

Question for written answer E-003979/2026
to the Commission
Rule 144
Luděk Niedermayer (PPE)

Subject: The interpretation of Article 61 of the EU Financial Regulation (conflict of interest rule) and possible use of blind trusts to resolve conflicts of interest

1. If a public official (a prime minister) is involved in negotiating and approving the EU budget, he or she can, during that process, influence whether or not a given company (one in whose financial success he or she has a personal or family interest) will receive funds from the EU budget, including, in certain cases, how much it will receive and under what conditions, and can do so whether it involves funds from project financing ('investment grants') or from direct payments ('operating subsidies'). This opportunity to influence the setting of rules on EU budget-spending for both types of payment, at EU and national level, renders such an official subject to a potential conflict of interest, and the Commission should therefore take appropriate action, not only with regard to investment grants, but also to operating subsidies. Does the Commission agree with the above interpretation of the conflict of interest rule? If not, why not?
2. In the case of assets consisting of non-publicly traded firms – which cannot, for objective reasons, be sold and exchanged quickly and transparently for other assets – it is practically impossible for them to be sold or exchanged for other assets during the term of the blind trust. This, in my view, makes it impossible to ensure that the person concerned is not in a position to make decisions which favour those firms. How then, in the Commission's view, is it possible to ensure the genuine 'blind management' of such assets in a way that complies with the conflict of interest rule?

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