

**Question for written answer E-000713/2017
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Combating the illegal trading of cigarettes

According to a KPMG study which appeared in summer 2016, 53 billion cigarettes sold in Europe in 2015 – nearly one in ten – were traded illegally. The Member States were therefore robbed of more than EUR 11 billion in tax and customs revenues. In France, this parallel market is growing year on year: in 2015, it accounted for 27.1% of all cigarette consumption, up from 26.3% the previous year. According to the same study, 16.7 billion cigarettes were purchased outside the official tobacconist network, 9 billion of which were smuggled or counterfeit. At a time when hundreds of tobacconists in mainland France are closing down – more than 700 closures in 2013 alone, destroying nearly 2000 jobs – and when the last cigarette factory, in Riom, is about to close down, the scale of illegal trading in France and elsewhere in the EU needs to be laid bare.

Does the Commission believe that the strategy it adopted in 2013 to combat illegal cigarette trading is working?

Is it planning to take action to keep cigarette production going in the Member States – in particular in the west – and prevent plant relocations so as to save jobs and guarantee strict observance of manufacturing standards?