

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003462/25
to the Commission
Estrella Galán (The Left), Jaume Asens Llodrà (Verts/ALE), Vicent Marzà Ibáñez (Verts/ALE)
(5 September 2025)**

Subject: Call for responsibility in the use of European funds and human rights violations in Mauritania

A report by Human Rights Watch ⁽¹⁾ documents serious human rights violations against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Mauritania, including torture, collective expulsions and inhumane detention conditions. The practices have been facilitated by migration control projects in Spain and the EU, involving at least EUR 61 million in European funds between 2015 and 2023.

While the Commission guarantees that the projects include contractual clauses requiring respect for fundamental rights, insufficient safeguards have been put in place to prevent abuse. In 2024, the EU approved a further EUR 100 million for migration cooperation with Mauritania ⁽²⁾ but failed to provide transparency on how the funds would be distributed.

In light of the above:

1. What steps is the Commission taking to ensure that EU funds — including those awarded in 2024 — are not associated with the human rights violations documented by Human Rights Watch in Mauritania?
2. What action will the Commission take if it detects breaches of human rights clauses in the projects funded?
3. How does the Commission monitor the involvement of Member States, such as Spain, in the implementation of those funds and the protection of the rights of migrants and refugees?

Submitted: 5.9.2025

**Answer given by Mr Síkela on behalf of the European Commission
(21 November 2025)**

The Commission's external actions rely on a human rights-based approach (HRBA), mandatory for all actions funded under Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) — Global Europe ⁽¹⁾; EU funds align with contractual human rights obligations.

When support is targeted at reducing irregular migration, attention is paid to upholding migrants and refugees' rights, including human dignity.

The Commission applies monitoring tools such as initial assessments, regular partner reports, verification missions, results-oriented monitoring exercises and external evaluations.

It reinforced these in 2025: contracts include clearer human rights provisions; there is new HRBA internal guidance. A procedure to handle complaints was introduced.

For all contracts awarded before 2025, the general conditions foresee the suspension and termination in case of *force majeure* and/or breach of any substantial obligations.

In Mauritania, the EU assisted authorities in developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for timely search and rescue at sea and defining post-disembarkation assistance per human-rights obligations, along with monitoring and a complaint mechanism. SOPs were acknowledged by Human Rights Watch as progress.

Each situation must be assessed based on substantial evidence and own merits for a proportionate approach. The Commission formalised an internal procedure for handling specific human rights abuses allegations related to EU-funded interventions.

Contractual clauses allow suspension or termination if evidence of a breach or pending verification arise. Since January 2025, these include clearer partner reporting obligations on assets transfer to third parties.

Where Member State agencies implement EU-funded projects, interventions are subject to HRBA and associated safeguards.

¹ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/08/27/they-accused-me-of-trying-to-go-to-europe/migration-control-abuses-and-eu>.

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_25_245.

⁽¹⁾ https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/funding-technical-assistance/neighbourhood-development-and-international-cooperation-instrument-global-europe-ndici-global-europe_en.