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Commission audit finds conflict of interest with Czech PM's companies

Andrej Babiš

According to leaks in the Czech media, the European Commission's audit into EU payments for non-agricultural funds to the Czech Prime Minister's Agrofert group of companies has found that he is in conflict of interest. The leaked audit, which is the first to come out, finds that around €11 million of non-agricultural EU funds will need to be returned. A second audit looking into the potential conflicts of interest around EU agricultural subsidies and Agrofert is expected next year.

Mikuláš Peksa, Greens/EFA Member of the Budgetary Control Committee and Czech Pirate MEP, comments:

"The leaked report clearly states Andrej Babiš controls the Agrofert group and that contracts awarded to his companies are in breach of Czech and EU law. The Commission audit has found that around €11 million will need to be returned as a result of Andrej Babiš' conflict of interest. All money must be returned by Mr Babiš and his companies directly, this burden cannot be placed on the shoulders of the Czech taxpayers."

"The European public have an interest in knowing what is in this audit and the European Parliament should be able to scrutinise the full details of this report. Czech and European taxpayers shouldn't have had to rely on leaks in the media to know if Andrej Babiš has been abusing his position as PM for his own personal gain."

Philippe Lamberts, President of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, comments:

"Now that it's been shown that there's an on-going conflict of interest around Andrej Babiš, this presents a clear risk to the EU budget. This audit raises serious questions about Babiš' role in making decisions on the EU budget that benefit him personally. Andrej Babiš should either resign from his role as Czech PM or completely relinquish any control over his companies. The credibility of the European Union and the Czech government are at stake."

"The EU must ensure that money meant to help citizens and vital sectors such as agriculture goes where it's

needed and not into the pockets of oligarchs. Now the new Commission of Ursula von der Leyen and Council President Charles Michel must prove that they are serious about the financial and political integrity of the EU by setting out how they intend to resolve this conflict of interest and stop it from happening in the future."

More:

The leaked audit can be found here: <https://www.scribd.com/document/438372830/Denik-N-Finalni-verze-audit-u-o-st%C5%99etu-zajm%C5%AF-Andreje-Babi%C5%A1e-od-auditor%C5%AF-Evropske-komise>

The Budgetary Control (CONT) Committee has, on the initiative of the Greens/EFA group, sent an Oral Question to the Commission on the misuse of EU funds, Conflict of Interests and Corruption to be followed by a Plenary debate.

Members of the Committee have also demanded an extraordinary meeting of CONT to discuss the status of the report and its findings with the Commissioner for budget next week on the 16th of December.

The Agrofert group is estimated to have received more than €75 million in subsidies a year.

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