

**Briefing for Head of Cabinet Markus SCHULTE  
and DG Marc LEMAITRE  
Meeting with Dror Bin, CEO Israel Innovation  
Authority**

**04 September 2024, 14.00-14.30, Brussels**

Ref. Ares(2025)6208462 - 30/07/2025

**Scene setter**

You are meeting, in the Cabinet's premises, a high level Israeli Delegation led by Dr. Dror Bin, CEO of the Israeli Innovation Authority, upon an Israeli request to meet the Commissioner (not available for this date). The Delegation would like to discuss the cooperation between the EU and Israel in the frame of the Israel Association Agreement to Horizon Europe.

DG RTD representatives will attend the meeting with you. For RTD, [REDACTED] 04 International cooperation - Asia, Pacific Africa and Middle East - and [REDACTED] the EU Delegation to the State of Israel, will be present at the meeting.


The cooperation with Israel under the HE Association Agreement is excellent and beneficial to both parties, as acknowledged at the last EU-Israel Joint Committee meeting held in Israel on 16 April 2024 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (see JC flash report in the Background). At the Joint Committee meeting we took stock of Israel participation to Horizon Europe, focusing on the excellent performance of Israeli entities during the first three years of Horizon Europe's implementation. Israel ranks second, after Norway, in terms of participation (in budget) among the associated countries.

Today's meeting's request shall be seen also in relation to the protests and concerns voiced in the last months by members of the European scientific community (including from Horizon Europe grantees) questioning the association of Israel to Horizon Europe, in the light of the current conflict in the Middle East.

Most of these letters were addressed to the Commissioner who replied according to the LTT agreed with EEAS and the central services. This matter was discussed at the Jour Fixe held on the 8 July (see Jour Fixe Note in the Background).

In this context,

 have complained about some European universities considering terminating, on the basis of the nationality, Horizon Europe grant agreements/consortia in with Israeli entities are participating. At the moment, no concrete cases of termination requests have been referred by the POs and RSOs to RTD unit H.1 (Common Legal Support Service).

## **Objectives**

- **Take stock** of the EU-Israel long-standing cooperation in R&I, with focus on the implementation of Israel association to Horizon Europe.
- **Congratulate** the Israeli delegation for the excellent performance, in particular in the European Research Council and European Innovation Council schemes and actions.
- **Discuss** about the recent inquiries and clarifications requests, in the context of the Middle East conflict, about the Israelis participation in Horizon Europe and explain the Commission position on this matter.

## **Key messages**

**Introduction (the first political stance has been proposed by EEAS)**

- **[Express** the EU condemnation of the terrorist attacks conducted by Hamas and other terrorist groups against Israel on 7 October 2023 and support to Israel and its people.

In exercising its right to defend itself, Israel must fully comply with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, in all circumstances].

- **Express** solidarity to the Israeli research communities, which has been affected directly and indirectly by the 7 October attack. In this respect the Commission has put in place some measures to limit the impact of the conflict on the Israelis researchers, right in the aftermath of October the 7 (see summary of the measures undertaken in the background)].
- **Stress** that the EU-Israel cooperation in Research and Innovation has played a crucial role with building mutual trust between the European Union and Israel with a long history of successful scientific and technological cooperation particularly in ICT, health, advanced manufacturing, food and biotechnology as well as environment and energy.
- **Explain** that the association supports the Global Approach to Research and Innovation and reconfirms Europe's commitment to a level of global openness needed to drive excellence, pool resources for faster scientific progress and develop vibrant innovation ecosystems.
- **Highlight** that the EU and Horizon Europe Programme, benefit from Israel's high levels of excellence and top-notch innovation capacity. For the EU is extremely important to work with international partners with high S&T capabilities, such as Israel which ranks on position **1st** for R&I expenditure per inhabitant and with an R&I intensity is **5.44% of GDP** which is above the EU-27 average 2.26%. In this respect recall that South Korea and Canada have recently associated to HE. This means that Israel can also benefit from its enlarged cooperation with global R&I power houses under HE.

**Israel association to R&I Framework programmes with focus on Horizon Europe**

- **Recall** that Israel is a very important partner for the EU in the area of Research & Innovation. Our cooperation has been growing from strength to strength over the past 28 years.
- **Mention** some figures from the EU-Israel cooperation in R&I throughout several Framework Programmes:
  - Israel has been associated to the EU Framework Programmes for Research & Innovation since 1996 with very high participation rates. In Horizon 2020, amongst the Associated Countries, Israel ranked 3rd in terms of participation, 2nd in the EIC Pilot and 1st in the SME instrument. (499 SMEs' participations in H2020; in FP7 – the figure was 215).
  - Israeli entities participated in over 1600 research & innovation projects across collaborative, MSCA, ERC and SME Instrument actions of Horizon 2020. They received €1.3 billion in direct EU contribution emerging as a net beneficiary (€100-140 million net gain approximately). In FP7, Israel received €861 million in EU funding.
- **Underline** the positive trend is confirmed also for Israel's participation in Horizon Europe. Israel is in **3rd** position in participations and **2nd** in budget (Net EU Contribution) share in Horizon Europe among associated countries. Israel ranks **2nd** in terms of participations in the EIC, among associated countries and Israel ranks **1st** in terms of participations in the EIC Accelerator, among associated countries.
- **Stress** the Israel's excellent performance in Research and Innovation EU Programmes is being confirmed also under Horizon Europe. For the ERC calls under Horizon Europe, researchers from Israel – some of them being here today - met the high expectations, reaching a **19% success rate**. Their success surpasses that of EU best-performing countries like the Netherlands (16%), and France and Germany (15%).

- **Mention** that Israel's association to Horizon Europe is an opportunity to continue and further deepen research cooperation with the focus on mutual priorities such as the twin green and digital transition, public health as well as ground-breaking innovation.

