

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-000595/25
to the Commission
Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (Renew)
(10 February 2025)**

Subject: LIFE grant debate

During the plenary debate on 22 January 2025, Commissioner Serafin stated that certain Commission departments had obliged NGOs 'to lobby Members of the European Parliament' as part of their LIFE grant requirements. These assertions have raised significant concerns about EU funding processes and risk undermining the credibility and independence of European civil society organisations.

Upon reviewing the contracts, I have found no instructions from the Commission requiring NGOs to lobby MEPs. This apparent discrepancy between the Commissioner's statements and the documented grant requirements requires clarification.

1. Does the Commission maintain its position that NGOs were instructed to lobby MEPs as part of its LIFE grant requirements?
2. If the Commission stands by these statements, could it provide documentary evidence of these requirements and specify which Commission departments implemented these conditions?
3. If the Commission does not stand by these statements, could it provide a rectification?

Submitted: 10.2.2025

**Answer given by Mr Serafin on behalf of the European Commission
(14 April 2025)**

The Commission did not instruct nor require non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to lobby Members of the European Parliament.

NGOs independently propose their work programme of activities in the policy areas indicated in the LIFE Regulation ⁽¹⁾, in response to a call for proposals ⁽²⁾ published by the Commission.

The call for proposals does not require any lobbying activities towards the Members of the European Parliament or other stakeholders.

The work programme is then annexed to the operating grant agreement signed between the Commission and the NGO ⁽³⁾. The NGO has the contractual obligation to properly implement the work programme it proposed, while the Commission has the obligation to pay the amount of the grant.

The work programmes may or may not mention, among other NGO's activities, advocacy related to environmental, climate and energy efficiency policies.

These activities are not imposed by the Commission. The Commission does not prescribe the specific activities to be carried out by the NGOs in their work programme, nor does it instruct them to support any specific positions.

According to the grant agreements, any opinions expressed, and activities carried out remain the sole responsibility of the NGOs. Civil society entities remain fully autonomous and free to establish their own views on all policy matters.

The Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration made clarifications in this sense also during the meeting of the European Parliament Committee on Budgets on 29 January 2025 ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TEXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0783>

⁽²⁾ See for example the 2024 LIFE call for operating grants: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/life/wp-call/2021-2024/call-fiche_life-2024-ngo-og-sga_en.pdf

⁽³⁾ See for example the 2024 LIFE model grant agreement for operating grants: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/life/agr-contr/og-flat-rate-mga_life_en.pdf

⁽⁴⁾ https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/committee-on-budgets_20250129-1500-COMMITTEE-BUDG