

Minor interpellation

of the Members of Parliament Gökyay Akbulut, Desiree Becker, Janina Böttger, Maik Brückner, Mirze Edis, Katrin Fey, Vinzenz Glaser, Ates Gürpinar, Jan Köstering, Charlotte Antonia Neuhäuser, Cansu Özdemir, Lea Reisner, Zada Salihović, Ulrich Thoden, Donata Vogtschmidt, Christin Willnat and Die Linke parliamentary group

Legal infringement, corruption and security risks associated with EXPO 2027 Belgrade and consequences for German participation

In 2023, the Republic of Serbia was chosen as the official host country for the international specialised exhibition EXPO 2027 by the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE). Since then, serious concerns have been raised in the Serbian public and among civil society organisations regarding the rule of law, transparency and integrity of the preparations for the EXPO.

Following analyses and reports, including from Transparency Serbia (see www.transparentnost.org.rs/en/) and the European Commission (see https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/6e68ce26-b95b-48e1-921a-c60c12da8f00_en?filename=serbia-report-2025.pdf) the special law (Official Gazette of RS 92/2023)), as well as accompanying regulations, restrict processes of transparent procurement and effective legal protection. Given that the Federal Republic of Germany participates in international expos and trade fairs according to public procurement notices and programme information, and at the same time links export promotion and risk mitigation instruments to integrity criteria, there is a legitimate interest in obtaining information regarding the Federal Government's current knowledge, contacts, risk assessments and conditions in connection with EXPO 2027 Belgrade.

Additionally, shortly before the end of the year, a reform of key judicial laws was passed through an accelerated procedure - without broad public debate and without expert opinion - which relates, among other things, to key aspects of judicial and prosecutorial independence. With regard to Serbia's EU accession path, it is of particular interest how the Federal Government assesses these developments and what conclusions it draws from them for its bilateral relations with Serbia.

We ask the Federal Government:

1. Is the Federal Government aware of the 'Formal Notice' or comparable submissions by Serbian civil society actors to the BIE regarding EXPO 2027 Belgrade (cf. <https://betabriefing.com/news/politics/31784-citizens-ngos-launch-initiative-to-warn-bie-of-problems-related-to-expo-2027>) and if so, which ones (please provide date of receipt, recipients within the Federal Government, onward transmission between ministries)?

2. Has the Federal Government (or a German delegation) raised this issue in BIE bodies (General Assembly/Executive Committee/Working Groups) since Serbia's election as host on 21 June 2023 (please provide the date, forum, German mandate, and key content for each instance)?
3. Which documents on the governance of EXPO 2027 (in particular the SEE Agreement between the BIE and Serbia) are available to the Federal Government, and what conclusions does it draw from them regarding integrity and compliance (please provide sources/contract designations, where publicly available)?
4. What is the Federal Government's assessment of the content and application of the Serbian special law for EXPO 2027 and the procurement exemptions it provides for?
5. Is it correct, to the best of the Federal Government's knowledge, that Article 14 of the Special Law exempts EXPO-related procurement via 'EXPO companies' from the regular procurement law (cf. www.transparentnost.org.rs/images/dokumenti_uz_vesti/Special_Law_for_EXPO_and_its_Implementation.pdf), and if so: What minimum standards (transparency, competition, legal protection) apply instead?
6. How does the Federal Government respond to the findings of the European Commission (see https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/6e68ce26-b95b-48e1-921a-c60c12da8f00_en?filename=serbia-report-2025.pdf), that Serbia circumvents public procurement law through special laws (including EXPO 2027) and continues to raise concerns about legal protection/deadlines (please specify the concrete passages)?
7. What knowledge does the Federal Government have regarding the volume of EXPO-related contracts already awarded outside the regular procurement law, and from which sources does this knowledge derive?
8. What knowledge does the Federal Government have of reports that EXPO companies have awarded contracts of over €330 million with very low competition intensity (e.g. 86% 'single valid bid') (cf. www.transparentnost.org.rs/en/ts-and-media/press-issues/12922-with-the-constitutional-court-remaining-silent-expo-projects-continue-to-be-awarded-with-out-competition)?
9. Is the Federal Government aware of any companies that conduct or have conducted EXPO-related business on its behalf or on behalf of other state institutions, and if so, which companies are these and for which state bodies were or are they acting?
10. To what extent does the Federal Government examine whether German public funds or liability risks (directly or indirectly) could be affected by EXPO-related business of German companies (please list the instruments and audit points)?
11. What measures is the Federal Government taking to rule out corruption risks in the use of German funds in connection with EXPO 2027?
12. What audit and control mechanisms are in place to ensure the proper use of the funds?
13. What guidelines or recommendations does the Federal Government provide to German companies regarding compliance, anti-corruption and legally compliant procurement procedures in the context of the EXPO?
14. Is the Federal Government aware of any Serbian regulations under which building, usage and safety requirements in the context of the EXPO have been, or are to be, simplified or deferred (e.g. provisional approval, technical commission; use of temporary structures), and how does it assess this in light of visitor and safety considerations?

