

**Question for written answer E-010486/2014  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Risks associated with the planned introduction of standard packaging for tobacco products

Ireland and the UK plan to introduce standard packaging for tobacco products. During the prior consultation procedure, the Member States set out a large number of counter-arguments to the planned measures, saying that it would hinder the free movement of tobacco products.

For the above reasons, the introduction of standard packaging was abandoned by EU legislators when the Tobacco Products Directive was being adopted.

Standard packaging was introduced two years ago in Australia. Proceedings against the regulation are pending in the WTO, and a number of studies cast doubt on the effectiveness of the measure. In Australia the number of young people smoking has been on the rise since 2012, and illegal trade in tobacco products has also been increasing.

According to data from the EU's Anti-Fraud Office, the black market accounts for 11% of total consumption in the EU and results in the loss of some EUR 10 billion in tax revenue.

In my opinion, introducing standard packaging would lead to a further rise in the illegal trade of tobacco products. This would in turn result in a fall in demand for tobacco products produced in Europe, leading to social tension in tobacco-producing regions, which are already suffering from poverty.

1. What is the Commission's view of the planned introduction of standard packaging?
2. What action is the Commission taking to ensure that, when assessing similar regulatory efforts, equal attention is paid to tobacco growing and employment?
3. How does the Commission intend to offset the likely continuing fall in job numbers and loss of income caused by increasing black market trade in tobacco-growing regions?