Journal of Economic Integration | Vol: 13 - N°: 03 / (September 2025) | pp: 177-190

The Supervisory Role of Trade Agencies in Ensuring the Interest of the Consumer: a Field Study at the Annaba's Directorate of Commerce

الدور الرقابي لأجهزة التجارة لضمان مصلحة المستهلك: حالة مديرية التجارية لولاية عنابة

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Received: 05/07/2025 **Accepted:** 26/09/2025 **Published:** 30/09/2025

Abstract:
This study aims to highlight the role of economic control departments in protecting the Algerian consumer safety and the suppression of commercial fraud at the Regional Directorate of Commerce in the Annaba province, and the extent of the contribution of economic control agents and anti-fraud efforts in providing adequate protection for consumers and combating various forms of commercial fraud by imposing necessary penalties on violators. To achieve the study's goal, the descriptive and analytical methods, as well as the case study method, were used, as they are suitable for answering the study's problem. The study concluded that the Regional Directorate of Commerce in Annaba is committed to protecting consumers by deploying numerous control mechanisms that possess legal authority and the necessary material and human resources to protect consumers and combat commercial fraud in various ways to ensure transparency and integrity. The field study found that the economic control departments and anti-fraud efforts are keen on providing adequate protection for consumers, highlighting the importance of the control apparatus as a mechanism to combat fraud and illegal practices to ensure fair and transparent commercial practices, the coordination and awareness-raising work to ensure good management of the directorate's supervisory activity. As suggestions for the study, there is a necessity for the continuous updating of laws and regulations to keep pace with current developments, it is essential adopting a faster pace in employing a larger number of field inspectors, increasing awareness and educational efforts towards all economic partners and consumers is crucial.
Keywords: economic control departments, control agents, anti-fraud, consumer protection, Commerce
JEL Classification Codes: H7, D1, F1, F180.

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على دور مصالح الرقابة الاقتصادية في حماية المستهلك وقمع الغش التجاري على مستوى المديرية الجهوية للتجارة بولاية عنابة، مع التركيز على مدى مساهمة أعوان الرقابة الاقتصادية في توفير الحماية الكافية للمستهلكين من خلال مكافحة الغش وفرض العقوبات اللازمة على المخالفين. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة لمعالجة إشكالية البحث، تم اعتماد المنهج الوصفي والتحليلي إلى جانب أسلوب دراسة الحالة. توصلت نتائج الدراسة إلى أن المديرية الجهوية للتجارة بعنابة تُبدي التزامًا واضحًا بحماية المستهلك من خلال تفعيل آليات رقابية متعددة تمتلك صلاحيات قانونية وموارد بشرية ومادية كافية، مما يسمح لها بمكافحة مختلف أشكال الغش التجاري وضمان الشفافية والنزاهة في المعاملات التجارية. وقد أكدت

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الدراسة الميدانية أن مصالح الرقابة الاقتصادية حريصة على توفير حماية فعالة للمستهلك، مما يبرز أهمية جهاز الرقابة كآلية أساسية لمحاربة الغش والممارسات غير القانونية، إلى جانب الدور الحيوي للتنسيق والعمل التوعوي لضمان تسيير فعّال لنشاط الرقابة لدى المديرية.

ومن بين التوصيات التي خلصت إليها الدراسة: ضرورة تحديث القوانين والأنظمة بصفة مستمرة لمواكبة التطورات الراهنة، وتسريع وتيرة توظيف عدد أكبر من أعوان الرقابة الميدانية، بالإضافة إلى تعزيز الجهود التوعوية والتحسيسية الموجهة لكافة المتعاملين الاقتصاديين والمستهلكين.

كلمات مفتاحية: مصالح الرقابة الاقتصادية، أعوان الرقابة، مكافحة الغش، حماية المستهلك، التجارة.

تصنيفات JEL : H7، D1، F1 ، F180

INTRODUCTION:

In light of the many and continuous economic and social changes arising from globalization of trade exchanges between all countries, the new reflection of competition between products in international and local markets has affected the consumer.

