

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000895/25
to the Commission
Fabrice Leggeri (Pfe), Malika Sorel (Pfe), Catherine Griset (Pfe)
(3 March 2025)**

Subject: Cooperation between the Commission and a controversial Turkish agency

On 7 October 2024, exactly one year after the massacre in Israel, Gaziantep Islamic Science and Technology University, a member of the Erasmus+ programme, posted a message on its X account glorifying Hamas ⁽¹⁾.

Previously, the university's rector had already been accused of paying tribute ⁽²⁾ to 'martyr' Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas who was killed by an Israeli airstrike in July 2024.

On 13 December 2024, the Commission wrote ⁽³⁾ that it was 'currently investigating allegations made in the press, in cooperation with the national agency in Türkiye' and that it had 'asked the national agency to suspend the contracting process for the grant agreement on the recently selected cooperation project referred to in the Honourable Member's written question until there is more clarity on the matter.'

However, two months before the Commission's statements, the director of the Turkish national agency responsible for implementing Erasmus+ visited the University of Gaziantep and reiterated the Turkish state's support for it. He even publicly praised its rector ⁽⁴⁾.

1. Does the Commission see no contradiction in the fact that it is investigating a Turkish university accused of sympathising with Hamas 'in cooperation' with a national agency whose head has supported the university in question in the face of these accusations?

2. When did the Commission begin investigating in 'cooperation' with this agency?

Supporter ⁽⁵⁾

Submitted: 3.3.2025

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

The Commission implements 80% of the Erasmus+ ⁽⁶⁾ programme budget under indirect management, via national agencies designated by national authorities in each Member State or third country associated to the programme. Those agencies, including in Türkiye, are responsible for managing all phases of the project lifecycle. This includes maintaining communication with programme beneficiaries, monitoring project implementation and ensuring compliance with programme rules by the beneficiaries.

Hence, the Turkish national agency is rightly placed to provide the Commission with all the information necessary for the assessment of the Gaziantep Islamic Science and Technology University (GISTU) case and its responsibilities include cooperating with the Commission in looking into the use of the EU budget. Meanwhile, the Commission is committed to its obligation 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.

Therefore, the Commission is closely following the matter of GISTU and has been in contact with the Turkish national agency since October 2024. This included formal written communication and informal exchange of views on the national agency's approach to the case. A legislative and contractual framework is in place for preventing and following up on alleged conflicts of interest in the national agency. Finally, based on the analysis of the information gathered, the Commission will take, if need be, the adequate measures towards GISTU University, in line with the applicable legal framework, such as suspension of contract or payments, contract termination, recovery of funds or exclusion from EU financing.

⁽¹⁾ <https://x.com/gibtuni/status/1843258883352993960?s=12&t=BA8bZwb7Haunbvzca9wNhA>.

⁽²⁾ <https://www.lejdd.fr/societe/erasmus-lunion-europeenne-sous-le-feu-des-critiques-pour-avoir-integre-une-universite-pro-hamas-150023>.

⁽³⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-10-2024-001922-ASW_EN.html.

⁽⁴⁾ https://x.com/ulusalajans/status/1846524202175631726?t=TK_UuTMBsy-6q4xTJDuj7w&s=35.

⁽⁵⁾ This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Jean-Paul Garraud (Pfe).

⁽⁶⁾ <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>.