

Question for written answer E-002236/2024
to the Commission
Rule 144
Christine Anderson (ESN)

Subject: Procurement of face masks in the fight against COVID-19 and the ramifications thereof

According to media reports from various EU Member States, there were significant irregularities in the procurement of protective face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic. In some cases, low-quality masks were purchased at exorbitant prices, leading to legal disputes and strains on public budgets possibly amounting to billions. This raises questions about the level playing field and budgetary discipline in the internal market.

1. What role did the Commission play in the procurement of protective face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic and to what extent were procurement processes in the Member States coordinated or supervised?
2. What is the Commission's assessment of the financial risks arising from the ongoing legal disputes relating to the procurement of face masks for Member States' budgets with regard to compliance with EU debt rules?
3. What measures does the Commission intend to take with regard to future cases of procurement during crisis situations in the Member States in order to prevent distortions of competition resulting from improper procurement procedures and lobby influence?

Submitted: 23.10.2024