### **Horizon Europe strategic plan for 2025-2027 (this point may be raised by the Israeli Delegation)**

**Explain** briefly (if requested) about the last part of Horizon Europe. The adoption on 20 March 2024 of the Horizon Europe strategic plan for 2025-2027 marks a significant milestone, achieved after extensive collaboration and consultation with Member States, the European Parliament, stakeholders, and citizens over 18 months. Building upon the structure of the first strategic plan, the second plan retains and refines the 32 expected impacts of Horizon Europe funding while introducing novelties to address evolving geopolitical contexts and research needs. It outlines three key strategic orientations for investments: the green transition, the digital transition, and fostering a more resilient, competitive, inclusive, and democratic Europe.

### **Inquiries and clarification requests about the participation of Israeli legal entities in Horizon Europe**

- **Recall** that in the last months, in the context of the conflict in the Middle East, several letters and media requests were addressed to the Commission services questioning Israel's participation in Horizon Europe. Some of these letters were addressed to the Commissioner who replied according to the LTT agreed with EEAS and central services (see the exchange of letters in the Background). Following these clarifications, echoed also by the coordinated replies to the media request and by the press,

the flow and intensity of these enquiries has substantially diminished.

- **Mention** the Commissioner's reply to the letter received from the Association of Israeli Universities Heads – VERA asking the Commission's position about this matter and seeking reassurance (see VERA letter and reply in the Background).
- **Recall** that Israel participation in Horizon Europe is based on a specific international agreement making such participation subject to EU legislation establishing the framework programme and rules pertaining to its implementation (including the rules on the dual use, the respect of the humanitarian law and the human rights). In this respect a Guidance note for Commission services on Israeli legal entities participation in Horizon Europe was distributed internally (see the guidance note in the Background).
- **Explain and reassure** that any request to terminate the participation of a beneficiary must set out reasons and include the opinion of the beneficiary concerned. The Commission will then assess the request on a case-by-case basis considering whether the termination is justified. It must be noted that any termination of participation solely on the basis of the nationality should be considered as an improper termination as amounting to discrimination.

# **Background**

## **Flash report of the EU – Israel Joint Committee Meeting held on the 16 April 2024**

Dear colleagues,

The third meeting of the EU-Israel Joint Research and Innovation Committee under the Association Agreement to Horizon Europe took place online on 16 April 2024, under the co-chairmanship of [REDACTED] the Horizon Europe Association Unit, European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, and [REDACTED] Israel-Europe R&D Directorate (ISERD).

The meeting offered a good occasion for the EU to recall the importance of pursuing the EU-Israel R&I bilateral cooperation based on fundamental values, such as academic freedom, gender equality, diversity, research ethics, open science and evidence-based policy-making.

In the opening remarks, the Head of the EU Delegation to the State of Israel and the representative of the Israeli MFA stressed that the EU-Israel partnership is solid, spanning across various sectors from trade to Research & Innovation, being the most prominent area of bilateral cooperation thanks to Israel's association to Horizon Europe.

It was also highlighted by the EU the importance of Science Diplomacy through cross border regional cooperation to address common challenge as a powerful tool contributing to bring peace and stability to the region. The various presentations, both from the EU and Israeli side, confirmed the excellent performance of Israeli entities and researchers during the first three years of Horizon Europe's implementation and highlighted the areas where priorities need to be better aligned and where Israel's participation can be strengthened.

### **The key highlights and conclusions of the JC are the following:**

- **Ex-Post Evaluation of Horizon 2020:** the Horizon 2020 evaluation highlighted achievements, areas for improvement, and the need for increased funding. It emphasized scientific, societal, and economic impacts, stressing simplification, participation, and dissemination. International cooperation, notably with Israel, led to breakthroughs and economic growth, benefiting R&D spending, EU GDP, and job creation. The European Commission took note of the Israeli request to present more detailed data for the associated countries and, at the same time, clarified the purpose of the ex post evaluation exercise is to assess the overall impact of the Framework Program rather than focusing on the individual countries which are encouraged to extract relevant data from available tools and platforms.
- **Multilateral Dialogue on principles and values for international R&I cooperation:** the EU acknowledged Israel's ongoing involvement in diverse meetings and workshops linked to the Multilateral Dialogue on principles and values for cooperation in Research and Innovation (R&I). Israel is encouraged to deepen its engagement in the Multilateral Dialogue's initiatives, play an active role in shaping the roadmap for future steps, and partake in the associated thematic workshops.
- **ERA's actions, ERA Forum and ERAC:** Israel committed to three of the actions of the current ERA Policy Agenda (Actions 1 – Open Science, Action 8 – Research Infrastructures, Action 12 – Industrial ecosystems). Israel's representatives were

invited to be briefed on the ongoing discussions within the ERA Forum regarding the next ERA Policy agenda (2025-2027), where 31 proposals were developed collaboratively between May 2023 and March 2024, and ERAC provided guidance on future actions during its plenary meeting on 11-12 April 2024. Both sides agreed to pursue discussions about the ERA Forum, to contribute to the design of the ERA Policy Agenda's actions.

