

Appendix F: Members of the European Parliament addressing the European Commission

Members of the European Parliament: Questions to the Commission

NGO Monitor circulated a memorandum in the European Parliament in order to raise awareness to the lack of transparency in EU funding for NGOs active in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Upon receiving this memorandum, dozens of European officials have proclaimed to take measures in order to alert the EU of its misgivings. So far, 8 members of the European Parliament have posed parliamentary questions to the Commission.

This document lists the questions and answers that are the result of NGO Monitor's efforts to make EU funding processes more transparent and to ensure quality standards in NGO funding.

The following members of the European parliament have posed parliamentary questions to the Commission:

Sari Essayah
Hannu Takkula
Fiorello Provera
Charles Tannock
Oreste Rossi
Diane Dodds
Daniel van der Stoep
Roger Helmer

Parliamentary questions

25 March 2013

E-003386-13

[Question for written answer to the Commission](#)
[Rule 117](#)
[Sari Essayah \(PPE\)](#)

► **Subject: Improvements to the transparency of EU funding for certain NGOs**

Each year the European Commission provides Palestinian and Israeli NGOs, such as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and Partnership for Peace, with more than EUR 10 million in funding. There have been serious suspicions that this money has been used for purposes such as campaigns to fan the flames of 'justified' violence and terrorism perpetrated against Israeli civilians, instil the image of the Israeli authorities as 'war criminals', and promote the break-up of the Palestinian Authority. These suspicious moves run counter to the EU's values and are in no way conducive to peace in the Middle East: just the opposite. Given this situation, it is worrying that the Commission, even when asked, has not provided any accurate and comprehensive information, under Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, on EU funding, decisions taken in connection with it or any evaluation of the measures taken.

In its reply to NGO Monitor in 2009, the Commission justified its decision with reference to the exception in the regulation which deals with the interests of 'public security'. However, that reply fails to provide the necessary detailed examples of what danger to NGOs or public security transparency we should have been, or should be, fearful of, with respect to EU aid. What contradicts the Commission's reasoning in this case is the fact that many of these organisations make information on funding readily available for inspection and even draw attention to it.

Has the Commission established that the transparency of EU funding for organisations associated with the conflict in the Middle East will lead to substantial problems or anticipated threats that will endanger public security? What is the difference between the situation in the Middle East and, say, that in Somalia, Sri Lanka or Iran, regions for which similar information on funding is openly available?

What urgent steps will the Commission take to ensure that funding from EU sources for non-governmental Israeli and Palestinian organisations active in third countries, decisions taken in connection with it and an evaluation of the results are in the public domain in line with the EU's principles of transparency and accountability?

Parliamentary questions

18 April 2013

E-004357-13

[Question for written answer to the Commission](#)

[Rule 117](#)

[Hannu Takkula \(ALDE\)](#)

► Subject: Transparency of EU funding received by the Palestinian Authority

EU funding of individual Palestinian political organisations is substantial. However, information about the basis on which financial assistance is provided is not freely accessible; nor are details of the use made of the funding. There are indications that funds have been used in a way which does not accord with the EU's purposes and does not pursue objectives geared to promoting peace. Funding has been provided to political organisations actively involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such activity is not likely to improve the preconditions for a lasting settlement to the disputes. Lastly, it is not clear whether the funding has been used in the way intended by the EU.

The Commission has previously stated that the reason for secrecy was general security. What evidence does the Commission have that such secrecy is functioning in the intended manner and remains necessary? How does the Commission ensure that the funds it provides are not used in the wrong way, given that, for example, secrecy makes it harder for the media to carry out monitoring? How is EU citizens' right to be informed about EU administration respected with regard to the funding granted to the Palestinian Authority?

Parliamentary questions

19 March 2013

E-003077-13

[Question for written answer to the Commission](#)

[Rule 117](#)

[Fiorello Provera \(EFD\)](#) , [Charles Tannock \(ECR\)](#)

► Subject: Transparency in funding for Arab and Israeli NGOs

Under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, as well as other initiatives such as the Partnership for Peace, the EU provides substantial amounts of funding to support non-governmental organisations in both Israel and the Palestinian territories, yet there have been a number of media reports which suggest that, while discussions on EU funding for troubled regions and countries such as Iran, Somalia and Sri Lanka are openly discussed, there is little available information or transparency on the rationale and decision-making processes underlying the award of grants to organisations involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

1. What steps is the Commission taking to guarantee transparency in the award of grants to and the use of funds by NGOs dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict?
2. What measures are currently in place to ensure that European citizens or elected representatives such as MEPs can independently evaluate the Commission's decision-making process in the light of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and the Partnership for Peace Programme?
3. Can the Commission confirm that the European Court of Justice recently upheld the Commission's right to withhold information on the destination of EU funds to Palestinian NGOs, and can it state why these matters are shrouded in secrecy when there are very real concerns among experts on these matters that some of these funds may be supporting, or have links to, organisations supportive of extremist ideology which do not share the EU's values of democracy and human rights?

Parliamentary questions

25 March 2013

E-003330-13

[Question for written answer to the Commission](#)

[Rule 117](#)

[Oreste Rossi \(EFD\)](#)

► Subject: Lack of transparency in EU funding process of NGOs active in Arab-Israeli conflict — limited access to the related documentation

The lack of transparency in processes which provide significant funding for non-governmental organisations involved in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict is an issue that raises serious problems. Every year the Commission makes its financial contribution to these NGOs as it strives to achieve equal individual and collective rights. However, in the past when the NGOs asked for detailed materials documenting all activities specifically related to Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, it received only incomplete, badly written material from which important information available elsewhere was missing. The Commission maintained that the need for secrecy concerning the content of the documents and the consequent lack of detailed data arose from reasons of public safety, privacy and commercial interests and from the need not to make the Israel-Palestine relationship even more difficult. The matter has been taken to the European Court of Justice, but there has been no ruling yet.

