

Question for written answer E-003032/2023/rev.1

to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Rule 138

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Subject: Brussels awards contract to agency involved in electoral disinformation

Several French media outlets report that the firm Avisa Partners has obtained a contract from the Commission 'to support the new "strategic foresight hub" managed by the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI)' and is preparing to give '10 to 20 studies per year, on topics such as the role of women in countering radicalisation and the influence of disinformation in electoral processes'. It is also reported to have been given the task of 'facilitating the promotion of EU interests and values and the promotion of the EU's offensive interests'¹.

Avisa Partners is reportedly one of the largest information manipulation companies in France in recent years².

1. Given the damning report on Avisa Partners by France's Directorate General for External Security, and the fact that the French Government boycotted the firm at the International Cybersecurity Forum, can the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission explain how, by whom and why the agency was selected?
2. The 'Foreign Policy Instruments' contract does not appear in the list of tenders awarded for 2023 and two other contracts, amounting to EUR 910 000 and EUR 135 525, are listed. Can the HR/VP say what sums, in total, were allocated to Avisa Partners by the Commission and the European External Action Service in 2022 and 2023?
3. The Commission stated that 'the allegations made against the French company were in the process of being clarified'³. Can the HR/VP say what these allegations are and how far along we are in the clarification process?

Submitted: 12.10.2023

¹ <https://www.arretsurimages.net/chroniques/sur-le-grill/desinformation-leurope-paie-le-loup-pour-garder-la-bergerie>.

² https://www.intelligenceonline.com/corporate-intelligence_corridors-of-power/2020/05/13/avisa-hires-macrons-speechwriter,108405403-bre; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avisa_Partners
https://www.liberation.fr/checknews/olivia-gregoire-aurait-supervise-la-production-darticles-sous-faux-profils-lorsquelle-etait-cadre-distrat-selon-danciens-salaries-20220708_CXEMZPWQHZEJTPJ6X2TGJXG4/.

³ https://www.francetvinfo.fr/economie/medias/enquete-avisa-partners-dans-les-coulisses-de-la-sulfureuse-agence-d-influence_6035825.html.