

**Question for written answer E-002186/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Malika Sorel (Pfe)

Subject: Funding of 400 projects in the Western Balkans

At the end of September, Commissioner Iliana Ivanova met ministers from the Western Balkans in Skopje¹ with a view to stepping up cooperation on education, research and innovation. She promised to support almost 400 research projects² under the European Research Area and the European Innovation Agenda.

This promise comes after the Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Skopje – which is close to Erdoğan³ – became part of the Erasmus+ Network in early 2024: a development the dean welcomed as an opportunity to make a name for his faculty in the field of Islamic thought. In addition, the Hamas-linked Islamic University of Gaziantep in Türkiye⁴, which is also part of the Erasmus+ Network, has recently been mired in scandal. These facts show how little attention the Commission pays when choosing its partners.

In the light of the above:

1. How has the EUR 140 million pledged for the Digital Innovation Hubs been distributed?
2. What are the 400 projects for which funding has been pledged?
3. Has the Commission taken these scandals into account with a view to withdrawing its support for partners that openly flout EU values? If so, which ones?

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¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_4983

² <https://agenceurope.eu/en/bulletin/article/13494/24>

³ <https://www.lejdd.fr/international/union-europeenne-une-faculte-de-theologie-islamique-rejoint-erasmus-143539#:~:text=Avec%20l'ind%C3%A9pendance%2C%20elle%20a,ses%20premiers%20%C3%A9tudiants%20en%201997>

⁴ <https://www.lejdd.fr/societe/erasmus-lunion-europeenne-sous-le-feu-des-critiques-pour-avoir-integre-une-universite-pro-hamas-150023>