

**Question for written answer E-001354/2018
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Structural funds fraud and the 'Ndrangheta in Slovakia

The events of recent days have highlighted possible fraud involving European structural funds paid to Slovakia.

Before being brutally murdered, the journalist Jan Kuciak was investigating the misuse and illegal transfer of EU funds by business owners, politicians and individuals with connections to organised crime, particularly members of the 'Ndrangheta operating in Slovakia.

The structural funds in question allegedly consisted of subsidies for agricultural companies managed by individuals with Italian nationality with links to previous investigations into the 'Ndrangheta. Around EUR 13 million of European subsidies appear to have been transferred from the Slovak Ministry of Agriculture to companies managed by these families.

News reports suggest that one of the leading figures in these families has already been investigated for fraud involving EU funds and, thanks to contacts in the Slovak government, his activities have continued unobstructed.

Seven Italians connected to these families have been arrested and then released due to insufficient evidence.

In the light of the above, does the Commission:

- 1) Deem it necessary to speed up the presentation of a legislative proposal on the protection of whistleblowers containing specific measures to protect investigative journalists?
- 2) Intend to create a database on organised crime to be shared among all Member States?