



OCCRP | **Organized Crime
and Corruption
Reporting Project**

Below are 24 parliamentary questions submitted by members of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party to the German government in November 2025. Many are about OCCRP.

For each question we are providing OCCRP's comment, followed by the response given by the German government.

(German to English Translation by DeepL Translate)

1. Have there been any contacts, connections or collaborations between the Federal Government or a subordinate Federal Agency and OCCRP since 2020, and if so, which ones (please break down by ministry or agency, type of contact or collaboration, start of contact, initiator and persons involved on the part of the Federal Government and the OCCRP)?

OCCRP response: There is no regular contact between OCCRP and the German government.

German government response: It is linguistically unclear what meaning is to be attached to the phrase "contacts, connections, or cooperation" in the wording of the question. For example, cooperation that is not also a connection seems hardly conceivable. Nor is it clear what additional meaning the "connections" referred to in the question might have beyond the "contacts" referred to. The following response therefore refers to "contacts." To answer the question about contacts with OCCRP, a search for this network name was carried out in the databases of potentially affected work units of the highest federal authorities, in particular in the respective press offices. This search did not yield any results. Reference is made to the Federal Government's preliminary remark on the limitations of such information on contacts.

2. Has the Federal Government directly or indirectly provided financial support or funding to the OCCRP or structures or projects associated with the OCCRP between the beginning of 2020 and the present day, and if so, which ones (please provide a breakdown by

project title, amount of funding, budget line item, purpose of funding, duration of funding and responsible ministry; please include both institutional and project-related funding)?

OCCRP response: OCCRP has never received any grant from the federal German government or any of its subnational authorities. OCCRP publicly lists all major funders on our [supporters](#) page, in official filings such as the U.S. Form 990, and in financial statements which appear in our [annual reports](#).

German government response: It is linguistically unclear what scope of inquiry is being pursued with the question words "directly or indirectly," and the same applies to the description of the purpose "affiliated structures or projects." Therefore, funding in the sense of public subsidies from the highest federal authorities was queried. This query did not yield any results.

3. Has the Federal Government or a subordinate federal authority maintained any media partnerships, projects or collaborations with NDR, ARD, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Süddeutscher Verlag, the weekly newspaper Die Zeit, Zeit-Verlag, Dieter von Holtzbrinck Medien, Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck or a subsidiary of the aforementioned since 2020, and if so, which ones (please break down by time period, medium, ministry or authority and provide a brief description of the content)?

OCCRP response: This question does not apply to OCCRP.

German government response: The term "media partnerships" used in questions 3 and 6 is not a fixed term, nor is the focus of the question clear, as it also includes "projects," "collaborations," and subsidiaries in addition to the media mentioned. As part of its press and public relations work, the federal government has a large number of points of contact in various formats with a wide range of journalists. Details of the content and organization of these are not fully tracked. Therefore, a detailed breakdown cannot be provided. For further information, please refer to the preliminary remark.

4. To the best of the Federal Government's knowledge, have any of the state governments directly or indirectly provided financial support or funding to the OCCRP or structures or projects associated with the OCCRP between the beginning of 2020 and the present day, and if so, what kind of funding is involved (please provide a breakdown by project name, funding amount and budget line item)?

OCCRP response: OCCRP has received no funding from German state governments.

German government response: The federal government has no information on this matter. Questions in which the federal government is asked to provide information about the knowledge of a third party (so-called triangular questions) – e.g., another constitutional body – in this case the federal states – do not have to be answered. These questions seek information from a third party and do not specifically relate to the Federal Government's area of responsibility.

5. Were the results of research or parts of publications by the OCCRP used or actively disseminated in information campaigns or communications by the Federal Government, and if so, which ones?

OCCRP response: OCCRP is not aware of any use of our publications by the German federal government in any information campaigns or communications.

German government response: It is not clear which results and/or research the questioners are basing their questions on or referring to, so no statement can be made about whether the federal government has used or taken up any of this information. The federal government has a constitutional mandate to provide information about its activities, plans, and goals through its public relations work. In doing so, it generally relies on its own information.

6. To the best of the Federal Government's knowledge, did the OCCRP or participating media partners play a role in projects funded by the Federal Government for "fact-checking" or "combating disinformation", and if so, what role?

OCCRP response: OCCRP is not aware of any use of our publications in any fact-checking or combating disinformation projects funded by any level of the German government.

German government response: The wording of the question is unclear. If it is intended to provide a general overview of projects funded in this context, please refer to the answers to questions 24 and 32 in Bundestag document 21/1970 and to the Federal Government's preliminary remarks.

