

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000265/25
to the Commission
François-Xavier Bellamy (PPE)
(22 January 2025)**

Subject: The Grand Mosque of Paris has a monopoly on EU companies' exports to Algeria

According to press reports, the Grand Mosque of Paris has sole control of halal certification under an agreement with the Algerian Government. The agreement forces EU producers to pay money to a commercial company owned by the mosque's leaders if they want to export any products, including non-food products, to Algeria. This raises a number of serious questions.

A private company holding such a monopoly is clearly completely unacceptable under EU law. An estimate based on the pricing system used puts the annual cost to EU farmers and industry at several million euros. This levy does not bring any added value or even involve any actual act of certification — it is simply an unmonitored moneymaker. As the Algerian Government, in conjunction with the Grand Mosque of Paris, is increasing its threats and acts of hostility towards France, the fact that this source of funding exists is also concerning from a security point of view.

1. Has the Commission, as the guarantor of transparency in EU trade, investigated this clear distortion and its consequences? Does it know how these funds are used?
2. On 11 December 2024, the Commission was represented at a meeting on this issue at the Grand Mosque of Paris; what was the outcome of that meeting?
3. What criteria would lead the Commission to consider this certification requirement to be a violation of the EU-Algeria Agreement?

Submitted: 22.1.2025

**Answer given by Ms Šuica on behalf of the European Commission
(22 April 2025)**

Algeria has in principle a right to establish standards for products sold within its territory and to select the conformity assessment bodies (CABs) it deems appropriate.

This includes regulations on the use of specific labels related to compliance with religious requirements, such as Halal. However, Algeria must ensure that the selected CABs are able to conduct reliable assessments, avoid unnecessary delays and charge reasonable fees. In that regard, Algeria has decided to recognise only a single CAB within the EU (Grand Mosquée de Paris).

The Commission has received feedback that there are important certification delays and high fees. The Commission is actively discussing these issues with the Algerian authorities.

The Commission also remains in close contact with the Grand Mosquée de Paris, including through a recent meeting in December 2024, and has requested them to take concrete steps to minimise delays and reduce certification costs so as to ensure an efficient and cost-effective process for all EU businesses seeking to comply with Algeria's Halal certification requirements.

The EU-Algeria Association Agreement ⁽¹⁾ does not include provisions on certification of CABs. Conversely, Article 17(2) of the Agreement prohibits new quantitative restrictions on imports, or any measure having equivalent effect.

Should Algeria's measures be found to constitute such restrictions, they would be in violation of the Agreement.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2005:265:TOC>