The subject of consumer protection is one of the important topics that receives great attention at the present time, considering that consumption plays a fundamental role in economic and social life, especially after the wide openness towards domestic and foreign markets, which resulted in the noticeable diversity of services and products and increased demand by the consumer. (Masry, 2004, p. 9)

Given the great damage to which the consumer is exposed, as a result of economic competition and the alliance of economic agents within the market against the consumer and their dominance of the consumption process, which led to the emergence of some crimes that harm the consumer and reflect on his security and safety, which necessitated the state's intervention to protect him.

Consumer protection is an actual translation of the contemporary concept of human rights and therefore his protection falls within the core jurisdiction of the regulatory bodies and agencies responsible for protecting consumer rights. These agencies make great efforts to protect the consumer, and are primarily concerned with helping him obtain the products and services he needs for living stability, and removing the dangers that could harm his physical safety.

- On this basis, and in the field of consumer protection, the authority is establishing several mechanisms and control devices within the framework of suppressing commercial fraud and defending the consumer.

In light of the above, the problem of the subject crystallizes in the following main question:

What is the role of the economic control services in protecting the consumer in the regional directorate of trade in Annaba?

This study derives its importance from the position occupied by the trade sector in order to protect the consumer, and also to know and evaluate the work of the Regional Directorate of Trade for the state of Annaba in order to achieve the objectives of the subject, which represents an actual idea of human rights and that its protection is not specific to one law or legislation, but rather it must be worked on by various sectors and laws and achieve healthy and sound consumption in light of contemporary challenges.

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Given the great damage to which the consumer is exposed, as a result of economic competition and the alliance of economic agents within the market to the detriment of the consumer, exercising dominance over the consumption process, which led to the emergence of some crimes that harm the consumer and reflect on his security and safety, which necessitated the state's intervention to protect him.

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PAPER OBJECTIVE

The study focused on the role of the interventions carried out by the Regional Directorate of Trade to monitor commercial and anti-competitive practices and protecting the consumer.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive and analytical approaches were used, as the descriptive approach was used by collecting data and information from various sources, and the analytical approach was used to present, analyze and interpret data and information, while the case study approach was used by answering the main question and drawing conclusions.

Data collection tools: represented by bibliographic references from books, notes and articles related to the research topic, in addition to data related to the experiences of the agencies under study.

Study limits: Represented in human, spatial and temporal limits, explained as follows:

- Spatial limits: The study was limited to the Directorate of Trade institution for the state of Annaba, due to it containing the variables to be studied, which are useful in identifying most aspects of the subject.

- Time limits: represented by the period allocated to completing the research memorandum followed by an internship at the Directorate of Trade institution for the state of Annaba. This study was completed during the period extending from March 2024 to May.

1- LITERATURE REVIEW

Control is an essential part of various fields such as trade and public services. Control aims to protect public interests and ensure the fair implementation of laws and regulations, as well as to ensure the quality of products and services provided. This section is devoted to presenting the most important concepts and contents related to control. The most prominent definitions related to control, its importance, in addition to its importance and objectives, as well as presenting the practical control steps, and finally, its types were addressed.

There are many definitions of control by many researchers in the field, and the most important of them are presented as follows:

(Henry Fayol) defines control as: "Ensuring that everything is happening according to the plan set, the instructions issued, and the specified principles, and the purpose is to point out points of weakness and dangers with the aim of addressing them and preventing their recurrence." (Abbas, 2004, p. 182)

(Mohammed Maher Alish) defines control as: "The process that seeks to ensure that the specified objectives, drawn up policies, plans and directed instructions are implemented accurately and carefully. Control also means that the achieved results exactly match what the management expects and aspires to."

