

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000838/25
to the Commission**

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(25 February 2025)

Subject: EU funds to environmental lobbying groups to promote the European Green Deal

A recent investigation by Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* ⁽¹⁾ has uncovered serious irregularities, according to which it is alleged that the Commission allocated substantial EU funds to environmental lobbying groups to promote its own 'green agenda'.

Furthermore, during Parliament's Plenary Session of 22 January 2025 ⁽²⁾, Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration Piotr Serafin admitted that 'it was inappropriate for ... the Commission to enter into agreements that oblige NGOs to lobby Members of the European Parliament'.

Given these revelations, could the Commission clarify the following:

1. Will the Commission disclose the nature, amount and source of the funds allocated for each legislative proposal that was subject to such an 'inappropriate practice', and provide a detailed list of beneficiaries from Czechia, specifying the amounts received by them and the lobbying objectives assigned?
2. What measures has the Commission taken, or does it intend to take, to investigate and address the identified irregularities, and how will it ensure the accountability of those responsible for improper or illegal practices, and prevent further conflicts of interest in the EU's decision-making processes?
3. Does the Commission plan to review and/or withdraw the European Green Deal legislation that may have been compromised by the findings revealed by *De Telegraaf*?

Submitted: 25.2.2025

Answer given by Mr Serafin on behalf of the European Commission
(12 May 2025)

The Commission adheres strictly to its transparency obligations. Information about EU fund recipients, including Czech beneficiaries, is published in the Financial Transparency System ⁽³⁾. The Commission proactively shares the objectives and outcomes of funded projects on the Funding & Tenders Portal ⁽⁴⁾. Interest representatives are required to report their lobbying activities and disclose key funding sources, including any contributions exceeding EUR 10 000 and representing more than 10% of their total budget, in their registrations in the Transparency Register ⁽⁵⁾.

Operating grants under the Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) are awarded competitively. Applicants submit proposals that include the description of their work programmes, in areas indicated in the LIFE Regulation ⁽⁶⁾. This work programme is annexed to the grant agreement. It may mention, among other applicant's activities, advocacy activities. The Commission does not prescribe the specific activities in the applicants' work programmes, nor does it instruct them to support any specific positions.

The Commission has not identified irregularities in LIFE operating grants. Nonetheless, agreements involving activities directed at EU institutions, even if they do not breach the legal framework, may entail reputational risks for the EU. To mitigate these risks, the Commission has issued guidance ⁽⁷⁾ addressed to all its services, clarifying which activities should not be mandated as a condition for EU financing.

Green Deal legislation has been subject to public consultations, in line with Better Regulation principles ⁽⁸⁾. All stakeholders had the opportunity to present their opinion and positions. Additionally, the Commission regularly reviews existing legislation based on Better Regulation principles.

⁽¹⁾ Bakker, Alexander, 'Lobbyschandaal in Brussel: EU betaalde milieclubs in het geheim voor promotie van groene plannen Timmermans', *De Telegraaf*, 22 January 2025, <https://www.telegraaf.nl/nieuws/1287315486/lobbyschandaal-in-brussel-eu-betaalde-milieclubs-in-het-geheim-voor-promotie-van-groene-plannen-timmermans>.

⁽²⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-10-2025-01-22-ITM-015_DE.html.

⁽³⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/index.html>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>.

⁽⁵⁾ https://transparency-register.europa.eu/index_en.

⁽⁶⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/783/oj/eng>.

⁽⁷⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/guidance-funding-dev-impl-monit-enforce-of-eu-law_en.pdf.

⁽⁸⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/better-regulation_en.