

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002622/24
to the Commission
Nora Junco García (NI), Diego Solier (NI)
(21 November 2024)**

Subject: Ineffectual Commission and Catalan regional government funding for Morocco

The Catalan regional government and the Commission have signed agreements with Morocco totalling EUR 3 million. The aim of these agreements is to promote gender equality through initiatives led by organisations linked to the Moroccan authorities. It is more than arguable that these funds lack EU oversight and raise questions about their alignment with democratic principles, given Morocco's questionable human-rights record. This situation raises concerns about whether such investments genuinely improve equality or risk reinforcing non-transparent practices in recipient nations.

Furthermore, these agreements come amid broader financial collaborations between Spain and Morocco, often justified as a means of strengthening bilateral ties and fostering regional stability. However, there is increased scepticism about the tangible impact of these funds, especially considering the recurring governance and human-rights issues in Morocco.

In view of the above:

1. How does the Commission ensure oversight and accountability for funds allocated to non-EU governments, particularly those with concerning human-rights records?
2. What measures are in place to verify that EU funds used for bilateral cooperation align with the EU values of democracy and transparency?
3. Can the Commission explain why resources are directed to such initiatives in non-EU regions while urgent socioeconomic issues persist within the EU?

Submitted: 21.11.2024

**Answer given by Ms Šuica on behalf of the European Commission
(12 February 2025)**

EU funding is subject to specific rules and regulations, in respect of sound financial management, which ensure oversight and accountability.

Particular attention is given to the respect of fundamental values, human rights, democracy and rule of law. Assistance can be suspended in the event of the degradation of fundamental values.

The Commission conducts regular monitoring and evaluation of funded programs to assess their impact, effectiveness and compliance with EU values and principles.

The Commission involves civil society organisations (CSOs) in the design, implementation and monitoring of EU-funded programmes and projects since CSOs play a crucial role in promoting democratic values and transparency.

The EU has also established solid mechanisms, such as continuous follow-ups, audits and verifications, to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of EU funds.

As a key multilateral actor, the EU is committed to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ⁽¹⁾, which include reducing poverty and inequality worldwide, including in non-EU regions.

Furthermore, the EU has established partnerships with countries in its Southern Neighbourhood to advance joint priorities, such as peace, stability, economic prosperity, upholding democratic values and human rights, notably working together with Member States through the Team Europe initiative and with special focus on gender issues (Gender Action Plan III ⁽²⁾).

By acting together, recognising the growing interdependence, the EU also aims at turning common challenges into opportunities. By investing in these regions, the EU promotes its own economic interests for instance by increasing trade and creating opportunities for European businesses, while ensuring mutual benefits for partner countries.

⁽¹⁾ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

⁽²⁾ https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/join-2020-17-final_en.pdf