[Answers from Bundestag document 21/1970 - Oct. 2, 2025](#)

Question 24: What strategic goals does the German Federal Government pursue with its measures to combat disinformation?

The Federal Government pursues a broad, society-wide approach against illegitimate foreign influence. The Federal Government regularly informs the public on its channels about the procedures, methods, and dangers of manipulation campaigns with the aim of educating citizens and strengthening their media literacy – in short: to strengthen society's resilience against foreign influence. In addition, it engages in dialogue with representatives of civil society, academia, and research.

Question 32: Which civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or foundations are involved in government projects or measures to combat disinformation (e.g., through consultation, collaboration, or funding)?

The following civil society organizations received project funding from the Federal Agency for Civic Education (BpB) focusing on disinformation: Kulturbüro Sachsen e. V., Arbeit und Leben Thüringen, Amadeu Antonio Foundation, and JFF – Institute for Media Education in Research and Practice. The Federal Office for Information Security (BSI) is conducting a project called "Detection of Images from Multimodal Models (RealOrRender)." This project is being carried out by the Fraunhofer Society for the Advancement of Applied Research. In the run-up to the 2025 federal elections, a learning module on disinformation/deepfakes was developed for the parliamentary groups in the Bundestag in cooperation between the GovTech Campus Germany, the BSI, and the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV). This module simulated the correct and measured handling of disinformation. Furthermore, reference is made to the answer to question 16, to the Federal Government's answer to question 4 of the minor interpellation by the AfD parliamentary group in Federal Parliamentary Paper 20/14469, and to the Federal Government's answer to question 12 of the minor interpellation by the AfD parliamentary group in Bundestag Parliamentary Paper 20/13542.

7. Does the Federal Government have any knowledge of the influence of the OCCRP on political processes in Germany and the EU, particularly in connection with the 2024 EU elections and the so-called "Voice of Europe" campaign (see the questioners' preliminary remarks), and if so, what kind?

OCCRP response: OCCRP did not participate in any of the “Voice of Europe” stories in any capacity. Several outlets that published stories on this topic have previously partnered with OCCRP on other materials. But these are separate and independent media organizations, not members of the OCCRP network. OCCRP has no influence on their content. Partnership on a story-by-story basis between independent, autonomous outlets is a normal journalistic practice.

German government response: The Federal Government does not comment on media reports to which the questioners appear to refer and, moreover, refers to the Federal Government's preliminary remarks.

8. Does the Federal Government have knowledge of the exchange of information between the OCCRP and European institutions (EU Commission, EU Parliament, EEAS) and of their influence on legislative processes at the German or European level, and if so, what kind?

OCCRP response: OCCRP has been asked to provide expert testimony to various European institutions over the years, generally on investigative journalism. As a non-profit media development organization, we do not advocate for any political agenda. We do advocate for policies and values that bolster independent journalism, such as press freedom, journalists’ safety, improvements in SLAPP, libel, and slander laws, protection for whistleblowers, and media funding.

German government response: The question does not specifically relate to the Federal Government's area of responsibility.

9. Does the Federal Government have any assessments from German intelligence services (BND, BfV, MAD) regarding the influence or threat posed by OCCRP activities since 2020, and if so, what are they?

OCCRP response: The supposition that OCCRP poses a “threat” to anyone is false and defamatory. OCCRP is internationally acknowledged as a professional journalism organization that produces fair, accurate, and groundbreaking investigative journalism. Our influence, which we acknowledge, comes from the quality of our publications.

German government response: Answer [open:] The answer to the question cannot be given openly, i.e., without classification. In this case, the classification of the answer to the question as classified information (VS) with the confidentiality level "VS – For official use only" is necessary in the

interests of national security. According to the General Administrative Regulation on Material Security (Classified Information Directive, VSA), information whose disclosure to unauthorized persons could be detrimental to the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany or one of its states must be classified accordingly. Disclosure of the requested information carries the risk that details of the intelligence services' knowledge and methodology would become known, as a result of which both state and non-state actors could draw conclusions about the specific procedures and methods used by the intelligence services, as well as their investigative approaches and priorities. Such publication of details is therefore likely to lead to a deterioration in the intelligence services' ability to gather information. This could be detrimental to the effective fulfillment of the intelligence services' statutory tasks and thus to the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany. This information is therefore classified as "VS – For official use only" and will be forwarded to the German Bundestag separately. The fact that the answer is classified should not be interpreted as either confirmation or denial of the facts in question.

