

**Question for written answer E-002064/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Joëlle Mélin (ID), Thierry Mariani (ID)

Subject: UK provider British Telecom awarded contract for the management of highly sensitive European communications (TESTA) network

According to the Politico information website,¹ the Commission is planning to award British Telecom (BT) a EUR 1.2 billion mega-contract for the management of its highly sensitive TESTA service for communications between administrations. The award of this contract to BT rather than to any of the EU operators casts doubt on the Commission's ability to safeguard the EU's strategic interests.

This decision has come as a shock and would, if put into effect, risk seriously compromising the security of Europeans and the confidentiality of their data. Indeed, the UK, which indeed left the EU definitively in 2020, does not have a reputation for particularly scrupulous data protection, as evidenced by the 2018 ECHR ruling that its mass surveillance programme constituted a breach of the right to privacy.

Faced with the justifiably indignant reactions of many European institutional or economic stakeholders, the Commission has been obliged to suspend this decision. Is it now in a position to guarantee that this strategically important contract will be awarded to an EU operator?

¹ Outrage after EU signs mega-deal with UK firm to handle confidential data - POLITICO