

**Question for written answer E-002403/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Dimitrios Papadimoulis (The Left)

Subject: Important recommendations from the European Court of Auditors on the Commission's use of external consultants

The Commission concludes annual external consultancy contracts worth around EUR 1 billion for a wide range of activities. However, the findings of Special Report 17/2022 drawn up by the European Court of Auditors¹ indicate that it is failing to ensure maximum cost-effectiveness and fully safeguard its interests when recruiting external consultants and using their services. At the same time, the auditors point to significant shortcomings regarding the framework provisions governing the use of these services, resulting in risks of concentrated service provision, over-reliance on external consultants and potential conflicts of interest, which are not being properly monitored. They also highlight weaknesses in the assessment of the work done by consultants' work and its added value.

In view of this:

Will the Commission follow immediately the recommendations of the European Court of Auditors regarding the use of external consultants and namely (a) remedy the shortcomings regarding relevant framework provisions, (b) take more effective action to monitor and mitigate the risks involved, (c) make better use of the results obtained and (d) improve its methods of evaluation?

¹ <https://www.eca.europa.eu/el/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=61461>