering other countries in a crucial sector dominated by Beijing.

Rare earths are strategic metals that are essential in the manufacture of smartphone chips, LCD screens, military equipment and [offshore wind turbines](#), among many other uses.

China is the heavyweight in the sector, currently controlling around three-quarters of rare earth production.

It will now ban the export of "rare earth extraction, processing and smelting technologies", according to a lengthy document published on Thursday by Beijing's commerce ministry.

Contrary to what their name suggests, this group of 17 metals essential to cutting-edge technologies are relatively abundant.

It is their particularly sought-after electromagnetic properties that make them "strategic metals".

The United States, European Union and other countries are increasingly treating the supply of these metals as a matter of national security, especially as the global energy transition is fueling fears of potential shortages.

In addition to the permanent magnets used in wind turbines and electric cars, some rare metals are used in television screens, drones and hard drives.

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