

Date: 15 December 2021

Dear Vice-President/High Representative Borrell,

The undersigned Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) write to convey concern about the [formalisation](#) of the Horizon Europe agreement with the State of Israel. For 25 years, Israel has enjoyed unconditional support from collaborations with the European Union (EU) in research and innovation - despite its [well-documented record](#) of violations and breaches of international human rights and humanitarian law.

Association with Horizon Europe is one of the closest forms of cooperation in research and innovation between the EU and non-EU countries. Such research and innovation, however, cannot come at the expense of the respect for human rights and the [rule of international law](#).

The vision of Horizon Europe is to create “[a sustainable, fair and prosperous future for people and planet based on European values](#)”. Nonetheless, Israel’s inhumane acts targeting Palestinians have been characterised by international and European experts as amounting to internationally wrongful acts of [apartheid and persecution](#), requiring obligations of non-recognition by Third States and an obligation to bring the internationally wrongful act to an end.

Israel’s exploitation of a captive civilian population to develop technology that is [later used to surveil human rights defenders](#) both within the Palestinian context and around the world, undermines the right to privacy and the integrity of the international legal framework. Recent revelations around the use of cyber surveillance technology such as Pegasus spyware against Palestinian human rights defenders and the source of such technology should be investigated and addressed.

Meanwhile, in 2021, Israel continued to advance the construction and expansion of illegal settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Far from reversing the unlawful colonisation and de facto and de jure annexation of the occupied Palestinian territory, Israel has [accelerated](#) the colonisation creating 300 illegal settlements and outposts and illegally transferring in nearly 700,000 settlers.

Incidents of [Israeli-settler violence](#) against Palestinians have escalated, [backed by the Israeli Occupying Forces and the State of Israel](#). In 2021, Al-Haq documented that 318 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces, including [72 children](#). At the same time, Israel [unlawfully exploits and destroys Palestinian natural resources](#), thereby substantially [contributing](#) to the climate crisis and infringing on Palestinians basic rights, including the right to self-determination and permanent sovereignty over natural resources.

Furthermore, Israel has escalated its attacks against Palestinian civil society, more recently through the [unjustified designation](#) of six leading organisations as “terrorist” and unlawful, aiming to isolate them, endangering the viability of the Palestinian human rights movement and civil society - key to any democratic and inclusive society.

In 2020, in response to Israel's illegal settlement enterprise, the UN released a Database of companies active in the illegal settlements. Further, in response to the escalating and aggravated attacks on Palestinians and their property, the [International Criminal Court](#) in March 2021, opened an investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Israeli occupied Palestinian territory. In July 2021, after the worst military offensive on the Gaza Strip in recent years, and widespread attacks on Palestinians across the West Bank and in Israel, the UN Human Rights Council mandated a [Commission of Inquiry](#) with expanded competence to examine the decades-long violations against the Palestinian people and the root causes.

It is against this backdrop, that we urge the European Commission to reconsider and freeze Israel's participation in Horizon Europe, until Israel guarantees compliance with its obligations under international law towards Palestinians and upholds human rights of all those under its effective control.

Through the various clusters, Horizon Europe [expects](#) to contribute to the protection of human rights and the rule of law. No state should be exempted or treated as an exception when it comes to implementing and applying international norms and the common European values. As such, we cannot, in good conscience, allow for the Horizon agreement with the State of Israel to proceed unchallenged.

We further call upon the European Commission and relevant EU stakeholders to carry out a full inquiry into if and how the Horizon association with Israel has been directly or indirectly used to develop spyware technology, namely Pegasus and Candiru.

Sincerely,

1. Rosa D'Amato - MEP, Greens/EFA
2. Alviina Alametsa – MEP, Greens/EFA
3. Sirpa Pietikäinen – MEP, EPP
4. Tanja Fajon – MEP, S&D
5. Cesar Luena – MEP, S&D
6. Guliano Pisapia - MEP, S&D
7. Maria Arena - MEP, S&D
8. Evin Incir – MEP, S&D
9. Andrea Cozzolino – MEP, S&D
10. Isabel Santos – MEP, S&D
11. Clare Daly - MEP, The Left
12. Mick Wallace - MEP, The Left
13. Irena Joveva, MEP Renew
14. Francisco Guerreiro, MEP, Greens/EFA

15. Idoia Villanueva Ruiz, MEP, The Left
16. Karen Melchior, MEP, Renew
17. Martin Buschmann, MEP, Non attached
18. Piernicola Pedicini, MEP, Greens/EFA
19. Marc Johan Botenga, MEP, The Left
20. Ioannis Lagos, MEP, Non attached
21. Ignazio Corrao, MEP, Greens/EFA
22. Leila Chaibi, MEP, The Left
23. Jakop Dalunde, MEP, Greens/EFA
24. Alice Kuhnke, MEP, Greens/EFA
25. Par Holmgren, MEP, Greens/EFA
26. Eleonora Evi, MEP, Greens/EFA
27. Chris MacManus. MEP, The Left
28. José Gusmao. MEP, The Left
29. Marisa Matias, MEP, The Left
30. Younous Omarjee, MEP, The Left
31. Mounir Satouri, MEP, Greens/EFA
32. Salima Yenbou, MEP, Greens/EFA
33. Tineke Strik, MEP, Greens/EFA
34. Luke Ming Flanagan, MEP, The Left
35. Ozlem Demirel, MEP, The Left
36. Claude Gruffat, MEP, Greens/EFA
37. Fabio Massimo Castaldo, MEP, Non attached
38. Ivan Vilibor Sinčić, MEP, Non attached
39. Javier Nart, MEP, Renew
40. Philippe Lamberts, MEP, Greens/EFA
41. Ernest Urtasun, MEP, Greens/EFA
42. Kateřina Konečná, MEP, The Left
43. Saskia Bricmont, MEP, Greens/EFA
44. Sara Matthieu, MEP, Greens/EFA
45. Nikolaj Villumsen, MEP, The Left
46. João Pimenta Lopes, MEP, The Left
47. Grace O' Sullivan, MEP, Greens/EFA
48. Tilly Metz, MEP, Greens/EFA

49. Patrick Breyer, MEP, Greens/EFA
50. Manu Pineda, MEP, The Left
51. Sira Rego, MEP, The Left
52. François Alfonsi, MEP, Greens/EFA
53. Sabrina Pignedoli, MEP, Non attached
54. Malin Björk , MEP, The Left
55. Pietro Bartolo, MEP, S&D
56. Miguel Urban Crespo, MEP, The Left
57. Klemen Grošelj, MEP, Renew
58. Ville Niinistö, MEP, Greens/EFA
59. Milan Brglez, MEP, Greens/EFA
60. Caroline Roose, MEP, Greens/EFA