

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003353/26
to the Commission
Andrey Novakov (PPE)
(27 August 2026)**

Subject: Call for proposals BG16FFPR003-4.004, financed under Bulgaria's 2021-2027 Regional Development Programme through the Just Transition Fund

According to the published results, a significant number of project proposals received positive evaluation, with many others placed on reserve lists due to limited available funding. According to the information available to us, an extraordinary audit is being carried out on account of concerns regarding irregularities in the evaluation process. The cancellation of the call in its entirety could adversely affect applicants who have acted in good faith and could undermine investment, job creation and economic diversification in the regions concerned. In this context, the following questions are addressed to the Commission:

1. Where irregularities are identified in the evaluation of project proposals for EU funding, does the principle of proportionality allow corrective measures to be taken, including re-evaluation or re-ranking of the proposals, instead of cancelling the entire call?
2. Are such corrective measures compatible with the principle of sound financial management where applicants unaffected by the irregularities can be protected?
3. Are there any deadlines at EU level or specific commitments under the programme requiring this call to be contracted or completed by a certain date?

Submitted: 27.8.2026

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

1. EU cohesion policy is implemented under shared management. The selection of operations under calls for proposals is the responsibility of the national programme authorities. National authorities are also primarily responsible for taking appropriate corrective measures.

If irregularities are detected in an evaluation, the national programme authorities are responsible for assessing their seriousness and deciding on the corrective measures that are proportionate and ensure equal treatment of applicants, transparency and non-discrimination. Possible measures can range from targeted corrective action, such as re-evaluating proposals, to cancelling the entire call.

If the irregularities are systemic or impossible to disentangle, and confidence in the whole evaluation process is undermined, cancelling the entire call may be lawful and proportionate.

2. In line with the principles of sound financial management, corrective measures need to be taken where expenditure declared or to be declared to the Commission has been made in breach of the applicable law. Corrective measures must be adequate and proportionate. It is primarily for the national programme authorities to assess the facts and determine the appropriate follow-up.

The Commission monitors compliance with applicable law and sound financial management.

3. At EU level, there are no specific deadlines requiring that a particular call for proposals be completed by a given date. However, the general regulatory framework and timing applicable to the 2021-2027 programmes must be respected, including the eligibility period for expenditure, the decommitment deadlines (n+3 mechanism) and the deadlines for submitting the programme closure documents.