15. What is the German Government's assessment of the collapse of the railway station canopy in Novi Sad on 1 November 2024 (16 fatalities) and of the resulting allegations of governance failures and corruption in Serbia, and what conclusions does it draw from this for its assessment of governance, procurement and safety risks in connection with EXPO-related projects?
16. What information does the Federal Government have on whether companies involved in the renovation of the Novi Sad railway station are also involved in EXPO construction projects?
17. What information does the Federal Government have regarding which staff members of government agencies or subordinate institutions involved in the renovation of the railway station in Novi Sad also hold roles in EXPO construction projects (in relation to permits, procedural matters, compliance with regulations, etc.)?
18. What knowledge does the Federal Government have of the warning issued in February 2025 by the Serbian Academy of Sciences (SANU) regarding the risks of 'irreversible environmental damage' and the endangered water supply infrastructure of Belgrade in connection with the EXPO plans (see <https://radar.nova.rs/drustvo/expo-opasan-po-zivot-nu-sredinu/>)?
19. What information does the Federal Government have regarding environmental impact/strategic environmental assessments and water law assessments for the EXPO site (particularly Belgrade/Surčin area), and has it raised these with Serbian authorities or in the EU context?
20. Which specific environmental, construction and labour-law standards does the Federal Government apply to its own involvement in the EXPO?
21. How does the Federal Government ensure that these standards are adhered to during implementation on the ground?
22. If Serbian legal norms apply to the construction measures related to the German participation - how do they differ in the three aforementioned areas (environment, construction and labour-law) from European and German standards?
23. Is the Federal Government aware of whether and how Serbia has integrated national anti-corruption institutions or independent controls into the EXPO governance, and whether international standards in accordance with the UNCAC are being met?
24. What standards does the Federal Government use to assess 'systemic' corruption/state capture risks in partner countries in the context of foreign trade promotion and major international events, and have such criteria been applied to EXPO 2027 Belgrade?
25. What role do the reports of the European Commission (Serbia reports) play in the German Federal Government's risk assessment regarding German participation in and support for EXPO 2027, and are there any conditions derived from them?
26. What planned or ongoing services provided by German companies and institutions in connection with the EXPO projects are known to the Federal Government (e.g. consultancy, construction, planning, technical and exhibition services), and what due diligence requirements does it impose on such engagements?

27. Which contracts/appointments in connection with the German EXPO participation have been announced by the Federal Government, and what anti-corruption and transparency clauses are standard for these?
28. What options is the Federal Government considering in the event that it is unable to ensure compliance with minimum standards regarding transparency, the rule of law, building safety and environmental protection (e.g. adjusting, restricting or terminating the involvement)?
29. What mechanisms does the Federal Government consider for securely receiving tips from whistle-blowers or companies regarding EXPO-related corruption or compliance risks in Germany (internal reporting channels; the Federal Government's external reporting channel at the Federal Office of Justice), and how is the protection of the whistle-blowers ensured?
30. What knowledge does the Federal Government have of reports from the Serbian Labour Inspectorate regarding the lack of work permits for foreign workers and the employment of Serbian workers without registration with social security and without a contract of employment (www.cins.rs/en/illegal-works-on-the-expo-working-off-the-books-and-fleeing-from-construction-site/; <https://forbes.nl/info.rs/biznis/propisi/otkriva-mo-na-ekspodasad-otkriveno-56-neprijavljenih-radnika-i-tri-slucaja-povreda-ovo-su-kompanije-i-preduzetnici-zateceni-u-preksaju/>), which were/are active on the EXPO grounds?

What knowledge does the Federal Government have regarding the content, procedures and criticisms of the Serbian judicial package (Mrdić Laws, adopted on 28 January 2026), including the EU assessment and the consideration by the Venice Commission; what documents does the Federal Government hold on this matter?

31. What assessment does the Federal Government make of whether and how these judicial reforms could affect the effective prosecution of corruption and organised crime (including the relevant special prosecutor's office), as well as international legal cooperation, and what consequences does this have for EXPO-related risk assessments?
32. What bilateral contacts have German authorities had with Serbian institutions (government, judiciary, public prosecutor's office) since the introduction of these judicial laws, and what position does the Federal Government take on this? (Please list the main topics of discussion and outcomes.)

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Heidi Reichinnek, Sören Pellmann and the Fraction