

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000852/26
to the Commission
Margarita de la Pisa Carrión (Pfe)
(2 March 2026)**

Subject: Assessment and classification of projects submitted under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme

In respect of the assessment and classification of projects submitted under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme:

1. What criteria and procedures are being used to select and appoint specific experts from the database of experts to evaluate a call for proposals under the CERV programme, and how is the professional profile of the experts, including their public statements, interests or positions that may affect their impartiality, specifically assessed, weighted and documented as part of this process?
2. What arrangements are in place to guarantee the neutrality, independence and absence of conflicts of interest of the appointed experts and ensure that assessments comply with the principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination, independence, impartiality, proportionality and objectivity in accordance with the regulation establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme?
3. Specifically, what measures are there to prevent an expert's positions or interests from influencing their assessment of others or the final outcome?

Submitted: 2.3.2026

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(2 March 2026)**

Subject: Assessment and classification of projects submitted under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme

Owing to the confusion that may have been generated and in order to be able to correctly understand the procedure carried out under the CERV programme:

1. Can the Commission clarify whether the executive agency can modify or adjust the scores or ranking resulting from expert evaluations and, if so, in what cases, according to what criteria and with what guarantees of traceability and transparency?
2. What is the applicable procedure when a project is deemed compliant by the agency, but not by the experts, or vice versa, and which assessment prevails and on what legal and procedural basis?
3. How is final funding determined when experts' scores and other programmatic or budgetary criteria differ, which criteria take precedence, and how are they reflected and justified in the event of an appeal or review?

Submitted: 2.3.2026

**Joint answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(29 April 2026)**

Experts interested in evaluating proposals register in the Commission database. When proposals need to be evaluated, the Commission searches the database using keywords linked to the relevant programme and call.

The Commission then selects experts based on their relevant expertise, experience and qualifications as recorded in the database. Before selection, each expert's professional profile is thoroughly reviewed, including professional background, reputation, and potential conflicts of interest.

The corporate template of the experts' contract used under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (CERV) ⁽¹⁾ requires experts to comply with the Experts Code of Conduct ⁽²⁾ which outlines the principles of impartiality and confidentiality that must guide the experts' work.

Various checks are performed to identify potential conflicts of interest; moreover, each proposal is independently assessed by two experts, who prepare separate evaluation reports, while a consensus report (CR) is prepared normally by a third expert.

Proposals are evaluated on the basis of the pre-announced selection and award criteria. The selection and award of proposals are under the direct responsibility of an evaluation committee, which for CERV is composed exclusively of staff from the Commission and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency.

External experts may assist the evaluation committee, but do not have decision-making authority. The evaluation committee analyses the proposals received and reviews all CRs.

On this basis, the evaluation committee drafts the Evaluation Summary Report that documents the merits and shortcomings of each proposal, the decisions taken, and it ranks the proposals up to the available budget.

⁽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 (OJ L 156, 5.5.2021, p. 1); ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/692/oj>.

⁽²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/experts/code-of-conduct_en.pdf.