

**Question for written answer E-001252/2021  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Monika Hohlmeier (PPE)**

**Subject:** Cases of corruption involving protective face masks in Italy and Spain

According to several media outlets, the Spanish and Italian authorities have uncovered large-scale criminal transactions involving COVID-19 face masks. In Italy, police officers uncovered several cases of corruption concerning a government contract for the purchase of 800 million masks, and in Spain, the authorities accidentally uncovered four million counterfeit FFP2 and KN95 masks.

1. Does the Commission have any knowledge of fraudulent purchases of protective masks or medical equipment financed by EU funds, in particular under the Emergency Support Instrument (ESI)?
2. If so, can it explain what means were used to bribe members of public authorities tasked with purchasing medical equipment and masks to manipulate public procurement procedures or certifications, or to redirect certified equipment for private purposes?
3. Can it say whether it has any knowledge of Chinese companies or criminal intermediaries bribing public servants to facilitate the purchase of masks in Italy, Spain or any other Member State?