

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001591/25  
to the Commission  
Virginie Joron (PFE)  
(22 April 2025)**

**Subject:** Oxfam: EUR 1 billion for a colossal NGO that is costing us a fortune?

European Court of Auditors Special Report 11/2025 reveals shortcomings in the transparency of EU funding for non-governmental associations.

Oxfam is believed to have received EUR 795 million between 2014 and 2023 <sup>(1)</sup>. However, its lobbying office in Brussels <sup>(2)</sup> reports having received no EU subsidies for 2023-2024, while Oxfam Belgium discloses EUR 7 million for 2023, with inconsistencies in its overall budget (EUR 47.5 million declared and incorrect calculations) <sup>(3)</sup>.

The sky-high salaries of some of its executives (up to EUR 155 000 per year) <sup>(4)</sup> and its sale of goods in shops raise questions about Oxfam's status as a charitable association and the legitimacy of the European, national and regional public funds it receives.

1. How can the Commission explain the failure to check the inconsistencies in Oxfam's financial arrangements or declarations (no subsidies declared by one entity, EUR 7 million by another; incorrect budget for Oxfam Belgium and its status as a charitable, non-profit-making association <sup>(5)</sup>)?
2. Oxfam claims to be a charitable association even though it engages in commercial transactions and some of its executives receive exorbitant salaries: at what threshold of executive remuneration does the Commission consider that an organisation has a commercial or profit-making purpose?
3. Are national and European subsidies to Oxfam compatible with competition rules on state aid and the Treaties?

Submitted: 22.4.2025

**Answer given by Mr Serafin on behalf of the European Commission  
(17 June 2025)**

The Commission would like to clarify that the sum of EUR 795 million disclosed on the Financial Transparency System (FTS) <sup>(1)</sup> represents the amount consumed on commitments in which Oxfam was one of the recipients (direct management) or an implementing partner (indirect management), considering all beneficiaries and the project as a whole.

Within this amount, in the period 2014-2023, 26 entities, residing in 19 countries, having the word Oxfam in their name, have been awarded EUR 636 million (direct management) and two of them have also implemented EUR 1 million (indirect management <sup>(2)</sup>).

In accordance with the validation rules <sup>(3)</sup>, 'non-profit entity' means an 'entity that is non-profit making by its legal form or legal purpose (e.g. charitable organisations), or that has a legal or statutory obligation not to distribute profits to its shareholders or members'. This status is systematically checked against supporting documents and validated by the Central Validation Service of the Commission.

The Commission refers to its replies to the European Court of Auditor's Special Report 11/2025 <sup>(4)</sup>, where it mentioned that 'carrying out an economic activity is compatible with the nature of a non-governmental organisation (NGO), for as long as any profits it generates from its activities are not distributed to its members'.

In this sense, engaging in commercial transactions or the salary level of employees of an entity do not prevent a 'non-profit' status of an entity.

<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/analysis.html>

<sup>2</sup> [https://transparency-register.europa.eu/searchregister-or-update/organisation-detail\\_en?id=46856801604-90](https://transparency-register.europa.eu/searchregister-or-update/organisation-detail_en?id=46856801604-90)

<sup>3</sup> [https://transparency-register.europa.eu/searchregister-or-update/organisation-detail\\_en?id=961809845865-57](https://transparency-register.europa.eu/searchregister-or-update/organisation-detail_en?id=961809845865-57)

<sup>4</sup> EUR 155 000 in Great Britain (Grok); EUR 126 000 in 2023 for the PDG of Oxfam Ireland p.93: [https://www.oxfamireland.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/2022\\_2023%20Oxfam%20Ireland%20Annual%20Report%20.pdf](https://www.oxfamireland.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/2022_2023%20Oxfam%20Ireland%20Annual%20Report%20.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://transparency-register.europa.eu/guidance/guidelines\\_en#ref-5-information-to-be-entered-in-the-register](https://transparency-register.europa.eu/guidance/guidelines_en#ref-5-information-to-be-entered-in-the-register)

<sup>(1)</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/index.html> (The annual publications are based on Article 38 of the Financial Regulation whereby data on recipients is not disclosed for very low value contracts below EUR 15 000 and where disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of the persons or entities).

<sup>(2)</sup> The Financial Transparency System (FTS) discloses information on the implementing partners of EU funds managed under indirect management mode since year 2020. The information for the period 2014-2019 is not available on the FTS portal.

<sup>(3)</sup> EU Funding & Tenders Portal validation rules : [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-learn-fca\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-learn-fca_en.pdf).

<sup>(4)</sup> <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications?ref=SR-2025-11>.

If the activity of the NGO qualifies as economic, the NGO can be subject to state aid rules. Article 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union <sup>(5)</sup> (TFEU) generally prohibits state aid by Member States to prevent distortions of competition in the internal market.

However, exemptions from this general ban exist based on the TFEU. Member States are required to notify the aid to the Commission, unless their measure is covered by a block exemption <sup>(6)</sup> or is too low to raise competition concerns <sup>(7)</sup>. For EU funding, State aid rules do not in principle apply.

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<sup>(5)</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12008E107>.

<sup>(6)</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISUM%3A0802\\_4](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISUM%3A0802_4).

<sup>(7)</sup> De minimis aid ([https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISUM%3A0802\\_2](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISUM%3A0802_2)).