

**Priority question for written answer P-000873/2023  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Christine Anderson (ID)**

**Subject:** Possible payments made by the Commission or its services to journalists in German public service broadcasting corporations and private media companies

Public service broadcasting corporations in Germany enjoy freedom of broadcasting. Their independence from state influence is to be ensured by 'maintaining sufficient detachment from state authority'.

However, it recently came to light that Saxon state ministries recruited and remunerated employees of the Saxony-based public service broadcaster Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR) to perform certain activities (Saxony Regional Parliament document 7/11004). The German Federal Government has likewise made payments to journalists to the tune of at least EUR 1.7 million. (Bundestag document 20/4850<sup>1</sup>).

1. Broken down, if applicable, by date, Commission department or service, type of assignment, journalist, broadcasting corporation and gross payment amount, what remunerations, fees or other types of payment have been made by the Commission or its services since 2019 to ARD, ZDF, Deutschlandradio or Deutsche Welle journalists (for presenting, advising, providing expert opinions, rhetoric or language training, interviews etc.)? Furthermore, how does the Commission reconcile its contracting practices with the fact that public service broadcasting is constitutionally required to maintain 'sufficient detachment from state authority'?
2. Broken down, if applicable, by date, Commission department or service, type of assignment, journalist, broadcasting corporation and gross payment amount, what remunerations, fees or other types of payment have been made by the Commission or its services since 2019 to journalists working for privately-owned radio stations, newspapers or other media companies (for presenting, advising, providing expert opinions, rhetoric or language training, interviews etc.)? Furthermore, how does the Commission reconcile its contracting practices with the fact that the media is seen as a 'fourth power' (see BPB<sup>2</sup>) which can exert control over the actions of the state?

Submitted: 15.3.2023

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/048/2004850.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/lexika/das-junge-politik-lexikon/321342/vierte-gewalt/>