

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002336/25
to the Commission
Anna Brylka (P/E)
(11 June 2025)

Subject: Media reports of opaque funding of non-governmental organisations to promote EU climate policy

A recent article in the *Welt am Sonntag* (cited on 7 June 2025 by *Euronews* and *Politico*) reported allegations of certain ‘secret contracts’ between the Commission and non-governmental organisations, such as ‘ClientEarth’ and ‘Friends of the Earth’.

According to the article, the Commission provided up to EUR 700 000 to fund actions to promote EU climate policy, including engaging German coal power plants in legal disputes to increase their legal and financial risks.

To fully clarify this issue and ensure public confidence in the Commission’s actions:

1. Can the Commission provide details of NGO funding under the LIFE Programme, in particular detailed information on the grants awarded to ClientEarth and Friends of the Earth in 2022-2024, including the amounts and objectives of the actions funded?
2. Have those grants included actions targeted against operators of German coal power plants, as suggested by the *Welt am Sonntag*?

Submitted: 11.6.2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(10 October 2025)

1. Operating grants to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) under the EU programme for the environment and climate action (LIFE) ⁽¹⁾ are awarded following competitive calls for proposals and in line with the provisions of the Financial Regulation ⁽²⁾. Applicants submit proposals that include the description of their work programmes of activities in areas indicated in the LIFE Regulation ⁽³⁾, which are then annexed to the grant agreement.

Detailed information on all operating grants financed under the LIFE programme is published online in the LIFE public dashboard ⁽⁴⁾. Each entry includes the beneficiaries’ details, the amounts of the EU contributions, and a description of the objectives of the grant. The dashboard is updated each year after the operating grants have been awarded. In addition, the Commission has provided the European’s Parliament Committee on Budgetary Control with all the documents requested by the Committee to facilitate the European Parliament’s scrutiny in the context of the budget discharge for the financial years 2022 and 2023.

2. The operating grant awarded to ClientEarth has been concluded under the LIFE programme, which provides financial support for the functioning of NGOs supporting civil society’s participation in policy making, through competitive calls for proposals.

The Commission maintains full impartiality and does not require beneficiaries, including NGOs, to undertake advocacy activities for specific political and policy purposes. The Commission has neither demanded nor encouraged ClientEarth to take legal actions against coal-burning power plants. As a beneficiary of the LIFE programme, ClientEarth has full independence in deciding the content and implementation of its own work programme.

The Commission issued Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy ⁽⁵⁾. A disclaimer in the recent LIFE Calls clearly indicates that beneficiaries of LIFE operating grants, remain responsible for the content of their work programme, views and actions.

⁽¹⁾ https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj/eng>.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0783>.

⁽⁴⁾ https://dashboard.tech.ec.europa.eu/qs_digit_dashboard_mt/public/sense/app/8298c020-48a6-4b84-91f4-f6f2665c0f99/overview. Under the ‘Call acronym’ tab, select ‘LIFE-[year]-NGO-OG-SGA and scroll down to the list of operating grants for each year of the 2021-2027 financial framework.

⁽⁵⁾ In 2024: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/guidance-funding-dev-impl-monit-enforce-of-eu-law_en.pdf.