- **New European Innovation Agenda:** the European Commission highlighted the importance of the innovation's components in various sectors, acknowledging Israel as breakthrough innovation global power house. Israel's contributions were recognized, urging further collaboration via platforms like the European Innovation Council (EIC) Forum. Strengthening this forum is crucial for advancing innovation agendas and addressing future challenges collectively. Both parties agreed to share detailed information and exchange views on this agenda item, particularly concerning the EIC club and EIC Forum.
- **European Economic Security Strategy package:** the EU presented its Economic Security Strategy, focusing on Research and Innovation's role. Recent actions include a White Paper on dual-use technologies and a Council Recommendation on research security. Israel expressed a preference for dual-use research to be funded under the Defense Program. Both parties agreed to provide such input in relevant Committees.
- **AI in Science policy and trends:** the European Commission recognises AI's transformative role and invited Israel to engage in initiatives like the Mutual Learning Exercise on AI in Science, funded by Horizon Europe's Policy Support Facility, and to co-create the Horizon Europe Work Programme for 2025 on AI in Science. Israel's active participation was encouraged in addressing the need for a robust policy framework and optimising investment strategies, particularly in light of rapid global progress in AI, with a focus on upcoming actions such as the PSF Mutual Learning Exercise (MLE) and the ERA Action on AI in Science.
- **Strategic Plan 2025-2027/IL suggestion for topics to be included in 2025-2027 WPs :** the European Commission presented the Horizon Europe strategic plan 2025-2027 exercise and process, emphasizing collaboration with Israel to advance research and innovation. This Plan, focusing on transparency and innovation, provides opportunities for joint efforts, aligning research priorities and ensuring stability in Horizon Europe programs. Its emphasis on green and digital transitions, strategic autonomy, and biodiversity opens avenues for partnership between the European Commission and Israel to address global challenges. Israel offered insightful suggestions for future calls, aligning with the EU's focus on civil security and resilience against various threats. These proposals aim to enhance societal resilience in crisis scenarios like earthquakes or climate change-induced catastrophes, covering topics such as PTSD, evacuation systems innovation, and maritime safety against pirates. The EU proposed channeling the written proposals to the Clusters Secretariats/Programming Committee configuration for consideration.
- **Principle of Reciprocity:** As per the Operational Conclusions from the June 12, 2023 Joint Committee (JC) meeting, Israel provided ahead of today's Joint Committee a written inventory of programs open to EU legal entities, along with their participation status. The European Commission and Israel agreed to exchange



annual updates on Israeli programs open to EU entities and the participation status of EU legal entities. It was agreed that these updates will be shared at JC meetings and that the relevant information will be included in the JC meeting minutes.

- **Financial contribution to HE/ Statistical Data:** Israel received the 2024 funding call on April 11, 2024, with a payment deadline of May 20, 2024, consisting of an initial contribution, adjustments, and automatic correction. Its strong commitment to research and innovation is evident, with 5.44% of its GDP allocated, surpassing the EU average. Israel receives EUR 626.9 million from its participation to Horizon Europe, ranking 3rd in participations and 2nd in budget share. Notably, Israel excels in the EIC Accelerator, with 117 SME participations. Israel is extremely performant in ERC and EIC, receiving EUR 382.9 million and EUR 93.6 million, respectively. Under Israel's request, the European Commission is committed to provide Israel with comprehensive statistics on green and digital-related calls in Horizon Europe, considering disclosing summarized data and specialized snapshots, subject to internal disclosure regulations.
- **EU Mission 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030:** Israel's involvement in the Cities Mission shows positive progress, with Eilat earning commendations and national authorities encouraged to endorse its Climate City Contract. Other Israeli cities, seen through their participation in the Twinning Learning Programme, signal a growing commitment to urban climate initiatives. Eilat, as a Mission city, actively participates in initiatives like the NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme, focusing on decarbonizing its tourism sector. Participation in the NetZeroCities Twinning Learning Programme facilitates knowledge exchange with pilot cities from other countries. Both sides aim to encourage more Israeli cities to join these programs. A national workshop on the Cities Mission, supported by the TAIEX Programme, is planned to inspire the establishment of national structures and city networks in Israel. Enhanced dissemination and networking opportunities regarding the Cities Mission calls are crucial to boost Israeli participation in urban climate neutrality sectors.
- **ERC:** Israeli researchers excel in ERC calls, with a 19% success rate, surpassing top EU countries. Despite Israel's small share in the ERA economy and population, it secures over 5% of ERC grants. The ERC welcomes Israel's association with Horizon Europe, noting Israeli researchers' significant contributions to ERC-funded science. The majority of ERC grantees in Israel are nationals, showcasing the local research community's strength. The ERC Scientific Council has expanded the eligibility window for Starting Grant (StG) and Consolidator Grant (CoG) calls to include armed conflicts, benefiting researchers in Israel whose careers are affected by current conflicts. This measure will be implemented in the ERC Work Programme 2025 once adopted by the European Commission.
- **MSCA:** Israel's active participation in the MSCA program of Horizon Europe drives innovation, facilitates researcher mobility, and strengthens EU-Israel collaboration. Active involvement in MSCA calls is ongoing, with continued support from MSCA National Contact Points. EU encourages Israeli organizations, especially those engaged in Doctoral Networks, to increase participation in Industrial Doctorate projects, leveraging Israel's strong innovative capacity in industries, SMEs, and startups. It has been emphasized the attractiveness of Israeli institutions to foreign researchers beyond returning Israelis.

The fact that around 68% of incoming MSCA post-doctoral fellows in Horizon 2020 were Israeli researchers underscores the potential for bolstered collaborations and knowledge sharing. Promoting Israel as an appealing destination for international researchers could further enhance these opportunities.

- **Scope for improvement based on lessons learned from the past four years of HE's implementation and EIT Israel Hub activities and way forward:** the R&I Section at the EU Delegation established itself as a key player in Israel's R&I ecosystem, fostering collaboration with ISERD, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, and the Council of Higher Education. The EIT Hub Israel has become a leading player in straightening synergies and partnership between the EU and Israeli ecosystems, with plans for supporting European market competitiveness, strengthening ecosystem bridges, supporting European diplomats in Israel, consortium building, and facilitating startups' globalization and scaling. Both Parties agreed organizing workshops and matchmaking sessions to enhance synergies between the European and Israeli startup ecosystems and to increase Israelis participation collaborative actions under Horizon Europe Pillar II, particularly in areas of common interest, such as green technology, digital and health.

### **Measures taken by the Commission in the aftermath of October 7**

To be noted that, in the aftermath of October 7, the European Commission acknowledged that the situation makes it difficult to complete and submit on time project proposals to some Horizon Europe calls with deadlines in the coming days and weeks, just after the attack.

