



Mrs. Iliana Ivanova
European Commission
European Commissioner for Innovation,
Research, Culture, Education and
Youth
Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels

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Ref: VLIR/2024/27
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Concerns: Collaboration with Israeli partners under Horizon Europe

Dear Commissioner Ivanova,

As you know, researchers from Israeli universities and public research institutions collaborate with their European partners in a number of research projects which are funded under Horizon Europe. The same goes for private and government actors from Israel.

Article 14 of the Horizon Europe grant agreement states that projects “must be carried out in line with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international and national law on ethical principles”. Project partners are expected to “commit to and ensure the respect of basic EU values (such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities)”. The grant may be reduced if beneficiaries breach one of its obligations.

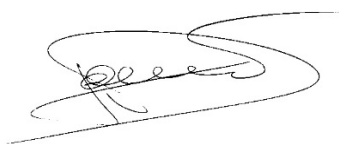
As Flemish universities we would welcome clear recommendations and/or instructions on how to proceed with Horizon Europe projects that involve partners from Israel, and more specifically on how to assess whether the Israeli partners comply with the ethical standards aforementioned. We think this is especially urgent in view of, among others, the recent binding rulings of the International Court of Justice on the situation in Gaza and the military actions of the Israeli Government.

We are fully aware of the fact that there may be differences between the various partners from Israel who are participating in Horizon Europe projects. Any indication on whether or not Israeli institutions are deemed to be in compliance with the ethical standards set forward by the European Commission would be more than welcome.

Apart from the overarching need to get clarifications on the ethical question, we would also welcome a Commission-led co-ordination in order to reduce the administrative burden. All across Europe, universities currently invest a lot of time and energy in screening their academic partnerships with Israeli counterparts: this is the case for both their bilateral and their multilateral (predominantly Horizon Europe) projects. As you may well understand, apart from the massive duplication of work that is far from efficient, we feel that a more harmonized and coordinated approach is needed.

We look forward to receive your reaction at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Danckaert
President



Koen Verlaeckt
Secretary General

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