10. Does the Federal Government share the questioners' assessment that the OCCRP could endanger the free formation of opinion in Europe through external political influence, and if not, how does it justify its view?

OCCRP response: The “free formation of opinion” in Europe is not “endangered” but enhanced by OCCRP, which publishes fair, accurate, and groundbreaking investigative journalism of great relevance to European audiences. We’ve reported on scams that cost Europeans hundreds of millions of dollars, problems in COVID procurement, bribery and organized crime in European governments, money laundering through European banks, and hundreds of other stories in the public interest.

As did dozens of outlets across the continent, OCCRP has published stories about allegations that AfD members have trafficked in Nazi imagery and accepted payments from Russian disinformation channels. These are matters of public record and are being adjudicated in court. Reporting on them is normal journalism.

The reference to “external political influence” is unclear, but may be an attempt to impugn OCCRP for accepting grants from the United States government prior to 2025. As explained in our [FAQ about OCCRP’s editorial policies](#), our former USAID grants contained language that ensured our editorial independence. No external funder, governmental or not, has ever had any ability to influence OCCRP’s editorial direction.

Our reporting is based on the highest tenets of investigative journalism and backed up by evidence. Our editors strive to ensure that every story we publish meets high standards of proof, fairness, and clarity.

German government response: The Federal Government does not comment on or interpret the assessments of those asking the questions.

11. How does the Federal Government generally assess the compatibility of state funding of OCCRP projects with the principle of media independence from the state?

OCCRP response: The question of how to ensure sufficient funding for independent investigative journalism is a pressing one and has no single answer. There is a live debate in the journalistic community about how to preserve editorial independence while accepting external grants, including government grants, and reasonable people may reach different conclusions.

In the case of OCCRP, we have never accepted any grant that in any way constrains our editorial independence or influences our content. All reporters and editors working for OCCRP understand that they are free to report on whatever governments, policies, or corporate interests they want. Even a cursory glance over OCCRP's decades-long record of reporting shows that we expose wrongdoing across the political spectrum, including [Venezuela's leftist Maduro regime](#); [Putin's autocracy in Russia](#); [oligarchs](#), [banks](#), and [corporations](#); and the "apolitical" class of [enablers](#) who enable crime and corruption around the world.

Though we accepted funding from USAID prior to its dismantling, our record shows that we have never shied away from topics that might strike a nerve in Washington or other Western capitals. OCCRP has exposed Pentagon [arms deliveries](#) to Syrian rebels, unearthed dubious U.S. government [contractors](#), traced President Trump's efforts to [find dirt](#) on his enemies, and published entire projects that are highly critical of U.S. [drug](#) and [migration policy](#). We've covered [corruption in Ukraine](#), revealed President Zelensky's [offshore holdings](#), and exposed [Israeli spyware](#).

OCCRP recently received EU funding to conduct advanced journalism training programs for investigative journalists working across Europe. This grant pays for capacity-building, not for editorial campaigns on specific topics.

German government response: The Federal Government does not assess the OCCRP's funding practices. As a matter of principle, the state does not fund

journalistic content for reasons of independence from the state and the general requirement of neutrality. For example, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media only funds the structures of journalistic work, but not journalistic content or editorial offices. There is no funding for investigative research, fact-checking, or editorial work.

12. Does the Federal Government have any knowledge of personnel overlaps between the OCCRP or projects funded by the OCCRP on the one hand and representatives of federal ministries or other state-affiliated organizations on the other, and if so, what kind?

OCCRP response: OCCRP does not employ anyone with any connection to the German government or any state-affiliated organizations. We are not aware of any “overlaps” between any projects connected to us and any German government bodies.

German government response: It is not clear what the questioners mean by "personnel overlaps" or "state-affiliated organizations"; these are not fixed terms. Furthermore, the federal government has no information on whether and, if so, which projects are funded by the OCCRP. Reference is also made to the federal government's preliminary remark.

13. Does the Federal Government, or to the Federal Government's knowledge the states, plan any measures to create greater transparency regarding any cooperation and financial flows between German media and the OCCRP, and if so, what are they?

OCCRP response: OCCRP does not receive money from the German government or any German media outlets.

German government response: The federal government has no information on this matter. Questions in which the federal government is asked to provide information about the knowledge of a third party (so-called triangular questions) – e.g., another constitutional body – in this case the federal states – do not have to be answered. These questions seek information from a third party and do not specifically relate to the Federal Government's area of responsibility.

