

**Question for written answer E-001051/2023  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Anne-Sophie Pelletier** (The Left)

Subject: Tobacco traceability and conflicts of interest

The illicit tobacco trade, which is in large part coordinated by tobacco companies, represents an annual tax loss of more than EUR 20 billion to the Member States. On 25 September 2018, 40 states – including the Member States of the European Union – ratified the World Health Organisation's Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products. Accordingly, the EU established a traceability system for tobacco products in May 2019. The implementation of this system has been entrusted to Dentsu, a subsidiary of an Anglo-Japanese company that has acquired the Codentify system developed and patented by Philip Morris International, in partnership with Atos. This choice poses two clear problems of conflict of interest. Firstly, Codentify was developed by Atos, a company formerly headed by the European Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry Breton. Secondly, this public contract was awarded in a discretionary manner to Dentsu after glowing reports from Jan Hoffmann, an official in DG Health who later became Director of Regulatory Affairs and Compliance for the same company.

I would therefore like to address the following questions to the Commission:

1. What mechanisms are available to the Commission to prevent, avoid and penalise conflicts of interest?
2. How does the Commission intend to combat the 'revolving door' phenomenon among its officials?

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