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Answer given by Mr Serafin
on behalf of the European Commission
(30.6.2025)

The Commission is not in position to comment on information that the European Court of Auditors decided to exclude from its special report¹.

The Commission observes full impartiality, as it does not require beneficiaries to undertake advocacy activities for specific political and policy purposes. Moreover, the guidance² issued by the Commission's central services confirms that specifically detailed activities directed at EU institutions should not be mandated as a requirement or condition for Union financing. Beneficiaries decide on their work programme in full independence. To ensure that a wide range of opinions is supported through operating grants, the selection and award of such grants is based on open calls for proposals publicly available on the Funding and Tenders portal³. Funding is awarded through a transparent and competitive process.

The definition of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and the need to indicate in the direct management grant applicant's information whether an entity is an NGO only came into effect in September 2024 with the Financial Regulation recast⁴. In addition, when it comes to receiving EU funding, NGOs are no different from other applicants. They are subject to fulfilling the necessary eligibility requirements. Having an NGO status does not entail any preferential treatment, nor is it an eligibility criterion in itself, aside from a few, very specific cases. Therefore, the status of an NGO is in principle not relevant for receiving EU funding.

The Commission is not aware of findings in the context of the ECA's special report which would require launching an internal investigation. The Commission refers to its replies to the ECA's report in question⁵.

¹ https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SR-2025-11/SR-2025-11_EN.pdf.

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/guidance-funding-dev-impl-monit-enforce-of-eu-law_en.pdf.

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>.

⁴ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202402509.

⁵ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECARepplies/COM-Replies-SR-2025-11/COM-Replies-SR-2025-11_EN.pdf.