

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**European academics protest involvement of Israeli arms companies in EU research programs**

More than 250 academics from 14 different European countries have written to the European Commission urging it to take action to prevent Israeli arms companies and other companies involved in abuse of Palestinian human rights from participating in EU funded research consortia.

[The letter to EU research commissioner Maire Geoghegan-Quinn](#) argues that the involvement of Israeli companies that help Israel violate international law in EU funded research programs “undermines both the reputation of these programs and the stated goals of the European Union and its member states”.

Signatories to the letter include Gérard Toulouse, a member of the French Academy of Science, Malcolm Levitt, a member of the UK Royal Society, and renowned philosopher Slavoj Zizek.

Israeli companies are granted access to EU research funding mechanisms such as the Seventh Framework Program (FP7) as part of the EU-Israel Association Agreement. However, the EU has come under fire for allowing companies like Ahava DSL, an Israeli cosmetics company based in an illegal settlement, to participate in EU funded projects and receive public money. Elbit Systems, an arms company that helps Israel build a wall on occupied Palestinian territory that was ruled illegal by the International Court of Justice in 2004, also receives EU funding.

European Commission President José Manuel Barroso is currently in Israel to discuss its participation in EU programs. [Palestinian civil society organisations have written to him](#) appealing for him to take action to ensure Israeli participation in European Union programs does not contribute to Israeli violations of international law.

Jonathan Rosenhead, an Emeritus Professor at the London School of Economics and the head of the British Committee for Universities in Palestine, said, “Universities across Europe have entered into research consortia funded by the EU in good faith, only to find that their Israeli partners are involved grave breaches of international law.”

“The open letter that we are publishing today is a reflection of the frustration within the academic community at “the failure of the European Union to exclude Israeli companies and institutions that violate international law from European

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In January, leading UK scientists, the film directors Mike Leigh and Ken Loach and the National Union of Students (NUS) hit the news with their criticisms of the participation of a London university and the Natural History Museum in a joint project with Ahava DSL. Both King's College London and the Natural History Museum have since expressed their regret at their involvement in the project.

There are ongoing campaigns at more than a dozen European universities against collaboration with Ahava DSL and Israeli military companies.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. [Full text of the letter and list of signatories.](#)
2. For more information on Israeli participation in EU funded research consortia and profiles of the companies involved, see:

<http://www.bdsmovement.net/files/2011/08/STW-research-green-paper-consultation.pdf>

www.statewatch.org/news/2010/nov/russell-tribunal--on-palestine-ben-hayes.pdf
3. [Letter that Palestinian civil society has written to European Commission President José Manuel Barroso,](#)
4. For more on the relationship between Ahava DSL and King's College London and the Natural History Museum, see

www.independent.co.uk/news/science/natural-history-museum-attacked-over-links-to-illegal-israeli-company-6290705.html
5. In October 2011, Palestinian academics and civil society organisations called for an immediate end to all research collaboration with Israeli military companies and all Israeli research institutions that are involved in violating international law and human rights.

<http://www.bdsmovement.net/2011/dont-collaborate-with-apartheid-8202>