

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001634/25
to the Commission
Jean-Paul Garraud (PfE)
(23 April 2025)**

Subject: Large-scale funding of NGOs without proper scrutiny or transparency

In its Special Report 11/2025, the European Court of Auditors revealed a system that is wholly unacceptable: the European Union finances NGOs on a very large scale with no serious scrutiny. Organisations proclaiming themselves to be NGOs receive grants without proper verification of their independence or compliance with European values (paragraphs 11, 17 and 23). Some serve commercial interests, while others have distinct political agendas, without democratic legitimacy.

More than 40% of the funds are received by a small number of organisations favoured by the Commission (paragraph 42), 85% of which survive exclusively on public grants (paragraph 57). This opaque system makes it possible to finance ideological, pro-immigration campaigns and structures committed to communitarian causes or which advocate in favour of sensitive societal issues.

1. How does the Commission justify the fact that entities serving private interests can be recognised as NGOs and thus benefit from European public funding?
2. Why does it continue to publish incomplete or unusable financial data, making it impossible for citizens to scrutinise the funds allocated to NGOs?
3. Will it make all public funding conditional on full transparency regarding the sources of funding and political activities of NGOs?

Submitted: 23.4.2025

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

The Commission refers to its replies to the European Court of Auditor's (ECA) Special Report 11/2025 ⁽¹⁾, mentioning that 'carrying out an economic activity is compatible with the nature of a non-governmental organisation (NGO), for as long as any profits it generates from its activities are not distributed to its members'.

The Commission will explore how to take into consideration the NGO status when an entity is pursuing its members' commercial interests. This aspect is not part of the NGO definition agreed by the Council and the European Parliament in the Financial Regulation (FR) ⁽²⁾.

The need to indicate in direct- management- grant applications whether the entity is an NGO came into effect with the FR recast. To receive EU funding, NGOs must fulfil the same eligibility requirements as other applicants. Being an NGO is no eligibility criterion in itself, aside from a few, very specific cases.

The Commission discloses information on recipients of funds financed from the budget in direct management through the Financial Transparency System (FTS) ⁽³⁾. These publications are aligned with the EU's consolidated annual accounts, which are audited by ECA.

The Commission refers to point 2, section III of its replies to the ECA observations. Article 38 of the FR indicates the requirements for publishing information about recipients and does not require the disclosure of advocacy activities funded through grant agreements.

The Commission also shares objectives and outcomes of funded projects on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ⁽⁴⁾. Interest representatives that register in the Transparency Register ⁽⁵⁾ as not representing commercial interests, which would typically include NGOs, must 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.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECARepplies/COM-Replies-SR-2025-11/COM-Replies-SR-2025-11_EN.pdf.

⁽²⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TEXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202402509.

⁽³⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/index.html>. The annual publications are based on Article 38 of the Financial Regulation (OJ L 2024/2509, 26.9.2024, p. 1-239), and in accordance with the third paragraph of the article, information on recipients is not disclosed in specific cases outlined therein.

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

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

The Commission notes ECA's recognition that, based on their sample, interest representatives were correctly registered in the Transparency Register ⁽⁶⁾.

⁽⁶⁾ See paragraph 50 of the ECA report (see footnote 1).