

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001482/25
to the Commission**

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(10 April 2025)

Subject: Major problems with EU funding for non-governmental organisations, according to the European Court of Auditors

In its Special Report 11/2025, the European Court of Auditors highlighted serious problems in the Commission's management of funds allocated to non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The report stresses that the Commission is not in a position to provide a clear and centralised picture of the number of NGOs supported, the amount of funding granted or the nature of activities carried out. Available information is often incomplete, out of date or difficult to access.

Even more concerning is the lack of systematic checks on financial transparency, the absence of conflicts of interest and the effective political independence of beneficiary NGOs.

This state of affairs is unacceptable, particularly in the light of recent complaints about alleged use of EU funds to promote ideological agendas, for example, with former Vice-President Timmermans and the Green Agenda.

Therefore:

1. How will the Commission step up control over programmes that receive financing so that they do not support initiatives that undermine the institutions' neutrality?
2. Will it suspend funding for NGOs that fail to comply with minimum transparency criteria?
3. Will it establish a single, public and up-to-date register of all EU-funded NGOs, providing information on sums received and activities carried out?

Submitted: 10.4.2025

**Answer given by Mr Serafin on behalf of the European Commission
(26 June 2025)**

The Commission does not prescribe the specific activities in the applicants' work programmes, nor does it instruct them to support any specific positions ⁽¹⁾.

The Commission has issued guidance ⁽²⁾ to mitigate the reputational risk from agreements involving activities directed at EU institutions, clarifying which activities should not be mandated as a condition for EU financing.

Initiatives funded from the EU budget should not undermine the institution's neutrality. Grants including operating grants are awarded competitively. Applicants submit proposals that include the description of their work programmes.

This work programme is annexed to the grant agreement. The work programme may mention, among other applicant's activities, advocacy activities.

To date, the Commission has not identified irregularities in operating grants. The Commission will immediately take action should it become aware of any proven evidence of misconduct, such as breaches of contractual obligations.

Interest representatives that apply for EU funding, which would typically include non-governmental organisations, are required to register in the Transparency Register ⁽³⁾ as not representing commercial interests.

They are required to report their lobbying activities and declare their main sources of funding as well as the amount of each contribution above EUR 10 000 exceeding 10% of their total budget and the name of the contributor in their registrations in the Transparency Register.

⁽¹⁾ In relation to the introductory statement, reference is made to the European Commission's replies to the European Court of Auditors' special report in question, <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications?ref=SR-2025-11>.

⁽²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/guidance-funding-dev-impl-monit-enforce-of-eu-law_en.pdf.

⁽³⁾ https://transparency-register.europa.eu/index_en.

The Commission adheres strictly to its transparency obligations. Information about EU fund recipients, including non-governmental organisations, is published in the Financial Transparency System ⁽⁴⁾. The Commission proactively shares the objectives and outcomes of funded projects on the Funding & Tenders Portal ⁽⁵⁾.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/index.html>; the annual publications are based on Article 38 of the Financial Regulation (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202402509) whereby data on recipients is not disclosed for very low value contracts below EUR 15 000 and where disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of the persons or entities.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>.