This extension was meant to provide the extra time and assistance needed to overcome any obstacles they may be facing, due to the current crisis situation, and make sure that their creative and innovative research projects get the attention they deserve.

The calls which deadlines will be extended for all the eligible applicants, irrespective of the country where the organisation is based, are the following:

- The ERC Starting Grant Call will be extended from 24 October to 6 November;
- The ERC Synergy Call will be extended from 8 November to 15 November;
- The EIC Accelerator will be extended from 19 October to 8 November;
- The EIC Pathfinder will be extended from 18 October to 25 October.

The Israeli authorities have shown their gratitude for this decision which proved to be effective

This extension aims to offer additional time and support to applicants, allowing them to overcome any obstacles arising from the current crisis situation and ensuring that their innovative research projects receive the attention they merit.

The decision has been appreciated by Israeli authorities for its effectiveness in addressing the challenges faced by researchers during this time.

## CVs



## **I. COUNTRY BACKGROUND**



# ISRAEL



## INTRODUCTION

The State of Israel was declared in 1948, after Britain withdrew from its mandate of Palestine. Israel was admitted as a member of the UN in 1949 and saw rapid population growth, primarily due to migration from Europe and the Middle East. The Israeli economy has undergone a dramatic transformation in the last 25 years, led by cutting-edge, high-tech sectors.

## GOVERNMENT

### Chief of State

President Isaac HERZOG

### Head of Government

Prime Minister Naftali BENNETT

### Government Type

parliamentary democracy

### Capital

Jerusalem<sup>1</sup>

### Legislature

unicameral Knesset (120 seats)

## GEOGRAPHY

### Area<sup>1</sup>

Total: 21,937 sq km

Land: 21,497 sq km

Water: 440 sq km

### Climate

temperate; hot and dry in southern and eastern desert areas

### Natural Resources

timber, potash, copper ore, natural gas, phosphate rock, magnesium bromide, clays, sand

<sup>1</sup>the US recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital in December 2017 without taking a position on the specific boundaries of Israeli sovereignty

as of December 2021

## ECONOMY

### Economic Overview

high-income, technology- and industrial-based economy; recent debt spikes; high inequality and poverty disparities persist; significant tariff and regulatory burdens, especially in agriculture; hard-hit by COVID-19; quantitative easing in effect

**GDP (Purchasing Power Parity)** \$353.4 billion (2020 est.)

**GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity)** \$38,300 (2020 est.)

**Industries** - high-technology products, wood, paper products, potash, phosphates, food/beverages, tobacco, caustic soda, cement, pharmaceuticals, construction, metal products, chemical products, plastics, cut diamonds, textiles, footwear

**Agricultural products** - milk, potatoes, poultry, tomatoes, carrots, turnips, tangerines/mandarins, green chilies/peppers, eggs, vegetables

**Exports** \$113.9 billion (2020 est.)

diamonds, packaged medicines, medical instruments, integrated circuits, refined petroleum (2019)

**partners:** US 26%, China 9%, UK 7% (2020)

**Imports** \$96.53 billion (2020 est.)

diamonds, cars, crude and refined petroleum, broadcasting equipment (2019)

**partners:** US 12%, China 11%, Germany 7.5%, Switzerland 7%, Turkey 6% (2020)

## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

### Population

8.8 million (July 2021 est.)

### Population Growth

1.45% (2021 est.)

### Ethnicity

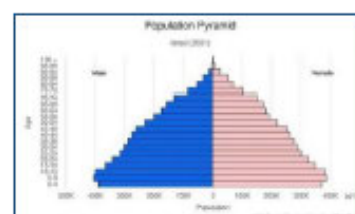
Jewish 74.1% (of which Israel-born 78.1%, Europe/America/Oceania-born 15.2%, Africa-born 4.3%, Asia-born 2.4%), Arab 21%, other 4.9% (2019 est.)

### Language

Hebrew (official), Arabic (special status under Israeli law), English (most commonly used foreign language)

### Religion

Jewish 74%, Muslim 18%, Christian 1.9%, Druze 1.6%, other 4.5% (2020 est.)



## 2. Statistics concerning Israel participation to Horizon2020 and Horizon Europe

## Israel

### Israel and the R&I landscape

- Israel's **R&I expenditure per inhabitant ranks** on position 1st. Its **R&I intensity is 5.44% of GDP** which is above the EU-27 average 2.26%;
- Israel receives a **total EU contribution to research & innovation of EUR 616.1 million**;
- Israel has **5.0 patent applications per billion GDP** (in PPS) which is above the EU-27 average of 3.4;

## PARTICIPATION OF ISRAEL IN HORIZON EUROPE

### HORIZON EUROPE and HORIZON 2020 - Key data for Israel

HE	€684.6 m	651	791	261	82
H2020	€1.3b	1,694	2,105	445	248
	of EU contribution	grants signed	participations	ERC PIs in host organisations	MSCA beneficiaries