(Aldrich) defined it as: "A continuous process of comparing actual achievements with planned operations, whether these activities are general or detailed, and taking the necessary measures and directives for that." (Hamoud, 2005, p. 316)

Elsewhere, control was defined as: "The concept of control is not limited to its description as a tool for correcting errors, but rather as it is, above all, a tool for teaching workers the best way to make their work more productive and better prepared to face sudden dangers at the appropriate time." (Bouaiche, 2012, p. 15)

The previous definitions show the great importance of monitoring all areas of management to ensure and safely achieve the goals as planned. Accordingly, the importance of monitoring can be highlighted in the following points: (Muhammad Raslan Al-Jayousi, 2008, p. 174)

- To ensure compliance with laws and executive authority decisions.
- To identify problems and obstacles that hinder work procedures.
- To ensure that financial aspects and policies are dealt with in accordance with plans and lists.
- To detect errors, misconduct and cases of deviation.
- To ensure that the rights and benefits stipulated for individuals and workers are achieved.
- To reduce work costs.

The importance of monitoring and the need for it lies in its status as one of the main administrative functions in the organization as a purposeful social unit, which exercises various tasks and roles to achieve the required performance, and often faces positive and negative

deviations when doing so, compared to the plans adopted by the institution to achieve its goals (Hamoud, 2005, p. 31). The deviation resulting from the control process may be intentional (positive) or unintentional (negative) depending on the nature of the variables that dictate such situations. Therefore, there must be an effective control system based on enabling the institution to implement its plans. (Ali Falah Al-Zoubi, 2013, p. 3)

Researchers have pointed to the main types of control including:

Sudden control: This is the type of administrative control that is carried out suddenly and without prior warning in order to monitor and control the work without prior arrangements from the manager or direct supervisor.

Periodic control: This is carried out every period of time, i.e. according to a regular schedule, as it is determined daily or more every week, or every month, and the schedule may be set on a quarterly or semi-annual basis.

Continuous control: This is done through follow-up, supervision, and continuous evaluation of work performance. (Al-Barani, 2020, pp. 40-44)

Some researchers have also indicated the existence of other types of control, including, for example:2

Comprehensive control: This is on all the work or overall results assigned to the individual, group of individuals, or organization.

Partial control: This is on a specific part of the work.

Partial detailed control: This includes control of the specific detailed work (results). (Bakr, 2010, p. 15)

Office control: This is done within the organization for the purpose of auditing and examining some results.

Surprise control: This is used in certain cases to ensure the discipline of individuals at work, and this control is carried out in the form of surprise inspection tours.

Periodic control: This means periodic supervision of work and results, using field inspection tours, or periodic reports, whether weekly, monthly or quarterly. (Al-Otaibi, 2007, p. 244)

Consumer protection is also essential to understanding the importance of this field in the lives of individuals and societies, as consumer protection is an essential part of the laws and legislation in many countries, aiming to ensure the safety and rights of consumers during the purchase or use of products and services.

The consumer is the person who acquires goods or services in order to satisfy his material or psychological needs or for his family members." (Atig Aicha, 2023, p. 95)

"A consumer is a person who purchases a product or service in order to meet his personal or family needs and desires." (Jalil, 2013, p. 22)"He is the natural or legal person who acquires or purchases materials and supplies that provide him with the satisfaction of his needs and fulfills his desires for goods and services." "He is the person who buys or has the ability to buy goods and services offered for sale in order to satisfy personal or family needs and desires, and the ordinary person who buys goods and services from the market for his personal consumption or for others in a rational manner in purchasing to satisfy his needs and requirements by obtaining goods and services from the market through various operations." (Al-Mansour, 2006, p. 96)

Consumer protection is defined as: "Preserving the rights of the consumer and ensuring that he obtains these rights and protecting him from the products offered to him that may cause him health, economic or social harm, whether the harm is apparent or not. Caring for the consumer and helping him obtain the goods and services he needs to maintain his livelihood and life in society, at appropriate prices at all times and under all circumstances, while avoiding any dangers or factors that may harm his interests or may lead to his deception." (Iyad Abdul Fattah Al-Nusour, 2013, p. 306)

Based on the above, consumer protection means a set of laws and measures that seek to protect the rights of consumers in the market and thus combat unfair commercial practices.

