

EN

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Answer given by Ms Zaharieva

On behalf of the European Commission

(1.6.2026)

The respect for fundamental rights is a founding principle set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.

The EU safeguards fundamental rights in research *inter alia* through the ethics review process that operates within the framework of Horizon Europe (HE)¹. All projects undergo a rigorous ethics review process, ensuring compliance with ethical standards and respect for human rights. The gender equality provisions of HE are anchored in the legal basis of the programme, which commits to ensuring the effective promotion of equal opportunities for all and the implementation of gender mainstreaming, including the integration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content².

The project AEQUITAS³ has been funded under the topic ‘Tackling gender, race and other biases in AI’ of a HE Cluster 4 call in the 2021-2022 Work Programme⁴. Work programmes and most notably the HE calls are shaped through inclusive consultation with Member States, stakeholders, and experts, and are aligned with the HE general and specific objectives in the basic act and the operational objectives in the Council Decision on the Specific Programme⁵, including gender equality promotion.

¹ See Article 19 of Regulation (EU) 2021/695,
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02021R0695-20251224>.

² Article 7(6) Of Regulation (EU) 2021/695.

³ Assessment and engineering of equitable, unbiased, impartial and trustworthy AI systems,
<https://doi.org/10.3030/101070363>.

⁴ A human-centred and ethical development of digital and industrial technologies 2021 (HORIZON-CL4-2021-HUMAN-01), <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/HORIZON-CL4-2021-HUMAN-01-24>.

⁵ Council Decision (EU) 2021/764 of 10 May 2021, OJ L 167I, 12.5.2021, pp. 1–80,
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2021/764/oj/eng>.