

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002428/24
to the Commission
Catherine Griset (P/E)
(6 November 2024)**

Subject: Stopping Erasmus+ funding for universities with links to Islamists

The European press ⁽¹⁾ has revealed that Erasmus+ has been used to benefit Gaziantep University in Türkiye, whose rector publicly paid tribute to Ismail Haniyeh, leader of Hamas, an organisation listed as a terrorist organisation by the EU. The university's leadership has also called for a boycott of Israel and has taken part in pro-Hamas demonstrations.

On 12 September, the university announced that it was receiving EUR 250 000 under a research project fully funded by the Commission — funding that, in the meantime, has been suspended following revelation of this scandal.

1. Can the Commission say how much in total has been received by that university since it joined the Erasmus+ programme?
2. What measures will the Commission be taking in future to prevent any other institution that promotes Islamism, gender inequality, the persecution of religious minorities and terrorism from receiving Erasmus+ funding?

Submitted: 6.11.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(6 February 2025)**

Since it was created in 2018, the Gaziantep University in Türkiye has been awarded a total amount of EUR 157 746 via three Erasmus+ grant agreements, for sending students to avail of learning abroad opportunities.

The Commission is politically committed and legally bound to ensure that no one receives EU funding if they are involved in criminal or unethical practices, terrorism-related offences, or in other activities incompatible with EU values.

The Financial Regulation recast ⁽¹⁾ introduced an explicit ground under the early detection and exclusion system for excluding entities from receiving EU financial support, if they have engaged in activities contrary to the values on which the EU is founded ⁽²⁾, such as incitement to discrimination, hatred, or violence ⁽³⁾.

The Commission will immediately act on any evidence of such violations by specific entities, by taking adequate measures in line with the applicable legal framework, such as suspension of contract or payments, contract termination, recovery of funds, or even exclusion from EU financing.

Mechanisms framed by the EU Financial Regulation have been put in place to protect EU values, including by adding new provisions in the Erasmus+ documents and grant agreements.

The Commission will continue rigorous monitoring procedures through checks and follow-ups on compliance with EU values. This includes close collaboration with national agencies responsible for the implementation of actions under the Erasmus+ programme.

¹ <https://www.lejdd.fr/societe/erasmus-lunion-europeenne-sous-le-feu-des-critiques-pour-avoir-integre-une-universite-pro-hamas-150023>

⁽¹⁾ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/990fe2a6-8f52-11ef-a130-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

⁽²⁾ These values are enshrined in Article 2 Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

⁽³⁾ Article 138(1), point (c)(vi) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast), OJ L 2024/2509, 26.9.2024.