

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002127/26
to the Commission
Alvise Pérez (NI)
(24 May 2026)**

Subject: Plus Ultra rescue, judicial references to Mr Escrivá and safeguards for state aid integrity

According to press reports, based on an order of Spain's Audiencia Nacional in the Plus Ultra case, judicial material refers to a meeting on 7 September 2020 between former Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and José Luis Escrivá, then Minister for Inclusion, Social Security and Migration and now governor of the Bank of Spain. Reports state that Plus Ultra obtained social security certificates saying that it had no overdue debts before it received EUR 53 million from Spain's SEPI solvency fund, despite later documentation indicating a pre-existing debt of EUR 451 954.79 and a subsequent deferral.

This is no longer merely a domestic political controversy. It concerns confidence in state aid controls, institutional independence and the credibility of a national central bank in the Eurosystem. Without presuming criminal liability, the fact that the current governor of the Bank of Spain previously led the ministry whose administration is mentioned in a corruption-related judicial investigation raises concerns about conflicts of interest, transparency and due diligence.

1. Will the Commission ask Spain whether all eligibility conditions and declarations used to grant state aid to Plus Ultra were accurate and compatible with EU State aid rules?
2. Will the Commission assess whether new judicial information requires a review of Spain's control mechanisms for SEPI aid?
3. Will the Commission evaluate EU-level standards for national central bank governors on conflicts of interest/cooling-off periods?

Submitted: 25.5.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné on behalf of the European Commission
(4 August 2026)**

The Commission does not wish to comment on the ongoing judicial inquiries regarding the airline Plus Ultra. The Commission does not have any information that would justify reopening the case concerning its decision of 31 July 2020 authorising the recapitalisation aid scheme in question, the legality of which under state aid rules has been confirmed by the General Court and the Court of Justice of the European Union ⁽¹⁾.

The decisions by the relevant administrative bodies to grant individual aid under the recapitalisation aid scheme in question were open to appeal at the time by any interested parties who considered themselves to have been adversely affected.

The Spanish scheme in question specifically requires beneficiaries not to have outstanding debts with social security institutions, which, while not a requirement for the aid to be compatible with the single market, is no impediment.

The Commission does not intend to take the place of the courts responsible for reviewing the acts of the Spanish administration granting individual aid or the specific involvement of persons holding — or having held — positions within the Spanish administration in connection with the granting of aid to Plus Ultra.

⁽¹⁾ State Aid SA.57659(2020/N) — Spain COVID 19 — Recapitalisation fund; OJ C/2020/269, 14.8.2020, p. 8. Cases T-628/20 EU:T:2021:514 and C-441/21 P, EU:C:2024:447.