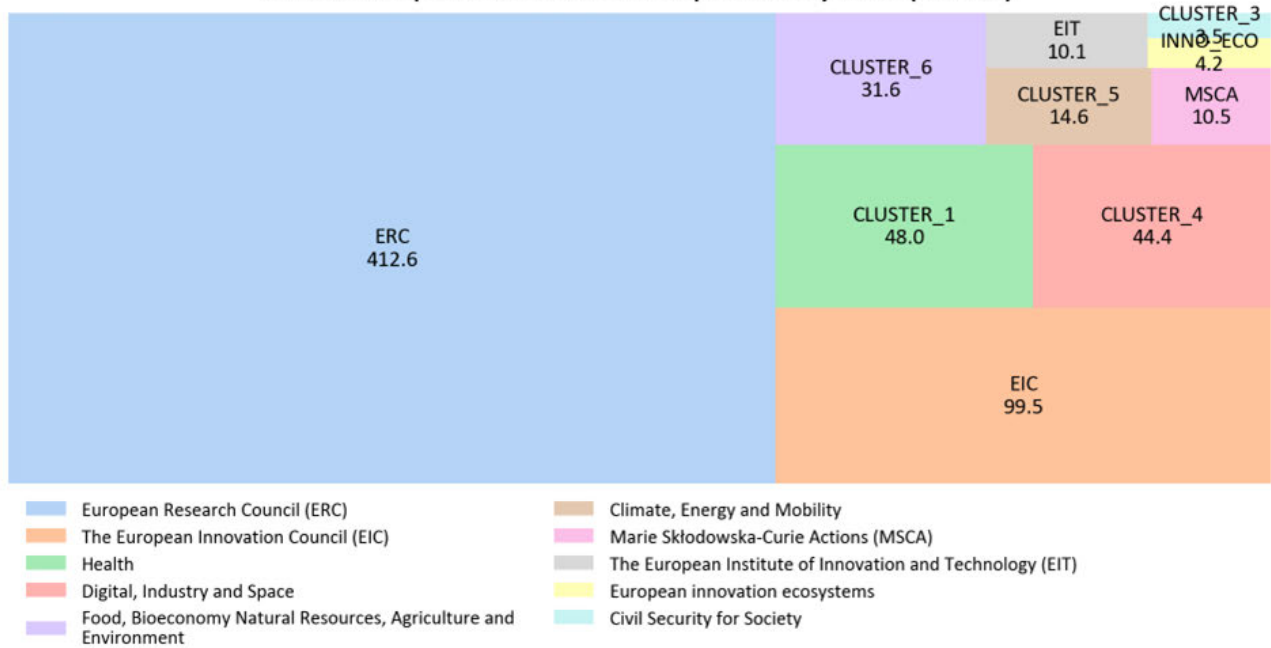
### Israel in Horizon Europe

- There are currently **40 grants Under Preparation** in addition to the 651 grants already signed;
- Israel is in **3rd position in participations** and 2nd in budget (Net EU Contribution) share in HE compared to 3rd in participations and 3rd in budget share in H2020 among associated countries;
- In EU contribution per inhabitant, Israel is in **3rd position among associated countries with EUR 72 per inhabitant** below the EU average of 72.6 EUR per inhabitant;
- The **success rate** of eligible applicants from Israel is **17.74%**, which is below the EU average of 21.19%;
- **Participants from Israel received EUR 684.6 million** so far, which is 27.73% for Horizon Europe among associated countries;
- Israel ranks **2nd** in terms of participations in the **EIC**, among associated countries;
- Israel ranks **1st** in terms of participations in the **EIC Accelerator**, among associated countries;

### Performance of Israel in HE priority areas

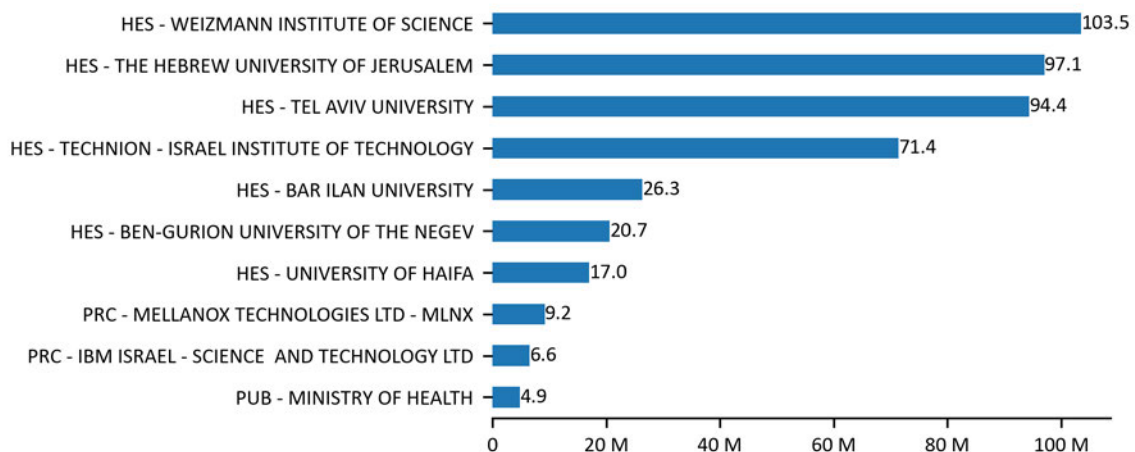
- **The top priority areas** in the HE budget going to Israel are **European Research Council (ERC)** (EUR 412.6 million) and **The European Innovation Council (EIC)** (EUR 99.5 million);

**Horizon Europe EU Contribution to Top 10 Priority Areas (mil EUR)**



## Top 10 Organisations

**Horizon Europe Top 10 organisations by EU Contribution (mil €)**



(\*) This success rate is displayed for applicants. Note that success rates for applicants may differ from success rates of proposals, which is displayed on the Horizon Dashboard.

(\*\*) The ranking and Comparison is based on the Country groups in Horizon Europe. Data on Art185 is not included in the Country briefing.





**Jour Fixe – 8 July 2024**

**“Cooperation with Israel - stocktaking”**

Main contact persons:  
(RTD)

**DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE COMMISSIONER**

- Give guidance on the actions undertaken so far concerning letters and media requests from various external stakeholders about Israel’s participation in Horizon Europe.
- Give guidance on the proposed approach of the JRC to concerning access to their research infrastructure.
- Give guidance on the proposed follow up actions concerning Erasmus+.

