

EN

E-004975/2025

Answer given by Ms Zaharieva
on behalf of the European Commission
(20.3.2026)

EU research and innovation programmes operate within the objectives, scope and focus of their legal framework, in particular Regulation (EU) 2021/695 establishing Horizon Europe¹, the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe² and the related work programmes. Within this regulatory framework, EU-funded research actions are selected according to the award criteria laid down in Article 28 (1) of the Horizon Europe Regulation: excellence, impact and quality and efficiency of the implementation.

The Horizon Europe Regulation requires integrating the gender dimension into research and innovation content across its funding³, including Cluster 1 ‘Health’ topics⁴. Considering the gender dimension is a methodological quality requirement under the ‘excellence’ award criterion, enhancing the scientific robustness and relevance of research. Biological sex as well as gender can be linked to the incidence and the prevalence of certain diseases and conditions and are therefore integral to medical research.

The EU4Health Regulation⁵ recognises that according to Article 8 of the Treaty of Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in all its activities, the EU shall aim to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality between men and women⁶.

EU action in the field of health research and innovation aims to contribute to a high level of human health protection and to address persistent health inequalities, in line with the European Charter of Fundamental Rights⁷, Article 179 TFEU and Regulations (EU) 2021/695 and (EU) 2021/522. Reducing health- related inequalities between women and men, including by addressing long-standing evidence gaps affecting women’s health, continues to be a key objective supported through EU-funded research.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/695/oj/eng>.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2021/764/oj/eng>.

³ Cf. Article 7 (6) of Regulation (EU) 2021/695, the Horizon Europe Programme Guide: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/programme-guide_horizon_en.pdf and Research and Innovation Actions and Innovation Actions application forms: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/temp-form/af/af_he-ria-ia_en.pdf.

⁴ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/cluster-1-health_en.

⁵ Regulation (EU) 2021/522: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0522>.

⁶ Gender equality, as well as rights and equal opportunities for all, and the mainstreaming of those objectives should be taken into account and promoted throughout the assessment, preparation, implementation and monitoring of the Programme.

⁷ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular Articles 21 and 35: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>.