14. What meetings in the form of workshops, discussions, or exchanges of ideas have taken place between journalists from Der Spiegel, NDR, Zeit-Verlag, and Süddeutsche Zeitung and representatives of federal ministries or agencies since 2020 to the

present day (please list by date, ministry, medium, occasion, and topic)?

OCCRP response: None of these outlets are members of the OCCRP network. We have no knowledge about the extent of their interaction with the German government.

German government response: The Federal Government regularly informs journalists about its policies. This can take the form of interviews, press conferences, or background discussions, among other things. The content and organizational details of these are not tracked in full. A detailed breakdown is not possible. For further information, please refer to the Federal Government's preliminary remarks.

15. Have there been any meetings in the form of workshops, discussions, or exchanges of ideas between representatives of the OCCRP and representatives of federal ministries or agencies since 2020, and if so, which ones (please break down by date, ministry, participants, occasion, and topic)?

OCCRP response: OCCRP has had no interaction with the German government beyond possibly seeking comment on stories.

German government response: Please refer to the answer to question 14.

16. Does the Federal Government possess any knowledge regarding the authenticity of the Czech intelligence recordings that allegedly link opposition politicians to cash payments?

a) If so, did it obtain or analyze these recordings from Czech authorities (see the questioner's preliminary remarks)?

b) If not, why did it not initiate a review to rule out possible manipulation of German public opinion in the run-up to the 2024 EU elections?

OCCRP response: This question does not pertain to OCCRP. We did not participate in any project about the "Voice of Europe" network and cannot comment on the quality of the sourcing.

German government response: Questions 16 to 18 will be answered together. The questions concern information that is particularly sensitive in terms of national security and therefore cannot be answered, even in classified form. The German Bundestag's constitutionally guaranteed right to question and obtain information from the federal government is limited by

interests worthy of protection that also have constitutional status, such as the welfare of the state. Disclosure of the requested information carries the risk that details of the specific methodology and highly sensitive specific intelligence connections of federal intelligence services would become known. As a result, both state and non-state actors could draw conclusions about specific procedures and capabilities of the intelligence services. This would mean serious restrictions on the gathering of information, which would ultimately prevent the intelligence services from properly fulfilling their legal mandate. However, the gathering of foreign-related information is essential for the security of the Federal Republic of Germany and for the intelligence services to fulfill their tasks. If such information were to be lost or significantly reduced, there would be a risk of sensitive information gaps, also with regard to the security situation of the Federal Republic of Germany. The protection of sources is an extremely important principle for the intelligence services to fulfill their mandate. Disclosure of details on intelligence methodology and sources would allow far-reaching conclusions to be drawn about the capabilities of the intelligence services and thus, indirectly, about their areas of focus and potential. This could have a significant negative impact on the ability of the intelligence services to gather intelligence. Even classifying the requested information as confidential and depositing it in the German Bundestag's confidential information office would not adequately address its highly sensitive nature in terms of its significance for the performance of the intelligence services' tasks. The requested content describes the capabilities and working methods of the intelligence services in such detail that disclosure even to a limited circle of recipients would not satisfy the need for protection. If the information requiring protection were to become known, it would not be possible to replace it with other instruments of information gathering. It follows from the above that the requested information touches on such sensitive confidentiality interests that the welfare of the state significantly outweighs the parliamentary right to information. In this respect, the right of members of parliament to ask questions must, as an exception, take second place to the confidentiality interests of the federal government. The fact that the answer is being refused should not be interpreted as either confirmation or denial of the facts in question.

17. Has the Federal Government taken steps to verify the allegations against EU-critical politicians? If so, what conclusions has it reached regarding the authenticity of the alleged audio and video recordings from the BIS that are supposed to incriminate Bystron (see [www.welt.de/politi\)?k/germany/article251123872/Secret-Services-Small-Packages-and-Moneyascheln-Videoaufnahmen-belasten-AfD-Mann-Bystron.html](http://www.welt.de/politi)?k/germany/article251123872/Secret-Services-Small-Packages-and-Moneyascheln-Videoaufnahmen-belasten-AfD-Mann-Bystron.html)), in light of the statement by the spokesman of

the Czech intelligence service BIS, Ladislav Šticha, that “the name of the AfD MP Bystron [...] was never mentioned by our side” and that “neither the Prime Minister nor any of the ministers nor the BIS ever mentioned any names except those who were on the sanctions list” (www.idnes.cz/zpravy/home/speakers-bis-ladislav-sticha-elen-cerna-secret-services.A240410_1_13524_domaci_mase), Interview with the Czech news portal “iDNES” from April 11, 2024)?

