

**Question for written answer E-008787/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Illicit trade in cigarettes from Belarus

It is estimated that over 50 billion cigarettes are sold illegally in the EU every year, accounting for over 10 % of total consumption. In 2015, Member State governments suffered an estimated total loss of EUR 11.3 billion in tax revenues. Belarus is at the centre of this problem. In 2015, cigarettes manufactured in Belarus alone accounted for over 10 % of the total black market in the EU, defrauding the EU of around EUR 1 billion that year. This phenomenon has been growing fast. According to KPMG's 2015 Project SUN report, the countries which lost most tax revenues due to cigarettes sourced from Belarus were Poland (EUR 310 million), the United Kingdom (EUR 230 million) and Italy (EUR 89 million). In Parliament's Budgetary Control Committee hearing last January, the Commission referred to the automation of part of the OLAF seizure management system, with a view to facilitating data analysis.

1. Does the data collected by OLAF confirm that this phenomenon is increasing?
2. What specific actions are envisaged as a result of the agreement signed between OLAF and Belarus?
3. Can the Commission confirm that it will ensure consistency of the Bank's external actions with the Union policy objectives in terms of progress in combating the illicit trade in tobacco products provided for in the cooperation agreement?