

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000991/26
to the Commission**

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(10 March 2026)

Subject: Ethical boundaries regarding abortion policies in Member States in response to My Voice, My Choice

1. Given that the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) is designed to combat poverty, could the Commission clarify how it will ensure that funds allocated to abortion-related services are used legally, what specific limits, safeguards or monitoring mechanisms are in place to prevent misuse, and how does the Commission ensure that such financing respects the diversity of ethical frameworks and legal provisions across Member States?
2. Considering the significant differences in abortion legislation and ethical limits among Member States, how does the Commission ensure that ESF+ funding respects national frameworks, including variations in gestational limits, medical requirements and legal definitions of abortion?
3. In certain Member States, including France, medical termination of pregnancy may legally be carried out until term following a diagnosis of Down syndrome. In light of the EU's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Articles 10, 21 and 26 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, how does the Commission ensure that ESF+ funding does not contribute, directly or indirectly, to discriminatory practices on the basis of disability?

Supporter ⁽¹⁾

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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(15 June 2026)

In line with the principle of shared management, it is the primary responsibility of Member States to ensure compliance with the applicable laws when it comes to their national programmes under the European Social Fund+ (ESF+) ⁽¹⁾.

To this end, Member States authorities carry out management verifications and audits to ensure that the expenditure is legal and regular.

The Commission also ensures that Member States have management and control systems that comply with the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) ⁽²⁾ and that these systems function effectively and efficiently during the implementation of the programmes.

The ESF+ strand is implemented jointly by the Commission and Member States. However, the ESF+ legislative framework leaves the responsibility for setting out the eligibility rules for support under the ESF+ to the national and regional authorities of the Member States.

They have to do so within the limits set out in the regulations applicable to the ESF+ and in respect of other relevant EU legislation and Treaty principles.

Therefore, it would be up to Member States, if they choose to do so, to define the conditions under which eligible women can access safe and affordable abortion care in their territory, and how such funding would be delivered, in full compliance with the relevant EU legislation and Treaty principles.

When implementing the ESF +, Member States need to respect applicable law. This includes the Charter of Fundamental Rights as well as the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD).

¹ This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Stephen Nikola Bartulica (ECR).

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 Of The European Parliament And Of The Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013, L 231/21, ELI: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R1057&from=EN>.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy, OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, pp. 159-706, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1060/oj>.