Reasons for protecting the interests and rights of consumers: include (Khairy, 2015, p. 176)

- Psychological damages that some consumers are exposed to due to the use of some goods and services;
- Consumers expect high quality products or services with a decrease in the real income and purchasing power of the consumer as a result of high prices, which led to consumer anger and frustration;
- Lack of sufficient information about the characteristics of services and their prices;
- The emergence of the problem of the low-income consumer, and his suffering from fraud, exaggeration in prices and low quality due to his lack of awareness of the importance of his protection, his low level of education and experience and his lack of awareness of his rights;
- Changing the legal and political view of the issue of protection, the government's acceptance of intervention to protect the interests of consumers, and the tendency of politicians to support consumer protection as a means of gaining more votes in the field of consumer protection;

2- RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2-1 Regulatory authorities in consumer protection and fraud suppression

Regulatory authorities play a vital role in consumer protection and fraud suppression to ensure market integrity and public confidence in products and services. The role of these bodies is represented in a set of functions and procedures that aim to preserve consumer rights and ensure the safety and quality of products offered in the markets.

1. Economic control services affiliated with the Ministry of Commerce: agents responsible for monitoring commercial practices, agents responsible for quality and fraud suppression.
2. Customs Administration in consumer protection.
3. Competition Council in consumer protection. (453-02, December 2022)

2-2 Coordination and awareness-raising work to ensure good control of the regional directorate of trade and export promotion in Annaba in coordination with the provincial directorate of trade in Annaba

2-2-1 Awareness-raising, educational and training events and days organized by (Directorate activity during 2023):

- Organizing by the Directorate of Trade and Export Promotion Annaba during the months of January, February and March of 2023

- Awareness-raising and awareness days on the measures taken to prevent food poisoning and respect the perishable cold chain as well as combating the phenomenon of displaying food products outside stores.
- On 2023/10/04-02-01 The Directorate of Trade and Export Promotion of Annaba, in coordination with the State Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Sibus, organizes awareness days for restaurant owners, especially on implementing the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control System to control it, and training days for restaurant owners and fast food
- On 2023/10/15-14-13 The Directorate of Trade of the State of Annaba, in coordination with the State Chamber of Commerce and Industry, organizes training days on implementing the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control System to control it.
- On 2023-11-19 The Directorate of Trade of the State of Annaba, the Directorate of Environment, the Directorate of Culture, the House of the Environment, the Municipal Structure for Health Preservation, and the Directorate of Tourism organizes an awareness campaign to reduce waste from the commercial space.
- On 2023-12-31 Organizing the Directorate of Commerce of the State of Annaba and National Security Awareness Campaign specially on not displaying products outside stores

2-2-2 Coordination work to take good care of the control activity:

- Intensifying coordination and follow-up to implement the work program and control outlined and the procedures for periodic evaluation operations.
- Intensifying forums and operations to disseminate laws in direct contact with economic operators via the press and radio allowed for an increase in traders' awareness of the importance of these laws and the importance of prices in attracting customers
- To achieve the goal of profitability, which is translated in reality by a decrease in violations.
- Intensifying and activating control activities within the framework of mixed teams (commercial practices and quality,) (trade, taxes, customs) (trade, health) (trade, auxiliary services, national gendarmerie and national security).
- Conducting new inspections to verify the addresses of commercial establishments subject to administrative closure or reopening

Within the framework of coordination with auxiliary services and the national gendarmerie.

- Monitoring eggs.
- Monitoring white meat.
- Monitoring tropical fruits.
- Monitoring pasteurized milk prices and combating the phenomenon of displaying food products outside stores.
- Monitoring and following up the source of milk purchase (powder or liquid) by café owners.
- Monitoring ice cream shops.

