

EN

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Answer given by Mr McGrath
on behalf of the European Commission
(27.2.2026)

The European Democracy Shield¹ provides a strategic approach to safeguard, strengthen and promote democracy in the EU. Its objective is to collectively preserve a democratic space where people can freely express their views, confront opinions, access a diversity of information sources and freely vote in fair elections – all this without interference.

The European Democracy Shield fully respects the allocation of competences between the EU and its Member States. For instance, on the conduct and organisation of elections, a Member State competence, the Commission provides reinforced support for cooperation between Member States through the European Cooperation Network on Elections.

An open civic space, with a vibrant civil society is at the core of the EU democracies. The EU Strategy for Civil Society² sets out a framework for engagement with civil society organisations to ensure that they are supported and protected in their work.

The Strategy makes it clear that transparency and accountability requirements apply to all entities seeking EU funding. The Commission applies robust safeguards to ensure that entities involved in activities incompatible with EU values do not receive EU financial support at any stage of an award procedure.

The objectives and priorities of EU funding are defined in the EU Regulations establishing funding programmes, adopted by the Council and the European Parliament, including the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values³ programme. Funding is provided in full transparency and in line with the Financial Regulation⁴, protecting the EU's financial interests and its reputation.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025JC0791>.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0790>.

³ OJ L 156, 5.5.2021, p. 1–20, 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>.

⁴ 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) available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32024R2509>.