

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004198/25
to the Commission
Mary Khan (ESN)
(24 October 2025)**

Subject: Misuse of CERV funding to discredit political parties

The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) is an EU funding instrument for the period 2021 to 2027. Officially, it aims to support the development of open, democratic, inclusive and societies based on the rule of law. To this end, around EUR 1.44 billion in EU funding is available for civil society organisations and selected public institutions ⁽¹⁾.

In practice, however, the programme is increasingly being misused as a political tool to discredit unwanted opinions and opposition parties. For example, the International Network Against Cyber Hate (INACH) received CERV funding and then published the study 'Framing Hate: AfD migration messaging on social media in the 2025 German elections' in 2025. In that document, Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party is presented unilaterally as a proponent of 'hateful narratives' that is generally associated with 'xenophobic sentiment'. It thus seems that report has been published with political intentions under the guise of scientific analysis ⁽²⁾.

1. How does the Commission justify EU funding from the CERV programme being used for projects that actually target a democratically elected party? How is this compatible with the EU law principles of equal treatment, objectivity and political impartiality?
2. What specific steps will it take to ensure that CERV funding is not used, directly or indirectly, for party political interference or for the targeted discrediting of democratically legitimate parties in future?

Submitted: 24.10.2025

**Answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(15 December 2025)**

The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) ⁽¹⁾ aims at protecting and promoting rights and values as enshrined in the Treaties, the Charter, in particular by supporting civil society organisations ⁽²⁾.

Under its Equality, Rights, and Gender Equality strand, CERV focuses on, *inter alia*, combating discrimination, racism, xenophobia and all forms of intolerance, both online and offline ⁽³⁾, as well as intolerance of persons belonging to minorities, taking into account multiple discrimination ⁽⁴⁾.

CERV is implemented through multi annual programmes approved by the Programme Committee constituted by representatives of the Member States and through calls for proposals, which are public ⁽⁵⁾.

The International Network Against Cyber Hate (INACH) has been awarded a grant under the call for proposals for operating grants to framework partners active in the areas of EU values.

Proposals are evaluated against pre-announced selection and award criteria by independent experts. The funding is provided in line with the Financial Regulation ⁽⁶⁾ and the principles of equal treatment and transparency.

During implementation, grants are closely monitored to ensure that they are implemented according to the grant agreement. In the event of incorrect implementation or in cases of fraud, irregularities, substantial errors or serious breach of contractual obligations, including the violation of EU values as enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, the grant may be suspended, terminated or reduced and funds may be recovered.

The monitoring of the implementation of the grants in which INACH is involved has not revealed any such breach.

¹ <https://www.kontaktstelle-cerv.de/cerv-programm>

² <https://www.inach.net/inach-newest-report-framing-hate-afd-migration-messaging-on-social-media-in-the-2025-german-elections/>

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/5703/oj>.

⁽²⁾ Ibid. Article 2(1).

⁽³⁾ Ibid. Article 4.

⁽⁴⁾ Ibid. Recital 14.

⁽⁵⁾ Calls are published on the Funding and Tenders portal of the Commission: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>.

⁽⁶⁾ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj>.