

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002755/25
to the Commission
Pina Picierno (S&D)
(7 July 2025)

Subject: Use of European cohesion funds to finance conductor Valery Gergiev's involvement in a concert entitled 'Un'estate da Re'

Conductor Valery Gergiev is slated to perform in Caserta on 27 July in 'Un'estate da Re' ['A King's Summer'], a concert that the Campania Region has financed through European cohesion funds ⁽¹⁾.

Gergiev is known for openly supporting the Russian Government and many reports indicate that he is a leading Kremlin propagandist. In 2022, the Scala opera house in Milan suspended its working relationship with Gergiev owing to his refusal to distance himself from President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine ⁽²⁾.

Moreover, according to several journalistic investigations, Gergiev has purchased many luxury properties in Russia, Italy and the United States via a charitable fund registered in his name that has mostly received donations from companies owned by the Russian state and from oligarchs with close ties to the Kremlin, leading to concerns about financial transparency and potential conflicts of interest ⁽³⁾.

Gergiev's participation in an EU-funded event is therefore blatantly at odds with the fundamental values enshrined in the Treaties.

In the light of the above:

1. Will the Commission take steps to prevent and put a stop to the use of European cohesion funds to finance initiatives linked to figures with close ties to regimes that are opposed to European values?
2. Is the Commission planning any initiatives to strengthen checks on the use of cohesion funds at the local level with a view to ensuring compliance with EU principles?

Submitted: 7.7.2025

Question for written answer E-002867/25
to the Commission
Erik Marquardt (Verts/ALE)
(14 July 2025)

Subject: Performance of Kremlin-associated conductor Valery Gergiev at the 'Un'Estate da RE' festival — co-financed by the EU — in Caserta, Italy

On 27 July 2025, Russian conductor Valery Gergiev, a declared supporter of Vladimir Putin and an internationally known cultural ambassador of the Kremlin, is scheduled to perform at the Un'Estate da RE festival in Caserta, Italy. According to publicly available information the event is co-financed by the EU Cohesion Fund ⁽¹⁾.

Given Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, the systematic bombing of civilian infrastructure — most recently in Kyiv — and the extensive EU sanctions against supporters of the regime, it raises serious concerns about how such cultural funding aligns with the core values of the European Union.

¹ <https://www.scabec.it/progetti/un-estate-da-re#programma>.

² <https://www.avvenire.it/agora/pagine/netrebko>.

³ <https://formiche.net/2022/04/navalny-gergiev-putin/#content>.

¹ <https://backstageclassical.com/bomben-auf-kiew-und-gergiev-in-italien/>.

1. How does the Commission justify the use of EU funds — including the Cohesion Fund — for an event featuring a prominent Kremlin-affiliated figure who has openly endorsed Putin’s regime and has yet to distance himself from its illegal war of aggression?
2. What safeguards (e.g. guidelines or mechanisms) exist to ensure EU funds do not indirectly contribute to the legitimisation of authoritarian regimes and their cultural representatives?
3. What consequences will the Commission draw from this case to ensure that future cultural funding is consistent with EU foreign policy objectives and core values — particularly its commitment to human rights and solidarity with Ukraine?

Submitted: 14.7.2025

Joint answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission

(22 August 2025)

1. As confirmed by the Managing Authority of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme for Campania, responsible for the implementation of EU cohesion funding in the region, the Commission can confirm that the concert series ‘*Un’Estate da RE*’ is not financed with EU resources but only with national funds through Italy’s Development and Cohesion Fund (Fondo per lo Sviluppo e la Coesione — FSC). The Commission has no responsibility for the selection and implementation of interventions under national funds which are fully the responsibility of the Member States.
2. For the next long-term EU budget, the Commission has proposed strong safeguards to protect the financial interest of the EU⁽¹⁾ by requiring the respect of the principles of the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the implementation of the Fund.

⁽¹⁾ COM (2025) 570 final.