

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001703/26
to the Commission
Nikos Pappas (The Left)
(27 April 2026)**

Subject: Public money, private profits and the integrity of the European sports model

Recent reports ⁽¹⁾ have revealed that the company Qualco, which benefits from significant public contracts, many of which are co-financed by EU funds under the Recovery and Resilience Fund, is the main and exclusive sponsor of the Athinaikos WBC women's basketball team, having even acquired naming rights for the team.

This case raises serious questions about the use of EU funds to create private advantages, transparency in public contracts and the distortion of balance in sport, especially when smaller clubs do not have access to similar sources of funding.

In light of the above:

1. How does the Commission ensure that funds from public contracts and EU programmes are not used, directly or indirectly, for private promotion activities, such as the sponsorship of professional sports clubs?
2. Under what conditions could the channelling of funds by companies that are heavily dependent on public contracts to specific sports bodies constitute indirect state aid within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU?
3. What measures does the Commission intend to take to enhance transparency, prevent conflicts of interest and protect the balance and social dimension of the European sports model?

Submitted: 27.4.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(2 July 2026)**

EU funds are subject to strict rules on transparency, audit and control. As for funds provided under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), Member States bear primary responsibility for ensuring that the measures supported and the use of funds comply with applicable EU and national law.

However, the Commission has supervisory and corrective powers under the RRF Regulation ⁽¹⁾. The fact that a company benefiting from public contracts sponsors a sports club does not in itself imply an irregular use of EU funds.

EU funds must be used for their intended purposes and in compliance with the relevant legal and contractual obligations. The Commission monitors the implementation of EU-funded programmes through reporting, audits and control mechanisms and may take appropriate action where there are indications of irregularities.

A transfer of State resources by a State to an entity often has indirect economic effects on other undertakings. Establishing whether state aid is present always requires a careful, case-by-case examination. It is the responsibility of the Member State to perform this analysis.

The Commission promotes good governance, transparency, integrity and solidarity in sport, through various EU programmes, such as Erasmus+. The forthcoming Communication on reinforcing the European Sport Model will further support these objectives.

¹ https://www.sdna.gr/mpasket/1424018_qualco-o-megas-horigos-toy-athinaikoy-poy-xekinise-os-eispraktiki-ki-egine-kolossos.
(¹) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/241/oj/eng>.