- Monitoring bakeries.
- Combating the phenomenon of conditional sales.
- Monitoring the extent to which the media respects prices, tariffs and terms of sale.
- Strict application of precautionary measures (administrative closure and seizure).
- Intensifying awareness and preventive operations through neighborhood work, print media and radio.
- Framing the summer season and intensifying the control work and directing to reduce the violation of non-compliance with the obligation of hygiene and health hygiene to prevent the risk of food poisoning, through work programs outside of official working hours, targeting the following activities: fast food, entertainment and leisure places, circus, party halls, hairdressing and beauty and monitoring the conditions of transporting and storing sensitive products (meat and its derivatives, eggs, milk and its derivatives) Preventing the sale of perishable products (bread, mineral water and drinks) outside shops on public roads.
- Monitoring marine fishing products and establishments that produce canned fish and crustaceans, and the conditions for displaying them for consumption within the framework of mixed teams (trade, marine fishing).
- Handling and investigating complaints and working to find appropriate solutions for them

2-3 Evaluation study of the activity results of the economic control and fraud suppression services

2-3-1 Analysis of the results of field control activities of the Directorate of Trade of the State of Annaba regarding monitoring commercial and anti-competitive practices for the years 2022-2023

Using the information provided by the Department of Trade and Industry of Annaba, it was compiled into tables to analyze the activity of the Economic Control and Anti-Fraud Department during the years 2022-2023. It is shown in the following table:

Table (1): Results of the control activity of the Department of Control of Commercial and Anti-Competitive Practices

Data	Results		Total	Percentage%
	2022	2023		
Interventions	30592	30238	60830	-1,16
Number of Violations	3402	4245	7647	%24,78
Official Reports	3278	4172	7450	27,27
Number of Administrative Closures	686	247	933	-63,99
Number of Fraudsters	93	113	206	21,51
Value of Non-Invoicing	731 038 336,46	74 254 241,00	805 292 577,46	-89,84
Value of Non-Compliant Invoicing	7 150 962,00	7 443 117,00	14 594 079	4,09

Value of Illicit Profits	32 444 669,96	7 040 451,00	39 485 120,95	-78,30
Value of Fraudulent Practices	592 567 070,83	200 797 146,00	793 364 216,83	-66,11
Authentic Value of Hidden Business	289 534 955,54	1 363 501 039,24	1 653 035 994,78	78,77
Value of Seizure	156 000,00	2 733 090,00	2 889 090	-94,29

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on a report provided by the Regional Directorate of Trade

- During the years 2022-2023, the services of the Trade Department of Annaba State carried out the tasks assigned to it to ensure the protection, health, safety and security of the consumer with all available human and material means and capabilities. In this context, it carried out: 60,830 interventions during which it achieved 7,647 violations in the field of commercial practices. A number of official reports were issued, estimated at 7,450 reports, where the difference in the amount of non-invoicing was estimated at 805,292,577.46 DA and an amount for illegal profits amounted to: 39,485,120.95 DA. Also, within the operations of the department, goods were seized for a total amount of 2,889,090 DA.
- A decrease in the number of interventions by 1.16%, as it may have occurred during the year 2023 by: 30,238 interventions in the field of monitoring commercial and anti-competitive practices, while the number of interventions increased during the year 2022 by: 30,592, and this is due to the Corona pandemic by intensifying field control work on an ongoing basis. These interventions carried out by the control teams resulted in recording a significant increase in the number of violations by: 24.78%, as 4,245 violations were recorded during the year 2023, but it decreased to reach 3,402 violations during the year 2022, and this is due to the awareness of traders of the need to respect laws and legislation, in addition to the effectiveness of the preventive control process.
- The increase in the number of recorded violations is matched by an increase in the number of official reports issued, which was estimated at 27.27%, as their number increased by: 4172 reports during the year 2023, as the increase in most of the control indicators is due to the intensification of control work and deterrent measures taken against economic operators to preserve the purchasing power of the consumer. 3278 official reports were also recorded during the year 2022, which shows the success of control agents in their awareness-raising work on the subject of consumer protection, with an effectiveness rate of 13.79% (the percentage of reports compared to the number of interventions)
- A decrease in the number of administrative closures by 63.99%, where 247 closures were recorded during the year 2023. This is mainly due to the decrease in violations that caused the closure process, such as the practice of economic aid for illegal prices and fraudulent and illegal commercial practices, while an increase in cases was recorded by: 686 closures during the year 2022, due to the adoption of preventive measures and procedures to confront the Corona pandemic. On the other hand, and in continuation of the procedures in place, the interests of the Directorate of Trade recorded a decrease in the amount of illegal profits by 78.30%, estimated at: 7,040,451.00 DZD during the year 2023, which is mainly due to the tasks of control agents to limit practices related to

