



ILIANA IVANOVA
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Dear Mr Danckaert and Mr Verlaeckt,

Thank you for your letter of 30 May 2024, in which you raise questions concerning the ongoing cooperation with entities established in Israel (hereinafter 'Israeli entities') in the framework of Horizon Europe. It is an important matter to which we are paying close attention. Your letter gives me the opportunity to clarify the context of EU relations with Israel in the field for which I am responsible, that of research and innovation (R&I) and the applicable legal framework to our 'Horizon Europe' framework programme.

In line with the positions expressed by the European Council in November 2023 and March 2024⁽¹⁾, our bilateral relations with Israel continue to be governed by the international commitments undertaken vis-à-vis each other, which include those concerning Horizon Europe.

The participation of Israel in the Horizon Europe Programme is governed by the principles and provisions of the Horizon Europe Programme' basic act⁽²⁾ as well as the agreement between the EU and Israel signed on 6th December 2021⁽³⁾ setting out the terms and conditions of Israel's participation in EU programmes (the Association Agreement), which is subject to strict rules.

⁽¹⁾ EUCO Conclusions EUCO 7/24.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0695>

⁽³⁾ Agreement between the European Union, of the one part, and Israel, of the other part, on the participation of Israel in the Union programme Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, (OJ L 95, 23.3.2022, p. 143).

Mr. Jan Danckaert
President

Mr. Koen Verlaeckt
Secretary General

The Flemish Interuniversity Council



In accordance with this regulatory framework, Israeli entities are eligible to participate in Horizon Europe grants under terms and conditions equivalent to those applicable to legal entities established in the European Union. Moreover, Israeli entities' participation in Horizon Europe projects is regulated by the 'Guidelines'⁽⁴⁾ related to entities based in occupied territories since 1967 and the terms and conditions of each grant agreement concluded by consortia involving Israeli entities.

By virtue of the above-mentioned instruments, several mechanisms are in place to prevent that EU funds are misused for activities in breach of international law and the applicable EU legal framework. In overseeing the implementation of the Horizon Europe programme, Commission services remain vigilant to ensure the respect of the applicable legal framework, its implementing rules and the monitoring mechanisms. This applies to all grants under Horizon Europe, also those in which Israeli entities participate, including when it comes to the respect of Article 19(1) of the Horizon Europe Regulation which stipulates that *"actions carried out under the Programme shall comply with ethical principles and relevant Union, national and international law, including the Charter and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Supplementary Protocols"*.

Concerning your request for guidance on how to proceed with ongoing Horizon Europe grants that involve entities established in Israel, it has to be noted that any termination request would need to be issued in accordance with the terms and conditions of the relevant grant agreement.

If a granting authority receives a request for the termination of an entity it cannot refuse such a request. However, it will assess on a case-by-case basis if this request is based on valid reasons and its impact on the project. On the basis of this assessment, the granting authority will decide on the possible legal and financial consequences of the termination such as a grant reduction which would require a formal contradictory procedure. Termination solely on the basis of nationality would be improper and would amount to discrimination prohibited under the Association Agreement.

Yours sincerely,
Iliana Ivanova

⁽⁴⁾ Commission guidelines No 2013/C 205/05 on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJ C 205, 19.07.2013, p 9).