

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002388/25
to the Commission
Mariusz Kamiński (ECR)
(13 June 2025)**

Subject: The Commission's use of public money for behind-the-scenes political lobbying

In recent months a number of stories have appeared in the media concerning the Commission's use of public money to carry out behind-the-scenes political lobbying to push through controversial policies such as the Green Deal and climate policy.

The reports show that experts advocating the Commission's preferred views are also receiving funding in the areas of agriculture and the common security and defence policy.

What is more, reports in the *Welt am Sonntag* ⁽¹⁾ suggest that, in addition to supporting 'green' NGOs in their efforts to lobby Member States and independent institutions, including the European Parliament, the Commission has also allegedly provided funding to help NGOs sue European companies.

One example is ClientEarth, which received EUR 350 000 to take legal action against coal-fired power plants, with the explicit aim of increasing the 'financial and legal risk' for their operators.

In view of the above, please provide specific answers to the following questions, which will speed up the work of the expected committee of inquiry that more than 200 MEPs have already called for:

1. Has the Commission funded and in any way mandated NGOs, consultancy firms or lobbying outfits to influence the decisions and policies of democratic governments and independent institutions?
2. In what areas — other than the already confirmed cases of the Green Deal, security and defence policy and agriculture — has the Commission conducted similar lobbying campaigns, and were activities promoting the agreement with Mercosur also financed?
3. What steps is the Commission intending to take in response to the criticism that there is no credible and transparent overview of the EU funds that are going to NGOs?

Submitted: 13.6.2025

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

The Commission has not mandated non-governmental organisations (NGOs), consultancy firms, or lobbying outfits to influence the decisions and policies of democratic governments and independent institutions.

Operating grants are awarded following competitive calls for proposals. Applicants submit proposals that include the description of their work-programmes of activities in areas indicated in the regulation for the Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) ⁽¹⁾, which are then annexed to the grant agreement.

The work programme may mention, among other applicant's activities, advocacy activities. The Commission does not prescribe the specific activities to be carried out by the NGOs in their work programmes, nor instructs them to support specific positions.

The Commission refers to its previous answers ⁽²⁾ and its replies to the European Court of Auditor's (ECA) Special Report 11/2025 ⁽³⁾ relating to NGOs' financing in internal policies.

The Commission adheres strictly to its transparency obligations. Information about EU fund recipients, including NGOs, is published on the Financial Transparency System ⁽⁴⁾.

¹ <https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/plus256221718/geheime-vertraege-offengelegt-eu-kommission-bezahlte-aktivisten-fuer-klimalobbyismus.html>

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0783>.

⁽²⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-000838-ASW_EN.html; https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-000296-ASW_EN.html; https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-10-2025-000280-ASW_EN.html; https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-10-2025-000595-ASW_EN.html; [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/questions/reponses_qe/2025/000351/P10_RE\(2025\)000351_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/questions/reponses_qe/2025/000351/P10_RE(2025)000351_EN.pdf); https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/291733/Replies%20to%20questionnaire%20addressed%20to%20Csr%20responsible%20for%20Budget%20and%20Administration_final.pdf.

⁽³⁾ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECARepplies/COM-Replies-SR-2025-11/COM-Replies-SR-2025-11_EN.pdf.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/index.html> (The annual publications are based on Article 38 of the Financial Regulation 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).

The Commission proactively shares the objectives and outcomes of funded projects on the Funding & Tenders Portal⁽⁵⁾. Furthermore, non-commercial interest representatives, including NGOs, are required to report their lobbying activities and disclose their main 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⁽⁶⁾.

The Commission will also explore the feasibility of incrementally increasing the frequency of publishing annual data updates in the Financial Transparency System, thus increasing the frequency of updates as per ECA's recommendation⁽⁷⁾.

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

⁽⁶⁾ https://transparency-register.europa.eu/index_en.

⁽⁷⁾ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECARepplies/COM-Replies-SR-2025-11/COM-Replies-SR-2025-11_EN.pdf.