**0. SUMMARY OF THE KEY POINTS**

**Horizon Europe**

In the context of the current conflict in the Middle East, protests and concerns have been voiced in the last months by members of the European scientific community, such as academic institutions, researchers and students. Some have questioned the cooperation with Israel in R&I including in the context of Israel’s Association Agreement to Horizon Europe. Against this background, several letters, and requests from various external R&I stakeholders, including from Horizon Europe grantees were addressed to the Commission services who are providing at present replies to them. Since the beginning of 2024, we have also received 12 media queries, covering questions on either several EU-funded projects or the situation concerning universities’ boycott. One of the questions was received in the midday briefing, whilst the other ones were by email. The full list of media queries and our replies is included in annex 1. In annex 2, the current LTT agreed with the Commission’s spokesperson’s for media queries.

The requests received so far can be grouped into the following three main categories concerning:

- (1) the **compliance** of the Israeli legal entities participating in EU Framework Programmes for R&I with the eligibility, legal and ethical provisions set out in

- (2) the possibility for legal entities **to terminate their participation** in an ongoing action involving Israeli legal entities or for the **participation of Israeli legal entities to be terminated**;
- (3) The **EU position, in the context of the conflict**, on the cooperation with Israel in general and, in particular, under the EU Framework Programmes for R&I.

The current line to take agreed by central services and the EEAS on EU – Israel cooperation in general and on R&I cooperation through Horizon Europe reads as follows:

- The European Union reiterates its strongest condemnation of the brutal terrorist attacks conducted by Hamas and other terrorist groups against Israel on 7 October 2023. It expresses its full solidarity and support to Israel and its people and reaffirms its full commitment to its security and to regional stability. In exercising its right to defend itself, Israel must fully comply with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, in all circumstances.
- The EU keeps under constant review all agreements with third countries, and the principles and values upon which they are based.
- The framework Association Agreement EU - Israel is the legal basis of the EU ongoing dialogue with the Israeli authorities, and it provides important mechanisms to discuss problematic issues and advance our point of view. In this framework, the EU will continue to reaffirm its commitment to the applicability of international human rights and humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territory and in the Gaza Strip; at the same time the EU is working actively to revive a political process leading to a lasting and sustainable peace based on the Two-State solution.
- The EU is not envisaging to suspend its current general cooperation with Israel. As a consequence, the European Commission is not planning to suspend or to revise the participation of Israeli researchers and legal entities in Horizon Europe. Israel participation in Horizon Europe is based on specific international agreement making such participation subject to EU legislation establishing the framework programme and rules pertaining to its implementation.
- Furthermore, although a temporary suspension of a Horizon Europe project or part of it would be legally possible under the Grant Agreement, it typically covers situations where the action needs to be stopped to fix specific problems. The Grant Agreement or part of it can only be suspended under exceptional circumstances, including in particular force majeure, and the beneficiaries must make their best efforts to resume implementing the action as soon as possible. While the granting authority would conduct a case-by-case assessment of the applicability of 'exceptional circumstances', these circumstances could in principle not include situations created by the beneficiaries' own choice, such as refusal to cooperate with another beneficiary.
- The participation of Israeli legal entities in the Horizon Europe is governed by an association agreement, signed on 6 December 2021<sup>1</sup>, which establishes the relevant

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 95, 23.3.2022, p. 143.

legal framework. Under its Article 2 (1)<sup>2</sup>, the participation of Israeli entities in Horizon Europe is subject to the Horizon Europe Regulation and any act pertaining to its implementation.

- At the level of implementation of Horizon Europe, several mechanisms have been put in place to prevent that EU funds are used for activities that could be contrary to international law. All projects are monitored by the European Commission services to verify in particular the use of EU funds and compliance with the contractual obligations. Any non-compliance may trigger corrective or contractual measures as provided for in the grant agreement (e.g., the recovery of EU funding or termination of the participation).
- Concerning questions about the risk of military use by Israel of the technologies developed through the Horizon Europe funded projects, one should note that any research and innovation activities carried out under Horizon Europe, according to the applicable rules, must have an exclusive focus on civil applications during the execution of the Horizon Europe projects.

As regards the statements of some European Universities to terminate Horizon Europe grant agreements with Israeli entities, it must be noted that legal entities may terminate their participation in an on-going action involving Israeli entities or the consortium may terminate the participation of Israeli entities. Any request to terminate the participation of a beneficiary (regardless of whether it is voluntary or involuntary) must set out reasons and include the opinion of the beneficiary concerned (or proof that this opinion has been requested in writing). The responsible authorizing officer (RAO) will then assess the request on a case-by-case basis considering any relevant element of the particular case, and notably consider whether the termination is justified. It must be noted that under the central guidance provided any termination of participation, be it voluntary or involuntary, solely on the basis of the nationality should be considered as an improper termination as amounting to discrimination. As requested by the central services, any RAOs' decision to sanction improper termination will have to be validated by them, being consulted for each case by the CLSS on the basis of a comprehensive file.

At the moment, no concrete cases of termination requests have been referred to RTD unit H.1 (common legal support service). Therefore, it is not possible to predict which type of measures (if any) the RAOs contemplate to implement (e.g. grant reduction, termination of the action). Moreover, it is very likely that central services will define their LTTs on the basis of the cases elevated to them to ensure a harmonised approach as much as possible.

In addition, a guidance note for Commission services on Israeli legal entities participation in Horizon Europe was distributed internally. The note is included in annex 3.

## **JRC research infrastructure**

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<sup>2</sup> Article 2 (Terms and conditions of participation in the Horizon Europe Programme) *1. Israel shall participate in the Horizon Europe Programme in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement, and under the terms and conditions set forth in this Agreement, in the legal acts referred to in Article 1 of this Agreement, as well as in any other rules pertaining to the implementation of the Horizon Europe Programme, in their most up to date versions.*

Additionally, in relation to access of Israel to EC/JRC research infrastructure (in its capacity of Associated Country to Horizon Europe), the JRC will proceed as follows:

In case project proposals submitted by Israeli entities requesting access to JRC research infrastructures are judged suitable by the panel evaluating proposals, composed by external experts and the JRC, the JRC will include a specific clause in the agreement regulating access of the selected user institutions, to guarantee that the projects submitted for access to JRC research infrastructures are exclusively aimed at civil applications.

