

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002066/26
to the Commission
Matjaž Nemec (S&D)
(19 May 2026)**

Subject: Award of Horizon Europe grant to the Israel Antiquities Authority (project 101167454) despite Article 2 breaches

In June 2025, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy carried out a review of Israel's compliance with Article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement and determined a breach. On 29 July 2025, the Commission proposed the partial suspension of the Association Agreement with Israel and of its participation in Horizon Europe ⁽¹⁾. However, the Commission has not yet triggered Article 14 of the Horizon Europe Grant Agreement in relation to Israel or entities originating from Israel.

Despite the review findings, on 19 December 2025 the Commission awarded a grant to a consortium, including the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) — a state agency, under Horizon Europe project 101167454, with an estimated EU contribution of EUR 153 750 ⁽²⁾. The IAA has historically faced criticism for its role in archaeological activities within the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, which Israel de facto annexed, constituting a grave violation of international law.

1. Why did the Commission award a grant to the IAA despite its own conclusion that Israel is in breach of Article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement?
2. What specific mechanisms or 'ethical screenings' were applied to project 101167454 to ensure that no IAA activities funded by the EU take place in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, in compliance with Commission Guidelines 2013/C 205/05 and international law, including International Court of Justice advisory opinions on Palestine?

Submitted: 19.5.2026

**Answer given by Ms Zaharieva on behalf of the European Commission
(5 October 2026)**

While the Commission recognises the breaches of human rights by the State of Israel, this does not extend to individual Israeli entities, and the actions or behaviour of the State of Israel cannot automatically be considered attributable to its entities participating in Horizon Europe grants.

Thus, termination of participation based solely on the ground of nationality would amount to discrimination prohibited under the EU-Israel Association Agreement ⁽³⁾.

At the level of Horizon Europe implementation, several mechanisms are put in place to prevent that EU funds are used for activities that could be unethical or contrary to relevant national, international or EU law.

The Horizon Europe project 'Uncovering Lost Knowledge from the Ancient Library of Herculaneum: Overcoming Damage and Reviving the Human Experience using Physical Evidence, AI, and the Structuring of Diverse Data' ⁽²⁾ underwent an ethics review procedure ⁽³⁾ carried out by independent experts to ensure that all planned research activities conform to ethical standards and relevant laws and obtained ethical clearance.

The eligibility rules as set out in the 2013 Commission guidelines ⁽⁴⁾ also referred to in Recital 71 of the Horizon Europe Regulation ⁽⁵⁾ are consistently applied, including to this project, as part of the grant applications evaluation process.

In addition, compliance with the eligibility rules including those set out in the 2013 Commission guidelines is required throughout the lifetime of a project.

¹ [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM\(2025\)890&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM(2025)890&lang=en).

² <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101167454>.

⁽¹⁾ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2022/323\(10\)/oj/eng](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2022/323(10)/oj/eng).

⁽²⁾ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101167454>.

⁽³⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/information-for-applicants_he-erc-syg_en.pdf and https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/erc-rules-for-submission-and-evaluation_he-erc_en.pdf.

⁽⁴⁾ Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC_2013_205_R_0009_01.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/695/oj>.

Under the guidelines, the activities of Israeli entities will be considered eligible only if they do not take place in the occupied territories, either partially or entirely ⁽⁶⁾.

⁽⁶⁾ The requirement on the eligibility of activities under a specific project, refers to the physical location of these concrete activities carried out under the respective project (as per point 12 a) of the guidelines). The location of any other activities, which are carried out by this entity outside this concrete project are irrelevant. In addition, it is to be noted that the requirement on the place of establishment does not apply to Israeli ministries and government agencies or authorities and therefore, in the context of this specific project, this does not apply to the Israel Antiquities Authority albeit the activities it carries out must still be outside the occupied territories.