

**Question for written answer E-001889/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Michał Dworczyk (ECR)

Subject: Unreasonably high pay and non-transparent procedure for selection of special adviser to the Commission President

EUR 149 963.66 – that is the amount that mediaeval history professor Peter Strohschneider received for 154 days’ work on the ‘Strategic Dialogue for the Future of EU Agriculture’ report commissioned by the Commission President. Ursula von der Leyen approved a daily rate for the German expert of EUR 973.79, which exceeds the maximum rate of EUR 594.22 normally given to special advisers to the Commission. While the rules allow the Commission to increase remuneration in ‘duly justified exceptional circumstances’, it is worth noting that the Commission also works with renowned experts on an unpaid basis, for example Mario Draghi, author of the report on European competitiveness. The amount paid to Professor Strohschneider is shocking. What is more, special advisers are selected arbitrarily. The selection process is not regulated in any way and depends solely on the Commissioner and the President. A lack of transparency in the Commission President’s activities seems to be a recurring issue: in July 2024, the General Court of the European Union criticised von der Leyen for not being sufficiently transparent when concluding multi-billion-euro contracts to purchase COVID-19 vaccines.

In light of the above:

1. How does the Commission justify the exceptionally high remuneration that Professor Strohschneider received, considering that other special advisers work unpaid?
2. Why exactly was a history professor tasked with a report on the future of EU farming?
3. Does the Commission recognise that the lack of transparency and clear criteria in the selection of special advisers could potentially lead to abuse and is inconsistent with standard employment regulations in the EU institutions?

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