OCCRP response: This question does not pertain to OCCRP.

German government response: See answer 16.

18. Does the Federal Government have knowledge of cooperation between the OCCRP and the Czech intelligence service in the production of reports on Voice of Europe and opposition politicians? If so, what role did EU funding play in this, and if not, why was this not investigated?

OCCRP response: OCCRP has never cooperated with any intelligence service. We did not participate in any “Voice of Europe” publications. The small amount of EU funding we receive is dedicated to capacity-building programs, not editorial work.

German government response: See answer 16.

19. Does the Federal Government possess information on the role of the OCCRP in disseminating allegations against EU-critical politicians in media outlets such as Spiegel, ZEIT and Süddeutsche Zeitung (see the questioners' preliminary remarks), and if so, how does it ensure that such allegations are not disseminated? Wouldn't this effectively make them part of a foreign disinformation campaign against the German opposition?

OCCRP response: None of the named publications are members of the OCCRP network, and OCCRP has no influence on their work. Moreover, the question presupposes that “disseminating allegations” is somehow improper. Another term for this is “news reporting.” Informing the public that serious allegations have been made against politicians is one of the core functions of journalism. As long as the reporting is accurate, it is difficult to see the problem.

German government response: The Federal Government does not comment on or interpret individual media reports. For the rest, reference is made to the Federal Government's preliminary remark.

20. Does the Federal Government share the questioners' assessment that the allegations against EU-critical politicians were part of a targeted campaign before the 2024 EU elections to discredit them, and if not, how does it justify this in view of the conspicuously fruitless investigations to date?

OCCRP response: This question does not pertain to OCCRP, which did not participate in the reporting being referenced.

German government response: Reference is made to the Federal Government's preliminary remarks.

21. Have there been any contacts between the German Federal Government and the EU Commission regarding EU funding of the OCCRP, particularly in the context of the Voice of Europe affair and the allegations against EU opposition politicians (see the questioners' preliminary remarks), and if so, what kind?

OCCRP response: OCCRP received an EU grant to develop journalistic capacity, not for any editorial work. OCCRP published a single news story reporting that investigations of an AfD politician had been launched in Germany. OCCRP has no connection to the "Voice of Europe" reporting, which was carried out by independent outlets that are not members of the OCCRP network.

German government response: In the opinion of the Federal Government, it is not clear what exactly the questioners are referring to in their inquiry and what time frame is relevant in this regard. With reference to the sources cited by the questioners in the preliminary remarks: The Federal Government does not comment on or interpret individual media reports. For the rest, reference is made to the Federal Government's preliminary remarks.

22. Does the Federal Government have knowledge of possible manipulation of media reports on EU-critical politicians based on OCCRP sources, and if so, why has it not yet launched a public investigation?

OCCRP response: The meaning of this question is unclear. OCCRP is not aware of any "manipulation of media reports" based on our reporting.

German government response: The federal government has no information on this matter. The federal government does not answer hypothetical

questions. For further information, please refer to the federal government's preliminary remarks.

23. Does the Federal Government have any knowledge of possible election interference by OCCRP cooperation partners in the run-up to the 2024 EU elections? If so, what kind? And if not, how does it explain the sudden decline in media coverage of the allegations against EU-critical politicians after the election (see the questioners' preliminary remarks)?

OCCRP response: OCCRP partners with outlets that uphold the highest standards of journalism. It is unclear what the questioners mean by "election interference," since they appear to be referring simply to news reporting that took place before an election. In any event, OCCRP did not participate in any stories on the "Voice of Europe" affair.

German government response: See answer 22.

24. Has the Federal Government taken measures to prevent foreign intelligence services or networks from conducting disinformation campaigns against German opposition politicians? If so, what measures have been taken, and if not, why have no measures been taken?

OCCRP response: This question does not pertain to OCCRP.

German government response: The Federal Government takes the threat of foreign influence and manipulation in the information space very seriously and is taking decisive action to counter it. The aim of disinformation is to undermine the population's trust in democracy and state institutions and to influence the political opinion-forming and decision-making process. The Federal Government uses its channels to provide information about the procedures, methods, and dangers of manipulation campaigns in order to educate citizens and strengthen their resilience. For further information, please refer to the Federal Government's response to Bundestag printed paper 21/1970. Within the scope of its statutory mandate, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) contributes to clarifying the background of disinformation activities in the information space when these originate from foreign intelligence services or state-controlled structures and actors. This does not involve recording or listing information in the sense of the question.