

For the attention of Ms Geoghegan-Quinn

Re. P-006190/2011

Thank you for the information concerning the contributions made by the EU to Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories (Ahava DSL) through its participation in the fifth and seventh framework programmes. The data you provide show the total sum granted to Ahava DSL by the EU as €1.13M.

I accept that, since Ahava DSL is a legal entity in Israel, the EU acted within its own formal legal rules when it allowed Ahava DSL to participate in these framework programmes. Nevertheless, this organization lists its main address as Arava 1, Airport City, Lod Airport, while its factory, research laboratories and visitors' centre are situated well within the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) at Mitzpe Shalem, about 1 km from the west shore of the Dead Sea and 10 km north of the Green Line.

The policy of allowing an address in Israel to legitimise an operation that occurs exclusively in the OPT raises serious questions to which I request your response .

The EU, quite correctly, has not allowed the use of an official address in Israel to support the preferential import of Israeli settlement goods produced by Israeli settlements in the OPT . The same ethical consideration should apply to research activity in the OPT in order that EU taxpayers' money is not used to support illegal Israeli settlements.

You say that "The participation condition of being established in a certain territory does not oblige a beneficiary to carry out the funded research in the place of its establishment." The example of Ahava DSL shows that the absence of such a requirement provides an easy route for illegal settlements to benefit from EU funding. This should be blocked immediately.

My questions are:

What actions do you propose to stop this abuse?

Will he commission at least require participating laboratories to declare the location at which the research will be carried out so that, where that location is illegal, EU funding can be withheld.