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Answer given by Ms Zaharieva
on behalf of the European Commission
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This project is a European Research Council (ERC) grant funded through Horizon 2020¹. A key role of the ERC in Horizon 2020 was to ensure that Europe produces world-class science. The ERC has funded since 2007 more than 17 000 projects and over 10 000 researchers, across physical sciences and engineering, life sciences, social sciences and humanities². This led to over 2 200 patents and other Intellectual Property Rights applications. More than 200 000 articles were published in scientific journals and the ERC grantees have been awarded with 14 Nobel Prizes, 7 Fields Medals, 11 Wolf Prizes and dozens of important prizes.

The European Qur'an' project is a multidisciplinary scientific research project that explores the complex historical interactions between Europe and the Islamic world. The main scientific objective of the project is to study the role of the Qur'an in European intellectual history, thought and self-image. The project has developed a wide-ranging database of primarily Western European texts dealing with the Qur'an in the long period from 1150-1850³.

This project is a major scholarly undertaking by a group of recognised academic institutions⁴. The project was awarded funding through an independent scientific peer-review process, with the selection based solely on scientific excellence⁵.

All ERC funded projects are monitored, requiring periodic scientific and financial reports, to ensure progress and compliance with all relevant EU legislation and ethical standards. Projects also undergo an independent ethics appraisal process⁶.

The funding of this project is in line with the Treaty on European Union⁷, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights⁸ and the objective to promote academic freedom.

¹ The EU's research and innovation funding programme from 2014-2020.

² Within the social sciences and humanities projects which represent around a fourth of ERC grants, topics span an extensive range of disciplines, including economics and finance, law and political science, sociology, psychology and linguistics, literature and philosophy, history and archaeology, geography and environmental studies, anthropology, arts and cultural and religious studies – the category in which falls the mentioned project.

³ For an overview of the project's results, please consult <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/810141/results>.

⁴ Led by the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), the University of Naples L'Orientale, University of Copenhagen, and University of Nantes, with additional academic partners across Europe and beyond.

⁵ For more details on the applicable evaluation procedure and criteria, please consult the ERC work programme 2018-2020, Commission C(2017) 5307 of 2 August 2017

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2018_2020/erc/h2020-wp18-erc_en.pdf.

⁶ See Annex A: The ethics review process, Commission Decision C(2017)4750 amending Decision C(2014)2454 on the European Research Council rules for submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the specific programme of Horizon 2020;

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/sgl/erc/h2020-erc-se-rules-amended2_en.pdf.

⁷ See Article 6: 'The Union recognises the rights, freedoms and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union...': https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF.

⁸ See Article 13: 'The arts and scientific research shall be free of constraint. Academic freedom shall be respected': https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf.