

**Subject:** ERC Grant and Ethical Concerns Regarding Dr Harry Pettit

Dear Ms Moreau, Director of the European Research Council Executive Agency,

I am writing in my capacity as a Member of the European Parliament to draw your attention to recent developments concerning the ERC Starting Grant awarded to Dr Harry Pettit for his project MONEYINFRA in [September 2025](#) (EUR 1.5 million).

Following public statements supporting EU-designated terrorist organisations, glorifying violence against Israel and Jewish communities, and disseminating antisemitic and conspiratorial narratives, Radboud University Nijmegen terminated its contract with Dr Pettit on [10 November 2025](#).

On 26 February 2026, the Vrije Universiteit Brussels (VUB) announced it would host Dr Pettit's ERC-funded research. Following this announcement, he published [further antisemitic and conspiratorial statements](#) while praising the late Ayatollah Khamenei. On [1 March 2026](#), the VUB confirmed it would not proceed with his appointment, citing that these statements breached its institutional and ethical values.

These developments follow concerns previously raised in [Parliamentary Question E-000409/2026](#). At this stage, two universities have independently concluded that Dr Pettit's conduct is incompatible with their academic and ethical standards.

In light of Article 14, EU Ethics and Values, of the ERC Model Grant Agreement and the corrective measures under Articles 28–32, we note that the Commission's [Guidance on Grant Agreements](#) provides clear precedents. Page 186 identifies a breach of Article 14 where a person with representation powers makes public statements discriminating on religious grounds. Page 308 illustrates EU-initiated termination under Article 32 for grave professional misconduct, including antisemitic statements calling for the destruction of a state, as conduct undermining professional integrity and EU values.

Given the parallels between these examples and Dr Pettit's publicly documented conduct, including the termination of institutional affiliations by two universities, we would welcome clarification on the following points:

- Given that two universities have independently concluded that Dr Pettit's conduct is incompatible with their academic and ethical standards, does ERCEA agree that there are sufficient grounds to withdraw or terminate the ERC grant? If not, could you clarify on which legal or factual grounds this assessment is based?
- Is ERCEA currently assessing whether these developments warrant the opening of an ethics review or other follow-up measures under Article 14 and Articles 28–32 of the Grant Agreement?
- How ERCEA ensures that decisions in such cases align with the [EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life \(2021-2030\)](#), in particular Pillar III on education, research and Holocaust remembrance, as well as with Horizon Europe's objectives and obligations in this regard?

We would be grateful for any clarification you can provide on how ERCEA intends to proceed.

Your sincerely,

MEP Bart Groothuis (Renew Europe)

Co-signed by:

MEP Sander Smit (EPP)

MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen (ECR)