

EN
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Answer given by Mr Avramopoulos
on behalf of the Commission
(13.3.2015)

The Commission cannot confirm the sums suggested by the Honourable Member for funding of research related to drone technology. Within the Seventh Framework Programme Security Research EUR 17,7 million is allocated to drone related research.

It is recalled that research funded by Horizon 2020 (H2020) should fulfil the requirements stipulated in the Regulation establishing H2020¹, specifying that research and innovation activities carried out under H2020 shall have an exclusive focus on civil applications. Research motivated by military applications is excluded from funding by H2020. Applicants have to address potential dual-use concerns in their proposals.

Moreover, any proposal for funding under H2020, as was the case in the Seventh Framework Programme, has to pass several checks².

Proposals contravening ethical principles or any applicable legislation may be excluded from the evaluation, selection and award procedures at any time³. In particular, for drone technologies, like for all dual-use technologies, the ethics review process requires the compatibility with the Community regime for the control of exports, transfer, brokering and transit of dual-use items⁴ as well as with the relevant international norms⁵.

Lastly, it is recalled that, according to the Regulation on implementing powers⁶, the Commission makes available to the European Parliament (and the Council) via the register of committee⁷, proceedings and information on draft implementing acts on the funding of research projects, including research projects related to drones, under the Seventh Framework Programme and H2020.

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0104:0173:EN:PDF>

² The first step consists of a thorough scientific and technical evaluation performed by independent experts. Evaluators assess proposals on their relevance for and exclusive focus on civil applications, and will declare the proposal ineligible or out of scope if this criteria is not fulfilled. The second is an ethics review for those proposals earmarked as ethically sensitive (including human rights, privacy aspects).

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0081:0103:EN:PDF>

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:134:0001:0269:en:PDF>

⁵ In addition, the participants are invited to appoint in their proposal an independent ethics adviser/ethics board, with relevant ethics and security expertise, to carry out a risk-benefit analysis of the intended research and to suggest appropriate safeguards to cover security risks (during, and beyond, the lifetime of the project) and training for researchers proposers. When it is considered necessary by the ethics experts, the appointment of such an advisor/advisory board becomes, further to the ethics review, a contractual obligation.

In some sensitive cases, other safeguards might be imposed to minimise the risk of misuse (e.g. publication of the research results only under certain conditions).

It should also be stressed that the mid and long term impact of (potential) dual-use technologies developed for civil applications is a question that is mainly beyond the research policy sphere.

⁶ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32011R0182>

⁷ FP7 Security Research projects associated with drones have been transmitted via the Comitology Register in 2010 on 21 May, 11 June and 12 November; in 2011 on 3 November; in 2012 on 18 January, 13 April; in 2013 on 22 February, 31 October; in 2013 on 23 October