

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003383/25
to the Commission
Siegbert Frank Droese (ESN)
(3 September 2025)**

Subject: EU funding opportunities for animal welfare projects in Serbia

The EU runs pre-accession and thematic funding programmes for Serbia. This gives rise to questions as to the transparency, allocation and accessibility of these funds for effective animal welfare projects.

1. What EU environmental and animal welfare funding instruments are currently available to Serbian applicants (e.g. under IPA III, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, or the related thematic programmes), and can non-governmental organisations (NGOs) apply directly?
2. How is the application process structured, and in particular, can Serbian NGOs or European NGOs working with Serbian organisations act as lead applicants and manage the project budget, or are the funds primarily allocated through Serbian government agencies?
3. What safeguards and monitoring mechanisms are in place to ensure that EU funds allocated to projects in Serbia are not misused or allocated inefficiently, and how does the Commission check their effective and transparent implementation?

Submitted: 3.9.2025

**Answer given by Ms Kos on behalf of the European Commission
(18 November 2025)**

Currently, in Serbia, there are no EU-funded projects specifically covering animal welfare that involve civil society organisations (CSOs). EU financial support for civil society in Serbia is channelled primarily through the Civil Society Facility ⁽¹⁾.

The aim is to support the development of civil society in Serbia and to strengthen the contribution of CSOs to Serbia's accession process to the EU.

Funding is either managed directly by the EU Delegation or through implementing CSOs selected on a competitive basis. Serbian CSOs can apply for funding provided the eligibility criteria are met.

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in Rural Development (IPARD III ⁽²⁾) provides support aiming at enhancing food security, sustainability of agricultural systems, and rural development.

The application process is structured around specific entrusted measures, with requirements defined for each call ⁽³⁾. CSOs do not usually qualify unless the specific requirements are met, such as being a cooperative. Nevertheless, one ongoing programme offers grant support for environmental CSOs ⁽⁴⁾.

The Commission has several measures at disposal to prevent, detect and correct the misuse of EU funds, such as *ex-ante* and *ex-post* controls, audits and monitoring, as well as investigations by the European Anti-Fraud Office.

The annual Instrument for pre-Accession Assistance monitoring committee is a key tool to track progress on the use of funds and to provide assurance regarding the sound management of the EU funds.

⁽¹⁾ Financing Decision: https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/financing-decision-civil-society-facility_en.

⁽²⁾ DG ENEST website overview: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/international/international-cooperation/enlargement/pre-accession-assistance/overview_en.

⁽³⁾ IPARD III for Serbia: <https://uap.gov.rs/ipard-iii-podrska-ruralnom-razvoju/>.

⁽⁴⁾ 'Volunteers for Nature — grown impact for citizens, actions on environmental protection': <https://mis.org.rs/en/portfolio-items/volunteers-for-nature/>.