

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002389/26
to the Commission
Isabel Serra Sánchez (The Left)
(10 June 2026)**

Subject: Possible irregular use of NextGenerationEU funds in a media campaign by Zaragoza City Council

According to a press source ⁽¹⁾, Zaragoza City Council reportedly allocated EUR 152 012.06 to the ‘Plan de medios y difusión del proyecto Huerva Ríos’ (Media and communications plan for the River Huerva project), an institutional campaign partly financed by NextGenerationEU and intended to raise awareness of the renaturalisation of the River Huerva. Part of those funds is said to have been earmarked for state media and digital platforms with no clear presence in Zaragoza, including outlets linked to the right and extreme right. What is more, the municipal records reportedly acknowledged a ‘breach of the contracting procedure laid down in law’ and the plan’s approval after the campaigns had been carried out.

Regulation (EU) 2021/241 requires that the financial interests of the Union be protected and that irregularities, fraud, corruption and conflicts of interest be prevented, detected and corrected. Public procurement using EU funds must apply the principles of transparency, equal treatment, competition, proportionality and sound financial management.

1. Does the Commission consider it compatible with these obligations for a campaign financed with EU funds to be carried out first and then regularised?
2. Will the Commission request information from the Spanish authorities regarding the selection criteria, invoices, contracts, explanatory memoranda and any competitive procedures followed?
3. If irregularities, a lack of transparency or partisan bias are confirmed, what steps will the Commission take to recover misused amounts and prevent EU funds from financing media outlets that have been linked to or flagged for disinformation and hate speech?

Submitted: 10.6.2026

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

The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) ⁽¹⁾ is a performance-based instrument based on the completion of targets and milestones. Investment 2 under Component 5 of the Spanish Recovery and Resilience Plan ⁽²⁾ relates to the restoration of riverbanks and protection against flood risks, among other actions.

At this stage, the Commission has not assessed any payment request covering a target that includes projects in the River Huerva, Zaragoza related to the restoration of riverbanks. Member States have until 31 August 2026 to complete milestones and targets linked to measures in the plan.

The Commission actively monitors the implementation of Spain’s Recovery and Resilience Plan. In case investments are not completed in time or are not aligned with the requirements of the RRF Regulation, the corresponding payment may be reduced for an amount proportionate to the scope of the target.

Pursuant to Article 22 of the RRF Regulation, Member States are responsible for preventing, detecting and correcting fraud, corruption, conflicts of interest and irregularities affecting the financial interests of the EU.

The Commission can act in cases of suspected serious irregularities (fraud, corruption, conflicts of interest and double funding) reported via audits, the European Anti-Fraud Office, investigations by the European Public Prosecutor’s Office, or other sources.

When a discrepancy is detected, the Commission may request the Member State to take corrective measures and apply financial corrections in accordance with the RRF Regulation and the Financing Agreement. If the discrepancy is not corrected, the Commission may implement reductions and recoveries.

¹ <https://arainfo.org/chueca-riega-huerva-medios-afines-150-000-euros-bulos-agitacion-ultraderechista/>.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/241/oj/eng>.

⁽²⁾ COM(2026) 257 final, https://reforms-investments.ec.europa.eu/document/download/4f3a6d9d-e733-4c66-b405-1ecc5037b343_en?filename=COM_2026_257_1_EN_annexe_proposition_cp_part1_v2.pdf.