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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 ERC ensures that all funded projects undergo rigorous and independent scientific and ethics evaluations. These assessments prioritise scientific excellence and compliance with EU legislation and ethical standards. The project EuQu³ is a multidisciplinary research project that explores the complex historical interactions between Europe and the Islamic world. The main scientific objective is to study the role of the Qur'an in European intellectual history, thought and self-image. The project was selected solely based on its excellence followed by a strict ethical scrutiny⁴. No evidence of financial misconduct or inappropriate affiliations has been found. Ongoing monitoring upholds compliance with the original grant agreement and with EU legislation generally.

The ERC funds projects based solely on their scientific excellence, via independent expert evaluations. The EuQu project's objectives are solely scholarly, not motivated or linked to any specific political agenda. The project contributes to nuanced scientific discourse, in line with Europe's long tradition of academic freedom and scientific inquiry.

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 'The European Qur'an. Islamic Scripture in European Culture and Religion 1150-1850'.

⁴ 'Annex A: The ethics review process', Commission Decision C(2017)4750 amending Decision C(2014)2454 on the ERC 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.