

**Priority question for written answer P-000462/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Direct award (EDF-2023-AIRDEF-EATMI) in the draft 2023 European Defence Fund (EDF) work programme

The objectives of the EDF include making 'the most efficient use of defence research spending in the Union' (Article 3(2a)) and 'reducing the risk of unnecessary duplication' (Article 3(2b)). The EDF Regulation¹ provides for 'competitive calls for proposals' (Article 11(1)) as standard procedure. Only in 'duly substantiated and exceptional circumstances' may the Commission use 'direct awards'.

In 2021 the Commission launched a competitive call regarding 'protection against high-velocity aerial threats' and the development of an 'endo-atmospheric interceptor (concept phase)'. Of the two multinational consortiums to apply, HYDEF won in July 2022. Surprisingly, the losing applicant, HYDIS, was included in autumn 2022 in the Commission's draft 2023 EDF work programme for a direct award (EDF-2023-AIRDEF-EATMI). At least 15 Member States have criticised the Commission's proposal to fund the same programme twice ('dual sourcing').

How does the Commission justify this direct award proposal EDF-2023-AIRDEF-EATMI in the 2023 EDF work programme, considering the EDF's objectives of (a) reducing duplication, (b) increasing efficiency of spending and (c) only using direct awards in exceptional circumstances, and given that the decision for HYDEF was taken in July 2022, four months after Russia started its aggression against Ukraine, which included the use of hypersonic missiles?

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¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/697 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092. OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p. 149.