

Question for written answer E-001816/2025

to the Commission

Rule 144

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Subject: European Court of Auditors' Special Report 11/2025: poor classification and registration of grant applicants

Special Report 11/2025 of the European Court of Auditors (ECA) on the transparency of funding granted to NGOs paints a bleak picture. The ECA notes that the Commission has made little progress since the last report in 2018¹.

For instance, there is still no common registration system for grant applicants, no coherent overview of funds provided, and no single definition of NGOs – in spite of repeated calls that there should be.

The Court is insisting that the Commission issue guidance on the classification of NGOs by the end of this year; it criticises the fact that managers of EU funds rely solely on self-declarations by NGOs that they are independent of government and do not serve their members' commercial interests, and do not use other data sources. Simply checking articles of association to establish whether profits have to be distributed to shareholders is therefore not sufficient to infer whether or not an organisation can be classified as an NGO.

1. Why has the Commission been putting off acting on the ECA's recommendations for eight years?
2. How will the Commission ensure that hybrid organisations, e.g. public-private partnerships, foundations or associations linked to trade unions and political parties, will no longer be classified as NGOs in future?

Submitted: 6.5.2025

¹ Special Report 35/2018.