

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003339/25
to the Commission**

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Daniel Obajtek (ECR)
(1 September 2025)**

Subject: European Court of Auditors special report 11/2025 on Transparency of EU funding granted to NGOs

According to the European Court of Auditors special report 11/2025, serious concerns persist over the transparency, traceability and oversight of EU funding granted to non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Between 2021 and 2023, the Commission allocated EUR 7.4 billion to NGOs under various internal policies, yet major weaknesses remain unaddressed.

Key concerns include:

- no reliable, central overview of NGO spending across programmes and funding modes;
- inconsistent NGO classification, with 8 out of 30 audited entities wrongly listed as NGOs based largely on self-declaration;
- over 40% of direct EU funding went to just 30 NGOs, raising concerns about concentration and access inequality;
- compliance with EU values is not proactively verified, despite this being a contractual obligation for recipients.

In the light of the above:

1. What concrete steps will the Commission take by the end of 2025 to establish a clear, operational definition of ‘NGO’, including objective criteria for independence from public authorities?
2. When will a unified real-time transparency portal be launched to track EU funds granted to NGOs, as recommended by the European Court of Auditors?
3. Given that most audited NGOs rely heavily on public funding, how will the Commission verify their compliance with EU values and prevent the misuse of funds by politically active or controversial entities?

Submitted: 1.9.2025

**Answer given by Mr Serafin on behalf of the European Commission
(25 November 2025)**

A definition of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and the obligation to indicate in grant applications under direct management whether an applicant entity is an NGO came into effect in September 2024 with the Financial Regulation recast ⁽¹⁾.

Information on funding received from the EU budget in direct management can be found in the public Financial Transparency System (FTS) ⁽²⁾. It allows to specifically search for NGOs.

Pursuant to the Commission’s validation rules ⁽³⁾, the Commission does not check and validate the status of every single applicant. Nonetheless, the Commission systematically checks against supporting documents whether an entity is a private body and a non-profit organisation ⁽⁴⁾, which are the main elements to qualify as an NGO under the validation rules.

⁽¹⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202402509.

⁽²⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/analysis.html>.

⁽³⁾ EU Funding & Tenders Portal validation rules : https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-learn-fca_en.pdf.

⁽⁴⁾ Definition of non-profit entity from the validation rules: ‘entity that is non-profit making by its legal form or legal purpose (e.g. charitable organisations), or that has a legal or statutory obligation not to distribute profits to its shareholders or members’.

Before awarding EU funding, the Commission carries out rigorous selection processes, including several different checks on grant beneficiaries based on objective criteria, such as their compliance with exclusion criteria or the EU restrictive measures. Applicants also need to sign a declaration on honour, declaring whether they are in a situation of a grave professional misconduct.

Under the Early Detection and Exclusion System, the Commission may exclude unreliable economic operators and organisations from EU funding and thus create a list of such entities based on grounds including incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence, before the award, during the implementation, and after the project ends.

As mentioned in the Commission's reply to the European Court of Auditor's special report on transparency of EU funding granted to NGOs ⁽⁵⁾, the Commission will explore the feasibility of incrementally publishing annual data in the FTS, and, therefore, increase the frequency of updates. Currently, quarterly updates ⁽⁶⁾ are carried out to reflect any additional or reduced amounts, as well as the amounts consumed.

In line with Article 277(6) of the Financial Regulation, the Commission will increase completeness of information by extending the publication requirement to indirect and shared management as of the next multiannual financial framework, subject to availability of such data stored in the single data mining and risk-scoring tool ⁽⁷⁾.

⁽⁵⁾ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECARepplies/COM-Replies-SR-2025-11/COM-Replies-SR-2025-11_EN.pdf.

⁽⁶⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/faq.html>.

⁽⁷⁾ Defined under Article 36(2)(d) of the Financial Regulation.