

**Question for written answer E-014805/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Franz Obermayr (ENF)**

Subject: Increase in cigarette smuggling

An increase in cigarette smuggling can be seen across the world. According to a report by the Royal United Services Institute, well organised gangs of criminals are focusing more and more on smuggling cigarettes, alcohol and pharmaceuticals. That type of smuggling is less risky than smuggling drugs or weapons, but nonetheless generates considerable profits, which are then used to fund other criminal and terrorist activities. In addition, gangs which hitherto have 'only' been smuggling cigarettes can now use their infrastructure to smuggle refugees, too, as a Hungarian police colonel, Zoltan Boross, explained in an article in the 'Neue Zürcher Zeitung' newspaper.

1. Is the Commission aware of the links between cigarette smuggling and financial backing for criminal organisations in general and for terror groups in Africa and the Middle East in particular?
2. Does the Commission consider that cigarette smuggling should be combated more forcefully, thus stopping funding for such groups?
3. What action is the Commission proposing to the Council in order to combat drug and cigarette smuggling more effectively?