

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001867/24
to the Commission
Jordan Bardella (PPE)
(30 September 2024)**

Subject: Financing the Al Sharq Forum using European funds

It is vital, today, that we ask questions about the use of European funds, which, far from protecting our citizens, sometimes seem to be used to finance organisations that are dangerously close to Islamism.

The case of the Al Sharq Forum is revealing. This organisation, with close ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, issued a call on 2 August for homage to be paid to Ismail Haniyeh ⁽¹⁾, the leader of Hamas, an organisation recognised as a terrorist entity by the EU itself. However, between 2021 and 2023, the same EU paid EUR 110 279 to that organisation through the Erasmus+ programme.

1. How can the Commission justify funding for an organisation that is close to Salafist movements and which claims to support organisations described by the EU as terrorists? What criteria are used to justify the payment of such grants?
2. What specific action is being taken to prevent European taxpayers' money from being used to support entities that spread ideologies contrary to our values and that threaten the security of our nations?

Submitted: 30.9.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(17 December 2024)**

The Commission is politically committed and legally bound to ensuring that persons and entities do not receive EU financial support if they are involved in criminal, unethical practices, offences related to terrorist activities or in other activities that are incompatible with EU values ⁽¹⁾. EU provisions allow to take restrictive measures against those who support, facilitate or enable violent actions.

Such measures have been taken, for example, in respect of persons, groups, entities and bodies who provide support to Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad ⁽²⁾.

The recent Financial Regulation recast ⁽³⁾ introduced an explicit ground under the Early Detection and Exclusion System ⁽⁴⁾ for excluding entities from receiving EU funds in case of activities contrary to the values on which the EU is founded, such as incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence ⁽⁵⁾.

The 'Sharq Forum Derneği' ⁽⁶⁾ is currently not receiving any funding under Erasmus+. It did in the past, as coordinator of four Erasmus+ projects for a total amount ⁽⁷⁾ of EUR 85 173 in 2021 and EUR 18 755 in 2020 ⁽⁸⁾.

The regular monitoring activities carried out during the project implementation period did not result in any issues being detected. As these projects have been completed and this organisation has no longer contractual relations within the programme, there is no legal ground to take action vis-à-vis the projects in the specific context described (alleged facts occurred in August 2024).

The Commission can take action in the future, should it become aware of any evidence in this respect, by implementing any appropriate measures against unreliable entities, including by excluding them from EU financing.

¹ <https://x.com/SharqYouth/status/1819454212763242596>

⁽¹⁾ These values are enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

⁽²⁾ Also listed as on <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02024D0385-20240119>

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast).

⁽⁴⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/how-it-works/annual-lifecycle/implementation/anti-fraud-measures/edes/edes-database_en

⁽⁵⁾ Article 138(1), point (c)(vi) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509.

⁽⁶⁾ <https://www.sharqforum.org/>

⁽⁷⁾ Shared with project partners.

⁽⁸⁾ These figures are those granted by the national agency to the entire consortium managing each project after finalisation.