

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000933/25
to the Commission
Erik Kaliňák (NI)
(5 March 2025)**

Subject: Executive agency for education, culture and audio-visual — recovery of funds

According to media reports, the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is set to recover funds granted to the 'Projekt Fórum' civil society organisation. This is allegedly due to insufficient documentation concerning the use of funds from the grant for the project 'Mirrors of Europe', which ran from 2010 to 2012). The amount to be recovered is likely to be in the region of EUR 160 000 (including legal and enforcement costs) ⁽¹⁾.

Although the EACEA, as an EU executive agency, is responsible for the implementation of designated EU programmes, under Council Regulation 58/2003 the Commission continues to have responsibilities and a number of powers vis-à-vis the executive agencies or programmes, including, *inter alia*, supervisory power over the implementation of the programmes (Article 20 of the regulation).

In view of the above, I would like to ask the Commission for confirmation of the veracity of the above-mentioned media reports.

1. If a confirmation of co-financing was required, does the Commission know whether the 'Projekt Fórum' organisation provided such confirmation?
2. There has also been media coverage of the claim by the European Ombudsman that the project did not meet the eligibility requirements for funding under the Culture programme 2007-2013. Is the Commission aware of this allegation, and what are the implications?
3. Does the Commission agree with EACEA's claim that the use of funds was insufficiently documented? What data were missing?

Submitted: 5.3.2025

**Answer given by Mr Micallef on behalf of the European Commission
(21 May 2025)**

Commission Decision C(2023)5035 final of 19 July 2023 outlines the grounds for the enforced recovery procedure. It was established that Projekt Forum Zdruzenie (PFZ), coordinator of the project 'Mirrors of Europe' failed to respect its substantial obligations under the Grant Agreement signed for the above-mentioned project. As such, it was requested to return the EU funding due to this breach of obligations.

Regarding the co-financing of the project, it was established that the documents provided by the project coordinator, including the financial statement was still not balanced and therefore did not comply with the requirements of the Grant Agreement, and that there was no financial contribution made by PFZ and its co-organisers to the project.

The Commission is aware of the claim initiated in 2019 by the project coordinator, and of the decision by the European Ombudsman ⁽²⁾, who found no maladministration in the Education and Culture Executive Agency's decision to recover the funds. Once all means of recovering the funds unduly received by the project, as put in place by the Commission services and the Agency, had failed (including debit note, reminders, formal notices, full repayment, repayment by instalment, offsetting, etc.), the sole remaining action was the enforced recovery procedure initiated via the above-mentioned Commission Decision.

Commission Decision C(2023)5035 outlines the grounds for the enforced recovery procedure.

⁽¹⁾ <https://plus7dni.pluska.sk/aktualne/marta-simeckova-obcianske-zdruzenie-projekt-forum-exekucia-agentura-europska-unia>.
⁽²⁾ European Ombudsman <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/decision/en/120801>.