illegal prices, as stipulated in Law 02-04, which determines the rules applicable to commercial practices, especially with regard to non-compliance with regulated prices and false declarations of cost prices that aim to hide illegal price increases, because in this process, prices are manipulated, which harms the purchasing power of the consumer, while... During the year 2022: estimated at 32,444,669.95 DZD. A double increase was recorded in the value of non-compliant invoices by an estimated rate of: 4.09%, which amounted to 7,443,117.00 DZD in 2023 compared to 7,150,962.00 DZD during 2022, with an increase in the total value of hidden turnover by 78.77%, estimated at: 1,363,501,039.24 DZD during 2023 and at: 289,534,955.54 DZD during 2022, especially those related to issuing fictitious invoices and forged invoices.

- As measures accompanying the control operations and which come as preliminary penalties stipulated by law, various control teams have seized various non-compliant goods for a total amount of: 2,733,090.00 DZD during the year 2022 and 156,000.00 DZD during the year 2023. As for the interventions carried out by the economic control and fraud suppression agents of the Annaba Regional Trade Directorate, this is done by monitoring markets, commercial establishments, shops and warehouses to verify the safety of the supply of food supplies and consumer goods and to achieve and ensure the general market balances between supply and demand for various products and control price levels.
- In the event of a scarcity of widely consumed food products and the presence of some fluctuations in some general food products, the number of interventions increases in order to control the market, as the market witnessed, coinciding with the advent of the holy month of Ramadan, an increase in demand for oil and semolina and citizens rushing to purchase and store them, especially with the circulation of rumors via social media, the increase in demand for these materials created some fluctuations in some materials from During this, the Regional Directorate of Trade in Annaba ensures the smooth running of the market, combats monopolistic practices and speculation, and ensures the regularity of the supply of basic and sensitive products and materials. It also works to develop a competitive climate in the market and economic protection for the consumer. This is due to what it achieved during the years 2022-2023, a decrease in the number of administrative closures by 63.99%, through awareness and sensitization of traders.
- Control agents work to combat the effects of commercial fraud, as the number of fraudsters was recorded at 21.51% during the year 2023 compared to the year 2022. The phenomenon of commercial fraud occupies a large place within the Algerian commercial sector. It is a dangerous phenomenon that has seen great spread and expansion due to the multiplicity of its methods and the difference in its manifestations, as it has become a threat to the economies of countries and their consumers. On the other hand, there has been a decrease in the amount of illegal profits by 78.30%. Those with legal incomes pay the taxes imposed on them and cannot evade them, while those with illegal incomes do not pay taxes in the state, which leads to an increase in the burden on Legitimate activities by raising the value of taxes on them and the burden on them and the decrease in tax revenues with the increase in public spending leads to a deficit in the state's general budget as well as a decline in the value of fraudulent practices by 66.11% and a decline in violations related to non-invoicing by 89.84% with

the aim of combating violations related to tax evasion and illegal speculation as well as a decline in the seizure process by 94.29% where these indicators show the keenness of the economic control and fraud suppression services to a great extent and they are permanently present in the field to work on providing sufficient and permanent protection for consumers and imposing the necessary penalties against perpetrators of violations.