### **General information on Israel's participation in Erasmus+**

Out of scope

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Out of scope


[Redacted]

[Redacted]

### **Proposed follow-up**




## 1. Mobility projects

Out of scope



## 2. Cooperation projects

Out of scope





Brussels  
RTD/ML

## NOTE TO THE FILE

### **Subject: Guidance for Commission services on Israeli legal entities participation in Horizon Europe**

In the context of the current conflict in the Middle East, protests and concerns have been voiced in the last months by members of the European scientific community, such as academic institutions, researchers and students. Some have questioned the cooperation with Israel in R&I including in the context of Israel's Association Agreement to Horizon Europe. Against this background, several letters, and requests from various external R&I stakeholders, including from Horizon Europe grantees were addressed to the Commission services who now it is necessary to respond to them.

This note addresses the Horizon Europe implementation-related enquiries and clarification requests received, with the aim of **providing guidance, particularly to executive agencies, in accordance with the applicable legal framework**. The requests received so far can be grouped into the following three main categories concerning:

- (i) the **compliance** of the Israeli legal entities participating in EU Framework Programmes for R&I with the eligibility, legal and ethical provisions set out in the applicable regulatory framework;
- (ii) the possibility for legal entities **to terminate their participation** in an ongoing action involving Israeli legal entities or for the **participation of Israeli legal entities to be terminated**;
- (iii) the **EU position, in the context of the conflict**, on the cooperation with Israel in general and, in particular, under the EU Framework Programmes for R&I.

The participation of Israeli legal entities in the Horizon Europe is governed by an association agreement, signed on 6 December 2021 <sup>(3)</sup>, which establishes the relevant legal framework. Under its Article 2 (1) <sup>(4)</sup>, the participation of Israeli entities in Horizon Europe is subject to the Horizon Europe Regulation and any act pertaining to its implementation.

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<sup>(3)</sup> OJ L 95, 23.3.2022, p. 143.

<sup>(4)</sup> Article 2 (Terms and conditions of participation in the Horizon Europe Programme) 1. *Israel shall participate in the Horizon Europe Programme in accordance with the conditions laid down in the*

We provide hereafter the **background and the current LTT**, *in line with the applicable rules* by the date of this note, per category and subcategory:

i. **The compliance of Israeli legal entities participating in Horizon Europe with the eligibility, legal and ethical provisions set out in the applicable regulatory framework:**

- **Eligibility of the Israeli legal entities according to the “Guidelines”:** In relation to the eligibility of the Israeli entities, the so-called Guidelines on eligibility of Israeli entities <sup>(5)</sup> remain fully applicable to EU programmes under the current MFF, Horizon Europe included. In line with these Guidelines, to be eligible for participation, as a general rule, Israeli legal persons must have their place of establishment within Israel's pre-1967 borders and they may not carry out activities in geographic areas that came under Israel's administration after 5 June 1967. Israeli settlements in territories occupied by Israel are illegal under international law. At the level of grant implementation, the EU services should ensure the strict respect of eligibility requirements for Israeli entities in all ongoing EU-funded programmes, including Horizon Europe.

In case of questions about the eligibility of an Israeli entity, please consult DG RTD Unit 0.3 responsible for the cooperation with Israel under the Association Agreement.

- **Compliance with the provisions on ethical principles and relevant national, EU and international legislation, including the exclusively civil application of the proposed activities.** According to Article 19(1) of the Horizon Europe Regulation *“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.”*
- In that respect, any participating entity in a Horizon Europe action is bound to respect Article 11 of the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement ('HE MGA'), which provides that *“The beneficiaries must implement the action as described in Annex 1 and in compliance with the provisions of the Agreement, the call conditions and all legal obligations under applicable EU international and national law”*, as well as Article 14, which stipulates that *“The action must be carried out in line with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international and national law on ethical principles”* and that *“The beneficiaries must 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).”*

It should be emphasised that beneficiaries cannot be considered in breach of the Article 14 obligations simply by virtue of being established in Israel. Any measures under that provision has to be based on the conduct of the beneficiary, not on the

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*Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement, and under the terms and conditions set forth in this Agreement, in the legal acts referred to in Article 1 of this Agreement, as well as in any other rules pertaining to the implementation of the Horizon Europe Programme, in their most up to date versions.*

<sup>(5)</sup> Commission Notice Nr. 2013/ C 205/05: Guidelines 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, 19.7.2013, p. 9).

actions or behaviour of the State of Israel, which cannot be considered automatically attributable to its entities participating in Horizon Europe grants.

Specific rules on ethics are set out Annex 5 of the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement.

At the level of implementation of Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe Framework programmes, several mechanisms have been put in place to prevent that EU funds are used for activities that could be contrary to international law. Projects financed under Horizon Europe are selected by external independent experts and, at the level of programme implementation, compliance with ethical principles and legislation is ensured by the appraisal scheme, which included self-assessment, two-stage ethics review (screening and assessment) at the level of the proposal, and ethics monitoring if appropriate during the implementation of the project. <sup>(6)</sup> The outcome of the two-stage ethics review becomes a contractual responsibility for participating entities. Adherence to ethical standards and the proper implementation of the actions can be verified (checked) at any time during the implementation of the grant. For ethics, monitoring procedures (checks or reviews in accordance with Article 25 GA) may be initiated at any time, in particular:

- when recommended by the ethics experts during the initial ethics evaluation.
- when new ethics issues arise (e.g., due to changes in the scope of the activities).
- when there are other grounds to doubt compliance with ethics obligations (for example after a scientific review) and/or for ethically highly sensitive activities, at the initiative of the funding body or the Commission.

Ethics reviews and checks (other than internal checks by Project Officers or Ethics officers) are performed by external ethics experts. During the scientific evaluation, the external experts check that the proposals have an exclusive focus in civil application.

