

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001377/24
to the Commission
Christine Anderson (ESN)
(18 July 2024)**

Subject: Does the Commission buy positive reporting? Questions on transparency with regard to media spending

A recent news report stated that the German Federal Government has spent around EUR 85 million over the past year on advertising, which was distributed to media outlets and influencers to ensure positive coverage ⁽¹⁾. This raises questions about the transparency and independence of the media.

1. Are there any similar cases in which the Commission has paid money to media outlets and influencers to encourage positive reporting?
2. How much money has the European Commission spent on advertising and public relations in the last three years, and to which media outlets or influencers has this been paid?
3. What measures is the Commission taking to ensure that such spending is transparent and does not jeopardise the independence of the media?

Submitted: 18.7.2024

**Answer given by President von der Leyen on behalf of the European Commission
(15 October 2024)**

The Commission strives to bring the EU closer to its citizens by informing and engaging them on the role of the EU and EU policies and initiatives, or how EU citizens can make the best of their rights in the EU. To achieve this, it uses a wide range of communication tools. These include public communication campaigns and advertising.

As part of specific communication actions, the Commission also engages with content creators by providing them with information on EU topics and organising study visits to the EU institutions.

The Commission's communication actions involving advertising or work with social media influencers are carried out in full transparency and respect the editorial independence of the media.

When running advertising campaigns, the Commission adheres to applicable national legislation and uses the transparency tools provided by each media and social media platforms, such as transparency labels and notices.

As regards political advertising, Regulation (EU) 2024/900 on the transparency and targeting of political advertising ⁽¹⁾ sets, among others, new rules on labelling and transparency notices, including to provide information about the sponsor of the political advertising, the amounts spent and their sources, which will enter fully into application from October 2025.

The Commission provides financing in the limit of the authorised appropriations for this purpose in accordance with the rules under the Financial Regulation ⁽²⁾.

In the period 2021-2023, the Commission had an annual budget of EUR 30 million used to finance EU-wide corporate communication campaigns, including advertising in media outlets. Recipients of EU funds of EUR 15 000 and above are listed in the Financial Transparency System ⁽³⁾.

¹ <https://www.freilich-magazin.com/gesellschaft/diese-agentur-kauft-mit-steuermillionen-gute-presse-fuer-die-bundesregierung>
⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32024R0900>
⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32018R1046>
⁽³⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/index.html>