

**Question for written answer E-001195/2018
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Dominique Martin (ENF)

Subject: Commission's joint investment with Bill Gates in Africa despite Microsoft's dismissal of 25 000 European workers

For many years, the Commission has been engaged in a number of colossal legal battles¹² with Microsoft: billions of euros have been spent. In June 2017, Microsoft dismissed all 25 000 workers employed by Nokia, Europe's only flagship brand in the telephony/technology sector, which Microsoft took over in September 2013. Taxpayers paid EUR 4.4 million – EUR 2.6 million of which came from the EU budget – for 821 workers to be redeployed³. They had already paid EUR 11 million – including EUR 5.5 million from the EU budget – for Nokia Germany to be relocated to Romania⁴.

Despite the above, the Commission announced on 25 January 2018 that it planned to invest almost EUR 100 million jointly with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in the health sector in Africa⁵.

Is the Commission making official its financial partnership with Bill Gates – multimillionaire and Microsoft founder and shareholder – not an obvious conflict of interest?

¹ <https://www.programmez.com/actualites/kaspersky-porte-plainte-contre-microsoft-pour-abus-de-position-dominante-26096>

² <https://euobserver.com/economic/137511>

³ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2017-0209+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

⁴ <https://www.welcomeurope.com/news-europe/nokia-will-benefit-assistance-of-european-globalization-adjustment-7324+7224.html>

⁵ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-361_en.pdf