2-3-2 The outcome of the control activities and the suppression of fraud of the Directorate of Trade of the State of Annaba during the year 2023 compared to the year 2022

The following table shows outcome of control and fraud suppression activities during the years 2023-2024:

Table (2): Outcome of control and fraud suppression activities during the years 2022-2023

Data	Results		Total	Percentage%
	2022	2023		
Interventions	63 680	33 666	30 014	+12,17
Number of Violations	4357	2 187	2 170	+0,78
Number of reports	3 959	1 953	2 006	-2,64
Number of sample collections	629	339	290	+16,90
Number of closure proposals	459	166	293	-43,34
Number of reservations	1941	1020	921	+10,75
Reservation quantity (tons)	1 317,591	480,291	837,30	-42,64
Reservation quantity (DA)	181 375 700,1	96 375 779,77	84 999 920,33	+13,38

Source: **Prepared by the researcher based on a report provided by the Regional Directorate of Trade**

During the years 2023-2022, the control services of the Directorate of Trade of the State of Annaba, affiliated with the Regional Directorate of Trade, carried out: 63,680 interventions, during which 4,357 violations were detected in the field of suppression of fraud. A number of official reports were issued, estimated at 3,959 reports, where the number of sample deductions was calculated at: 629 samples, while the number of closure cases was estimated at: 459 cases, and within the control operations, goods were seized, estimated at a total amount of 181,375,700.1 DZD.

The number of interventions of the control teams increased by 12.17% during the year 2023 compared to the year 2022 in the field of suppression of fraud, through monitoring food products, industrial products, services, quality promotion, economic promotion, monitoring the quality of imported resources and their compliance with Border level and also from the results obtained, we find a decrease in administrative closure procedures by 43.34% during the year 2023 compared to the year 2022, while the amount of seizures increased by 13.38% during the year 2023 compared to the year 2022 of expired goods or non-compliant or counterfeit goods. This shows the effectiveness of the supervisory work with the aim of protecting the consumer from fraud, deception and commercial extortion, while setting controls to protect him from fraudulent

materials and services, and adopting legislation that adequately secures his needs while ensuring quality and increasing competitiveness, which leads to increased competition between national and foreign products in domestic and global markets. The Regional Directorate of Trade also works to combat food products that pose a risk to consumer health and ensure that products comply with applicable standards, as well as the state's considerations towards increasing exports, increasing activities and competition for the quality of food products to international standard specifications, and granting the committed facility an ISO certificate, especially in the field of food, as well as respecting the rules of public hygiene and health safety, conducting laboratory tests and taking samples, where an increase of 16.90% was recorded during the year 2023 compared to the year 2022 in order to achieve consumer protection.

Conclusion:

Through this study, the problem raised was answered: The role of economic control services in consumer protection in the regional directorate of trade for the state of Annaba. The role played by control agencies in consumer protection is the first point of support for achieving this protection. There is an urgent need to review existing legislation, compile it, develop it and amend it to suit current circumstances and in line with modern trends.

- Through the field study and analysis of the results, the following results were reached:
- The regional directorate of trade for the state of Annaba ensures consumer protection by harnessing many control agencies that have legal powers and material and human capabilities to protect consumers and suppress commercial fraud and combat it in various ways to ensure transparency and integrity
- The keenness of the economic control and fraud suppression services, i.e. the keenness of officials to provide adequate protection for consumers.
- The importance of the control apparatus as one of the mechanisms for combating fraud and illegal practices for the integrity and transparency of commercial practices.

In light of the results reached, the following proposals can be presented:

- The need to activate the role of control agencies and make them compatible with international standards.
- The need to adopt a faster pace in employing the largest number of field monitors.
- Supporting the agencies responsible for monitoring quality and suppressing fraud and improving their composition.
- Increasing the number of laboratories that monitor quality and conduct examination and analysis of samples of suspected goods, by providing modern and advanced devices.
- The need to increase awareness and sensitization work towards all economic partners and consumers.
- The need to give sufficient powers and activate the role of all committees and consumer protection associations to defend their interests
- The need for the continuous updating of laws and regulations to keep pace with current developments

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