Any non-compliance with the above requirements, may trigger corrective or contractual measures as provided for in the grant agreement (e.g., the recovery of EU funding or termination of the participation).

In case of questions about ethics reviews and checks, please consult, RTD Unit 0.2 - Ethics sector.

ii. **Possibility for legal entities to terminate their participation in an ongoing action involving Israeli legal entities or for the participation of Israeli legal entities to be terminated by the consortium**

While voluntary or involuntary termination of the participation of a beneficiary in an action is legally possible (Article 32 of the HE MGA), there may be consequences under the grant agreement with the Horizon Europe granting authority. According to Article 7 of HE MGA, the beneficiaries are fully responsible towards the granting authority for implementing the action, which includes a joint responsibility for the technical implementation as set out in the

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<sup>(6)</sup> The Ethics process is described in detail in [programme-guide\\_horizon\\_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#) (pages 23-28, section 12). .



description of the action in Annex I thereto, in accordance with all the Grant Agreement obligations. If one of the beneficiaries fails to implement their part of the action, the other beneficiaries must ensure that this part is implemented by someone else (without being entitled to an increase of the maximum grant amount and subject to an amendment).

Moreover, any request to terminate the participation of a beneficiary entity (regardless of whether it is done with or without the consent of the entity concerned) and to exclude it from the project must set out reasons and include the opinion of the beneficiary concerned (or proof that this opinion has been requested in writing). The granting authority from its side has the right to take any measures in line with the grant agreement, which may include a grant reduction or the termination of the action, for example, if the granting authority considers that the reasons provided by the entity, which is making the request do not justify termination (improper termination). Termination of participation (voluntary or involuntary) on the basis of nationality alone would amount to discrimination prohibited under the Association Agreement to Horizon Europe.










All requests to the responsible authorising officers concerning the termination of participation should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. However, any decision to sanction improper termination requested by a coordinator (e.g. based on nationality) needs to be validated by central services. Therefore, the Responsible Authorising Officers (RAOs) should consult the Common Legal Support Service (CLSS) by AresLook [REDACTED] setting out all the specifics of the case at stake so that the validation by central services can be sought by the CLSS.




iii. **The EU position, in the context of the conflict, on the cooperation with Israel in general and, in particular, under Horizon Europe**


Responses to questions on cooperation with Israeli entities under the EU Framework programmes for R&I should focus entirely on the legal and procedural aspects arising from the relevant legal bases, for which DG RTD and its agencies are competent.

In the light of the above, we invite services to be vigilant to ensure the respect of the applicable regulatory framework, the monitoring mechanisms in place, as well as the above guidance, which may be further developed at a later stage.

c.c.:

TITRE	ECHEANCE	N° DE SAUVEGARDE	LETTER RECEIVED	Status
Petition regarding Israel's status as Associated Country in the Horizon Europe program	24/7/2024	<a href="#">rtd.04.dir(2024)6369374</a>	 Outlook original email (1).msg	<b>Reply at Cab level (draft version)</b>  2024-07-30_Reply Petition_(EEAS + Eth
Guidelines/state of play of the cooperation with Israeli researchers and organisations participating in the EU framework programmes for R&I	02/07/2024	<a href="#">vdl-ca-07.cab staff(2024)4712361</a>	NA	<b>Internal Guidelines have been finalised; ARES file on behalf of DG Mark Lemaitre to all DG RTD Directors and to all Directors of Executive Agencies has been sent out 2/07/2024</b>  2024-06-20 Note to the File - CAB version
LETTER on behalf of UPMP in relation to the serious breaches of human rights by the State of Israel	01/07/2024	<a href="#">vdl-ca-01(2024)5427940</a>	 Carta DDHH_presidenta cc	<b>Letter registered by SG, CdF EEAS</b>  Reply to Ares(2024) 4725908_ES.pdf
Letters from the Association of Israeli Universities Heads – VERA	10/ 06/24 and 26/06/2024	<a href="#">vdl-ca-12-2.cab staff.dir(2024)5238890</a>	 VERA to Commissioner Ivano	<b>Reply with SG (letter signed by the Commissi</b>  Reply Commissioner Ivanova VERA 2 final_ <b>oner)</b>
[Letter from 17 MEPs] Horizon Europe programme and Israel`s association agreement	12/06/2024	<a href="#">vdl-ca-12-2.cab staff.dir(2024)4717184</a>	 Letter Horizon Europe and Israel.pc	<b>Replied by the Cabinet</b>  Reply to 17 MEPs Ccsr Ivanova_CAB.pc

Letter from MEP Ehler  Protecting Israel and its researchers	04/06/2024	<a href="#">Ares(2024)4004263</a>	 240604_Letter COM Ivanova on Israel.pdf	<b>Replied by Cabinet</b>  Ares-2024-4004263_Letter Ivanova_MEP
Courrier de la part de la Rectrice de l'ULB, Prof. Schaus	31/05/2024	<a href="#">vdl-ca-12-2.cab staff.dir(2024)4041357</a>	 946.DG Innovation Recherche II.pdf	<b>Replied by the Cabinet</b>  Ares-2024-3919074_Letter Ivanova_prof.
Letter from the Rector of the University of Valencia sharing their position on Palestine and research funds for Israel	31/05/2024	<a href="#">vdl-ca-01.cab staff(2024)4477932</a>  Reg. number: <a href="#">Ares(2024)5674267</a>	 machine translation.pdf	<b>Reply prepared, Ares file launched</b>  Reply M- Vicenta Mestre Rectora.pdf 06/08/24
Letter from Jan Danckaert and  Flemish Interuniversity Council	30/05/2024	<a href="#">vdl-ca-12-2.cab staff(2024)4476560</a>	 027_2024 05 30 European_Commissi	<b>Replied by the Cabinet</b>  Ares-2024-3902087_Letter Ivanova_Danc

Member of cabinet in charge: SCHULTE Markus	Briefing contribution:  RTD 04
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