

**Priority question for written answer P-002579/2023  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Jean-Paul Garraud (ID)**

Subject: Position of the Commission and of its President on the abaya

In late August 2023, the French Government banned the abaya in schools. The abaya – a garment that is considered religious – is a long, loose and covering robe.

It is symbolic of an Islamist onslaught in French public space, which is regarded as a space for conquest. The burkini, which was championed within Parliament itself in 2018<sup>1</sup>, as well as the hijab, which has been seen in EU institutions' promotional campaigns<sup>2</sup>, have already been part of that onslaught. In 2016 the Commission even gave an assurance that EU officials were free to wear a burqa within its buildings<sup>3</sup>.

The wearing of those garments, which undermines women's dignity and social public order, is being encouraged by the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist organisation recently criticised<sup>4</sup> in Parliament by Commission Vice-President Schinas.

It should be noted that, in Saudi Arabia in 2016, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen refused to wear the abaya, stating that it bothered her that women were forced to wear it.<sup>5</sup>

1. Does the Commission share its Vice-President's criticism of the Muslim Brotherhood?
2. Is Commission President Ursula von der Leyen still opposed to the forced wearing of the abaya?
3. Does the Commission intend to ban its staff from wearing the hijab, burqa or abaya on its premises ?

Submitted: 6.9.2023

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<sup>1</sup> [https://twitter.com/Gilles\\_Lebreton/status/1013814557209329665](https://twitter.com/Gilles_Lebreton/status/1013814557209329665)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2023-001356\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2023-001356_EN.html)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/commission-dodges-burkini-ban-questions-but-says-officials-can-wear-burka-at-work/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/committee-on-civil-liberties-justice-and-home-affairs\\_20230706-0900-COMMITTEE-LIBE](https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/committee-on-civil-liberties-justice-and-home-affairs_20230706-0900-COMMITTEE-LIBE)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.aufeminin.com/news-societe/arabie-saoudite-la-ministre-ursula-von-der-leyen-refuse-le-voile-s2087572.html>