Taking into account that:

- documents on NGO funding are widely available through newspapers and Internet articles, but continue to be kept secret or are not fully updated because of public safety concerns;
- by contrast, documents pertaining to grants for countries such as Angola, Somalia or Sri Lanka are easily accessible;

- the research undertaken draws attention to the involvement of some NGOs which are recipients of Commission funding in anti-Israel boycotts and pro-war campaigns;
 - there is no certainty that aid granted to these NGOs in the future will not have the effect of supporting or encouraging violence that runs counter to the European values of democracy, freedom and tolerance;
- can the Commission state:
1. what criteria are used to justify the differences in access to openness and transparency as regards documents relating to EU funding programs in the cases of the countries mentioned above;
 2. on what grounds it decides that certain materials are 'sensitive';
 3. whether it believes it needs to ensure that the information related to the evaluation phase of the funding process have already been made public?

Parliamentary questions

15 April 2013

E-004243-13

[Question for written answer to the Commission](#)
[Rule 117](#)
 Diane Dodds (NI)

► Subject: Funding to NGOs in the Middle East

According to NGO Monitor, the Commission provides millions of euros annually in funding to political advocacy NGOs operating in the Arab-Israeli conflict, with many of the groups engaging in campaigns and activities that are not consistent with EU foreign policy objectives.

An example of this is the Gaza-based Palestinian Centre for Human Rights and Oxfam Novib securing a EUR 298 339.08 grant from the EU to 'contribute to the abolition of the death penalty in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, applied by the Palestinian National Authority via judicial death sentences' by the Israeli military.

How does the Commission respond to these claims, and how does it ensure that advocacy work engages in purely legitimate activities?

Parliamentary questions

20 March 2013

P-003198-13

[Question for written answer to the Commission \(Vice-President/High Representative\)](#)
[Rule 117](#)
 Daniël van der Stoep (NI)

► Subject: VP/HR — Transparency of subsidies to NGOs in the context of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict

The Commission does not act with transparency with regard to EU subsidies for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating in the context of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. It has been found that the Commission has often refused to account for the funding provided, giving no explanation for its refusal. The sums involved amount to at least EUR 10 m per annum!

1. Is the VP/HR familiar with the memorandum 'Ending Secrecy in European Union Funding to Political Advocacy NGOs Operating in the Arab-Israeli Conflict' by 'NGO Monitor — Making ANGOs Accountable'?

What view does the VP/HR take of the conclusion stated there that she does not act with transparency with regard to EU subsidies for NGOs operating in the context of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict? How does the VP/HR explain her non-transparent attitude, and will she change it? If not, how does the VP/HR explain the conclusion reached by NGO Monitor?

2. How does the VP/HR explain her non-transparent attitude in the light of Article 11 of Title II of the Lisbon Treaty, which lays down the transparency principle applicable to the European institutions? Does the VP/HR agree that her attitude breaches that article? How does the VP/HR account for this to European citizens, who ultimately have to provide the EUR 10 m given to NGOs each year?

3. Is there any connection between this non-transparent attitude on the part of the VP/HR and her partiality in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and what reasons can the VP/HR adduce for this partiality? Will the VP/HR adopt a clear pro-Israeli position in the conflict?

4. How will the VP/HR ensure that the funding provided does not fall into the wrong hands? How will she ensure that the funding is not passed on to Palestinian people/organisations fighting against Israel and/or seeking the destruction of Israel?

5. Does the VP/HR agree that her non-transparent attitude and the withholding of information are arousing more and more suspicion and mistrust among the people of Europe? Does the VP/HR agree that this is undesirable and that it demonstrates the serious democratic deficit of the EU? How will the VP/HR rectify this?

23 April 2013

P-003198/2013

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission

The Commission is aware of the publication referred to by the Honourable Member but does not accept the allegations of non-transparency in funding for projects implemented by NGOs in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Grants for projects which are awarded to NGOs under the EIDHR and the Partnership for Peace initiative are attributed following public calls for proposals. The calls are published on the website of the Directorate General for Development and Cooperation and of the EU Delegations concerned⁽¹⁾. The names of the projects selected as well as the beneficiary are thereafter published on the same websites.

The position of the European Union on the Middle East Peace Process remains unchanged. Our efforts are directed towards obtaining a resolution of the conflict based on a 'two-state' solution, with a viable, contiguous and democratic Palestinian State which will co-exist peacefully with the State of Israel.

Funds awarded for projects can only be used in accordance with the budget of the action, which forms part of the contract. All contracts submit regular financial reports which are subject to external financial verification.

Parliamentary questions

22 March 2013

E-003303-13

Question for written answer to the Commission

Rule 117

Roger Helmer (EFD)

► Subject: EU aid to Palestine

The EU is, according to the European External Action Service's website, the largest donor of financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority⁽¹⁾, and therefore has considerable responsibility.

While there is little doubt that Palestinians experience hardship and assistance is needed, it is also alleged that the Palestinian Authority continues to misappropriate funds:

1. What measures have been taken by the Commission to address the recommendations made by the OLAF report of 2004(2)?
2. Can the Commission provide evidence that EU aid funds can no longer be misappropriated by the Palestinian Authority?

While I am aware that basic data is provided on EU grants to Palestine, I am also informed that substantial documentation on grants relating to organisations involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict remains hidden. Can the Commission explain why there is a lack of transparency in this instance?