

Dr. Christian Ehler
Member of the European Parliament

European Parliament | 60, rue Wiertz | B-1047 Bruxelles



Iliana Ivanova
European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Bruxelles

Potsdam, 4 June 2024

Subject: Protecting Israel and its researchers

Dear Commissioner Ivanova, dear Iliana,

I am writing you with deep concern regarding the European treatment of Israel and its researchers in recent weeks. The actions of the Israeli government to exercise Israel's right to defend itself and guarantee the safety of its citizens have been met by protest and resistance across Europe. Protest and resistance steeped in anti-Semitism. I call on you to do everything in your power to stop this unjustified attack against the Jewish people of Israel.

European universities have been at the centre of these protests and increasingly European university leaders give in to the pressure of some radical student groups - sometimes even professional activists using the campus to push their radical agenda. This has led to increasing numbers of boycotts and stops of institutional collaboration with Israeli universities, including the cancellation of participation in Horizon Europe projects.

Furthermore, the High Representative announced he will convene a meeting of EU-Israel Association Council to exchange on all relevant issues affecting bilateral relations, which includes Israel's association to Horizon Europe. This is happening against the background of some European universities expressing the wish to banish Israel from the Programme.

I am abhorred by these actions by the European academic sector and by the prospect of any debate on Israel's place in Horizon Europe. This is a stark contrast with the reluctance we saw in the academic sector to break all ties with Russian universities when Russia as aggressor invaded Ukraine in 2022. The fact that Russia occupied Crimea and was fostering a war on Ukrainian territory since 2014 which also included grave human rights violations was ignored by the academic community altogether. It is also a stark contrast to the extensive collaborations European universities continue to maintain with Chinese universities, despite the well documented human rights violations of the Chinese government. At the same time, these decisions are taken while multiple reports of Jewish faculty members being harassed

over the situation in Gaza. Therefore, it is clear for me that the reaction of the academic sector is a fundamental attack on the place of the Jewish people within the European community, and specifically on the place Israeli researchers in the European Research Area. This is totally unacceptable and goes against the core of the European project.

Therefore, I call on you and the whole Commission to do everything in your power to guarantee the place of Israel and Israeli researchers in the European community and specifically in the European Research Area. Furthermore, I demand a Policy Action on antisemitism in European academia is added to the new ERA Policy Agenda.

Furthermore,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Ehler', written in a cursive style.

Christian Ehler

