

**Question for written answer E-002360/2025/rev.1
to the Council**
Rule 144
Marieke Ehlers (Pfe)

Subject: European support for NGOs to take legal action against European firms and the supporting role of the Anti-SLAPP Directive in this context

According to the newspaper *Welt am Sonntag*, the Commission has paid environmental organisations up to EUR 700 000 to take legal action against European firms. For instance, ClientEarth is reported to have received EUR 350 000 to bring legal proceedings against the German energy sector¹. Last year, the Council adopted the so-called Anti-SLAPP Directive, which makes it more difficult for companies and governments to defend themselves legally against NGOs. This directive also requires Member States to support associations, organisations and trade unions so that they can aid NGOs by providing advice and assistance during legal proceedings².

1. What is the Council's view on the interplay between the Commission's support for NGOs to bring lawsuits against companies on the one hand, and EU legislation that makes it difficult or even impossible for companies to defend themselves legally against these NGOs on the other?
2. Does the Council consider this to constitute a clear violation of the fundamental legal principle of equality of arms and the right to a fair trial, as enshrined in Articles 6 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights?
3. Is the Council prepared to push for a review of the Anti-SLAPP Directive and to ensure that, in the context of negotiations on the new MFF, NGOs do not receive subsidies to pursue their ideological fight against European companies through legal proceedings?

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¹ <https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/plus256221718/geheime-vertraege-eu-kommission-bezahlte-aktivisten-fuer-klimalobbyismus.html>.

² Directive (EU) 2024/1069 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded claims or abusive court proceedings ('Strategic lawsuits against public participation').