

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002050/26
to the Commission
Per Clausen (The Left)
(19 May 2026)**

Subject: Potential conflicts of interest for Jyrki Katainen as the EU's Special Adviser for the Arctic while working as a lobbyist with interests in the region

The appointment of Jyrki Katainen as the EU's Special Adviser for EU-Arctic relations ⁽¹⁾ has raised concerns ⁽²⁾ about potential conflicts of interest in many circles. One of the tasks included in his new role will be to update the EU's Arctic strategy.

One of the main sources of concern is the fact that, once he has taken up his new role, Mr Katainen will continue as Head of Group Public & Regulatory Affairs ⁽³⁾ at Nordea, a bank. And it is precisely because Nordea has substantial — and potentially escalating — investment interests in, among other things, fossil fuel extraction in the Arctic, that it is difficult to see how this situation cannot be problematic when one of the key issues in the new Arctic strategy is whether the EU should maintain its moratorium on oil and gas extraction in the Arctic.

In the light of the foregoing:

1. What specific consideration has been given to how to both prevent and — not least — address complaints or concerns about specific conflicts of interest related to Mr Katainen's different roles?
2. How many other EU special advisers and envoys are there who may have similar conflicts of interest?
3. Has any action ever been taken against a special adviser or envoy on the basis of suspected potential conflicts of interest?

Submitted: 19.5.2026

**Answer given by Mr Serafin on behalf of the European Commission
(8 September 2026)**

The procedure for the designation and appointment of Special Advisers is governed by Commission Decision C(2007)6655 ⁽¹⁾.

Before the appointment of any Special Adviser, the Commission carries out an *ex-ante* assessment of potential conflicts of interest based on a declaration of interests submitted by the person concerned. Where appropriate, safeguard measures are put in place to prevent any actual or perceived conflict of interest.

In the case referred to by the Honourable Member, the Commission carried out such an assessment prior to the appointment of Mr Katainen, to ensure that there is no conflict of interest between his duties as Special Adviser and his professional activities outside the Commission. Appropriate safeguards have also been put in place and accepted by the Special Adviser.

In accordance with applicable data protection rules, the Commission cannot disclose details relating to an individual's assessment or safeguards.

His role is to advise the Commission on the EU's Arctic policy, not to update its strategy. Any update remains the responsibility of the Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President.

The complete list of Special Advisers, together with their *curricula vitae* and declarations, is published on the Commission's dedicated webpage ⁽²⁾, in accordance with the applicable rules.

The Commission assesses each appointment individually based on the applicable legal framework and does not categorise Special Advisers according to potential conflicts of interest.

Therefore, it does not maintain a list of Special Advisers who may have 'similar conflicts of interest'.

The Commission applies its conflict of interest rules rigorously. Any concerns are assessed under the legal framework and applicable procedures.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_26_799

² <https://www.altinget.dk/artikel/seniorraadgiver-eus-arktiske-strategi-risikerer-at-blive-farvet-af-nordeas-syn-paa-arktisk-olie-og-gas?>

³ <https://www.nordea.com/en/news/nordea-head-of-group-public-regulatory-affairs-jyrki-katainen-designated-as-special-adviser-for-the-eu-arctic-relations>

⁽¹⁾ As amended by Commission Decision C(2014)541. These rules contain specific provisions on the examination and prevention of conflicts of interest.

⁽²⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/about/service-standards-and-principles/transparency/special-advisers_en#currentlistofdesignatedspecialadvisers.