

Dear Dr. Takahashi, Dear academics and fellow signatories of the letter,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 4 June 2019 regarding Israel and EU Research and Innovation Framework Programmes. I am replying also in the name of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms Mogherini.

The relationship between the European Union and Israel is comprehensively governed by a Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States and the State of Israel since 2005.

Israel's participation in the EU Framework Programmes has been mutually beneficial both for the EU and Israel. Israeli scientists and researchers are important partners, particularly in areas such as health, water, science, education and sustainable agriculture.

Israel has been associated to Horizon 2020 on the basis of on the Agreement on participation of Israel in the Union programme "Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)". This agreement explicitly makes participation of Israel in Horizon 2020 subject to EU legislation establishing the programme and rules pertaining to its implementation. In line with these, to be eligible for participation in Horizon 2020, all Israeli legal persons must have their place of establishment within Israel's pre-1967 borders and they may not carry out research activities from Horizon 2020 projects in geographic areas that came under the administration of the State of Israel after 5 June 1967.

As regards the applicable EU legislation, the Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 establishing Horizon 2020 provides that all the research and innovation activities carried out under Horizon 2020 must comply with ethical principles and relevant national, Union and international legislation, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights and its Supplementary Protocols.

All Horizon 2020 projects, most of which are of a collaborative nature involving participants from a number of different countries, are selected on the basis of excellence. A panel of external independent experts evaluates eligible proposals. Compliance to the ethical principles and legislation is ensured by the Horizon 2020 ethics appraisal scheme. It includes an ethics self-assessment by the applicant, followed by a two-stage ethics review comprising an ethics screening and, if necessary, an ethics assessment by independent ethics experts. Additionally, if necessary, ethics checks, reviews and audits during the implementation of the respective project and up to two years afterwards may take place.

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Let me draw your attention to the fact that in accordance with Article 19(2) of Regulation (EU) 1291/2013, research and innovation activities carried out under Horizon 2020 must have an exclusive focus on civil applications, excluding de facto use for military purpose. At the level of implementation of the programme, several mechanisms have been put in place to prevent EU funds being used for activities that could be contrary to international law. All projects are closely monitored by the Commission services, which take all necessary measures to ensure that all project activities are being carried out in compliance with EU legislation and international law.

The ethical evaluation of these projects includes an assessment of the possible dual-use of the proposed research and compliance with applicable EU, national and international legislation, including the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. Proposals involving security issues can also be subject to additional review. The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) may carry out investigations to verify the use of EU funds in case of fraud, corruption or any other illegal activity affecting EU financial interests.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a series of loops and a horizontal line at the end.

Carlos MOEDAS