

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001003/26
to the Commission
Ilhan Kyuchyuk (Renew)
(11 March 2026)**

Subject: Digitalisation and innovation in special education

1. How does the Commission ensure that when evaluating innovative projects under programmes such as EIC Pathfinder Open, appropriate experts with interdisciplinary expertise are included, particularly when projects combine advanced technologies with educational, psychological and social objectives, including projects aimed at individuals with neurodevelopmental needs or special educational and social needs?
2. To what extent do evaluations under the EIC and other programmes take into account the social and ethical impact of AI-based technological solutions on individuals with neurodevelopmental needs or special educational and social needs, and how does the Commission ensure that these evaluations are transparent and consistent?
3. How does the Commission assess the originality, international patent potential, and global market potential of innovations targeting neurodiversity and social innovation, and how is the risk of the EU falling behind non-EU countries in strategic AI technologies managed?

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**Answer given by Ms Zaharieva on behalf of the European Commission
(8 June 2026)**

The Commission ensures inclusion of appropriate multidisciplinary expertise in the evaluation of proposals under programmes such as the European Innovation Council (EIC) by appointing independent external experts covering the relevant scientific, technological and socioeconomic domains, including education, psychology and neurodevelopmental needs where relevant.

Experts are selected from dedicated pools, trained and monitored to ensure compliance with rules and avoidance of bias. Panels are composed to ensure diversity and expertise aligned with the proposal content.

Evaluation criteria are defined in the annual EIC work programme and include assessment of societal and ethical aspects, including for AI-based solutions, under the impact criterion.

This covers potential benefits, risks and compliance with ethical standards. Transparency and consistency are ensured through standardised procedures like calibration of experts, quality checks and evaluation committees which review and finalise scores.

Originality, intellectual property strategy and global market potential are assessed using the award criteria defined in the EIC work programme; this includes novelty, breakthrough nature, market development and scalability.

Targeted calls and strategic monitoring of global trends contribute to reducing dependencies and strengthening the EU's position in strategic AI technologies.

Central to the Commission's strategy is also the Resource for AI Science in Europe (RAISE) ⁽¹⁾ and the European Frontier AI Initiative ⁽²⁾, which seek to pool resources and talent to bolster the EU's AI ecosystem through three key pillars: strategic research and innovation, expert consultation and support for the development of highly capable European AI models.

⁽¹⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/our-digital-future/european-ai-science-strategy/raise-resource-ai-science-europe_en.

⁽²⁾ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/funding/turning-strategy-action-commission-launches-frontier-ai-grand-challenge>.