

**Question for written answer E-009450/2011  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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**Subject:** Creation of a Sharia court in Antwerp to rule on family law disputes: possible violation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights

According to reports in the Belgian press (*Het Laatste Nieuws*, *RTL Belgium*, *Le Vif* and *Skynet.be*) a Sharia court has recently been set up in Antwerp (Belgium) at the initiative of a radical Islamist group called *Sharia4Belgium*.

The aim of the group's founders seems to be to create an Islamic-style judicial system to settle family law disputes such as marriage, divorce, custody of children, maintenance payments and inheritance issues, thereby undermining the authority of the Belgian State and the rights enshrined in the Belgian Constitution, as well as in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Given that Sharia law in no way guarantees or safeguards equal rights between men and women, its implementation would jeopardise the rights of Muslim women by tolerating practices which European constitutional states consider to be illegal, such as polygamy, arranged marriages and honour crimes.

Above all, this court is not the first case of Islamic law being imposed in Europe, since in England a group of Islamic fundamentalists has proclaimed the Waltham Forest district an Islamic emirate governed by Sharia law.

Can the Commission therefore state:

1. whether it is aware of the situation described above and what measures it will take in this regard?
2. whether it does not consider this initiative to contradict the principles set out in the Charter on Fundamental Rights, especially as regards the protection of women and of children?
3. whether it knows of other cases of Sharia law taking root in Europe?