

## ADVICE ON CURRENT COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN GHENT UNIVERSITY AND ISRAELI ENTITIES

30 MAY 2024

Following the further escalation of the war in Gaza and the grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law during this war, the Committee on Human Rights Policy and Dual-Use Research was asked to reassess the ongoing institutional cooperation agreements that involve one or more Israeli partners.

The Ghent University human rights policy aims to prevent Ghent University from violating human rights, Ghent University research results from being misused later for human rights violations and Ghent University from cooperating with organisations (academic institutions, companies, etc.) involved in serious or systematic human rights violations.

Ghent University has 18 ongoing multi-partner research collaborations involving one or more Israeli partners, all funded through Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe. These include research on autism, Alzheimer's disease, water purification and sustainable agriculture. In addition, Ghent University participates in one multi-partner educational collaboration with an Israeli partner, funded through Erasmus+, in the field of economics and law. The list of the collaborations and advice of the Committee on Human Rights Policy has been annexed to this message. No risks of human rights violations have been identified related to the project itself.

Ghent University does not want to be involved in the grave human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law observed in Gaza. Therefore, Ghent University refuses to cooperate with partners involved in these serious human rights violations.

The International Court of Justice's interlocutory rulings indicate very serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by the Israeli government in Gaza. The Committee therefore believes that collaborations with Israeli government organisations are highly problematic in the light of university's human rights policy.

In addition, the Committee on Human Rights Policy notes that there is a high degree of interdependence between many of the Israeli academic institutions with which it cooperates, on the one hand, and the Israeli government, army and/or security services, on the other. Academic institutions develop technology for the security services that is later misused for human rights violations, and provide training to soldiers and security services, who later misuse this knowledge for human rights violations. Because of the nature, duration and scale of the human rights violations by the Israeli government, and because of the high degree of interdependence of many Israeli universities with their government, the Commission considers that there is a high risk that these universities are also implicated in human

rights violations. Therefore, the Commission considers cooperation with these academic institutions problematic in the light of the university's human rights policy.

The Committee recommends that for ongoing projects where one or more partners are involved in human rights violations, the necessary steps should be taken within the consortium to see if cooperation with the Israeli partner concerned can be discontinued. If this is not the case, Ghent University should take the necessary steps to withdraw from the project itself. Of course, this should be done with the utmost care for the researchers and promoters involved, while respecting contractual obligations.

With regard to some of Ghent University's non-academic partners, the Committee could not establish their involvement in serious human rights violations. Ongoing collaborations with these partners can continue. In one case, further research will shed light on the links between the Israeli partner and the government. If both would be intertwined, the Committee recommends taking the necessary steps to end the cooperation with that partner as well.

The participation of countries in European research programmes is grounded in the idea that participating member states respect and protect human rights, as mentioned, inter alia, in the cooperation agreement between the European Union and Israel. Given the scale, duration and nature of human rights violations by the Israeli government, the Committee on Human Rights Policy therefore recommends that a plea be made through the appropriate channels to suspend Israel's participation in European research and education programmes. Ghent University, along with other European universities, could take on a leading role in this.

Institutional cooperations with organisations in Israel: advice CMDUO 30/05/2024						
Acronym	Title	Start	End	Name Israeli partner	Result human rights impact assessment	Discontinue ongoing cooperation?
<b>Multi-partner research collaborations (EU funding)</b>						
AIMS-2-Trials	Autism Innovative Medicine Studies	1/06/2018	31/05/2025	Teva Pharmaceuticals	Positive advice	No
INTENSE	particle physics experiments at the high intensity frontier, from new physics to spin-	1/01/2019	31/12/2024	Tel Aviv University	Negative advice	Yes
Fish-AI	Developing an Artificial Intestine for the sustainable farming of healthy fish	1/04/2019	31/12/2024	Israel Oceanographic and Limnological Research	Negative advice	Yes
SMART PROTEIN	Smart Protein for a Changing World. Future-proof alternative terrestrial protein sources for human nutrition encouraging environment regeneration, processing Lactic acid and biosurfactants sourced from sustainable agricultural and industrial (food) WASTE feedstocks as novel FUNCTIONal ingredients for consumer products	1/01/2020	30/06/2024	Equi-nom Ltd.	Positive advice	No
WASTE2FUNC	Understanding microbiomes of the ruminant holobiont	1/06/2021	30/11/2024	Triple W Ltd.	Positive advice	No
HoloRuminant	Mainstreaming Ecological Restoration of freshwater-related ecosystems in a Landscape context: INnovation, upscaling and transformation	1/10/2021	30/09/2025	Agricultural Research Organisation - Volcani Centre Ben-Gurion University of the Negev	Negative advice Negative advice	Yes Yes
MERLIN	Targeting Circadian Clock Dysfunction in Alzheimer's Disease	1/03/2023	28/02/2027	Kishon Drainage and River Authority Tel Aviv University	Negative advice	Yes
MERLIN	Protecting urban aquatic ecosystems to promote One Health	1/01/2023	31/12/2026	Holon Institute of Technology	Negative advice	Yes
TClock4AD	ScaleAgData	1/01/2023	31/12/2026	Migal Galilee Reseach Institute	Negative advice	Yes
OneAquaHealth	In vitro 3D cell models of healthy and OSTEOpathological ageing bone tissue for implantation and drug testing in a multidisciplinary NETwork	1/01/2023	31/12/2026	Tel Aviv University	Negative advice	Yes
ScaleAgData	International Study for Treatment of Childhood Relapsed ALL 2020	1/05/2023	30/04/2028	Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center	Conditional positive advice	No
OSTEONET	Biodiversity indicators and the provision of soil biodiversity-based Ecosystem Services to build better land management solutions that effectively implement the EU Soil Strategy	1/06/2023	31/05/2028	Agricultural Research Organisation - Volcani Centre	Negative advice	Yes
IntReALL 2020	Preventing obesity through Biologically and bEhaviorally Tailored inTERventions for	1/11/2023	31/10/2027	Weizmann Institute of Science	Negative advice	Yes
SOB4ES	European Research Infrastructure for Marine Bioprospecting	1/01/2024	31/12/2026	Tel Aviv University	Negative advice	Yes
BETTER4U	A Roadmap for Industrial Symbiosis Standardisation for Efficient Resource Sharing	1/01/2024	31/12/2026	Enspire Science Ltd.	Positive advice	No
EUREMAP	Adaptive microcombs for innovative connectivity in datacenter applications and	1/08/2024	31/07/2027	Mellanox Technologies	Positive advice	No
RISERS	Safe Wheat Agriculture Towards Sustainable Health: Innovative Sensing Techniques, and Holistic Spectroscopy Traceability for Improved Soil, plant Health and safe wheat	1/10/2024	30/09/2028	Tel Aviv University Weizmann Institute of Science	Negative advice Negative advice	Yes Yes
AMICA	<b>Multi-partner educational collaborations (EU funding)</b>					
WHEATWATCHER	European Master in Law and Economics	1/09/2022	31/10/2028	University of Haifa	Negative advice	Yes
EMLE						