

**Question for written answer E-000023/2023
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Marianne Vind (S&D)

Subject: Public procurement and decent work: a cautionary tale involving the dumping of interpretation services

According to the Commission, it aims to 'encourage public buyers to use public procurement to achieve positive social and ethical impact'.

The current EU public procurement rules are not sufficient to achieve this objective, as clearly demonstrated by the UNI Europa report entitled 'Put your money where your mouth is – Why and how the EU needs to change its public spending policies to promote a social Europe'¹.

The report reveals how several authorities in Denmark awarded all their interpretation services to a new, cheaper tenderer. The company subsequently made working conditions far less favourable by, among other things, reducing rates. Many of the most qualified interpreters refused to accept the new terms. This led to a lack of interpretation services for courts and prisons, prompting an uproar from judges, lawyers and doctors. The company ultimately had to withdraw from the contract, as it was unable to meet the demand.

1. Does the Commission believe that the current public procurement framework is fit for purpose and provides a balanced approach to ensure both top-quality services and decent working conditions?
2. Does it intend to reconsider its current rules and strategy on social public procurement?
3. How does it aim to prevent a publicly financed race to the bottom in terms of working conditions?

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¹ <https://www.uni-europa.org/news/public-procurement-snapshot-report-december-21>.