

**Question for written answer E-002728/2023
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Engin Eroglu (Renew)

Subject: Otter enclosure

The recently completed otter enclosure at the Multimar Wattforum National Park Information Centre has recently been the subject of criticism on the basis of extraordinary increases in costs.

According to the *Hamburger Abendblatt* and *BILD* newspapers, the costs of the enclosure, which is being funded by European Union's structural funds, have risen from the previously planned figure of EUR 6.7 million to EUR 9.2 million. The Ministry of the Environment claims that this sum could rise further still.

No prior performance audit was carried out, and some of the money has been spent on outdoor facilities and an exhibition¹.

The German taxpayers' association (Bund der Steuerzahler) had already warned of a disproportionate increase in costs in 2019².

The otter is not a threatened species; the enclosure will not even be used for future breeding activities, and it houses three females³.

1. What share of the project's funding is being covered by the European Union's structural funds?
2. What is the purpose of this enclosure?
3. How is the Commission justifying this huge increase in costs to the taxpayer?

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¹ <https://www.bild.de/regional/hamburg/hamburg-aktuell/naturschuetzer-bauen-luxus-anlage-9-2-mio-gehege-fuer-drei-fischotter-84963832.bild.html?fbclid=IwAR1DxXbAdsanLjZs2jJqhLbhrKYrJ3Ewa9kdcBdrfwHI9rldIEp-fqhrwos>

² https://steuerzahler.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Schwarzbuch2019_web.pdf

³ <https://www.abendblatt.de/region/schleswig-holstein/article239129377/Luxus-Otter-von-Toenning-kosten-neun-Millionen-Euro.html>