

**Question for written answer P-002262/2014  
to the Commission  
Rule 117  
Justas Vincas Paleckis (S&D)**

**Subject:** Cigarette smuggling and other forms of illicit trade in tobacco products in the EU

According to calculations by the European Anti-Fraud Office, Member States' national budgets suffer financial losses to the amount of EUR 10 billion every year because of cigarette smuggling and other forms of illicit trade in tobacco products in the EU. Despite the measures in place, the eastern EU border, especially the Baltic region, remains the target of cigarette contraband. The main countries of origin are Russia, Ukraine and, increasingly often, Belarus.

The new Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) will help to combat illicit trade more efficiently. It provides for the implementation of a tracking and tracing (T&T) system, whereby every pack of cigarettes would be marked with a unique identifier code. All the information about the product, its country of destination, taxes to be paid, etc, would reach responsible national financial institutions in real time. However, this system is oriented towards products manufactured in Member States. The key problem is that the vast majority of contraband and counterfeit cigarettes come from outside the EU. Until now, the only way to fight this issue was via the existing agreements between the EU and the principal manufacturers, whereby manufacturers had to implement supply chain security measures including T&T technologies. The Commission said that these agreements and the supply chain measures implemented in those third countries were very successful.

1. How will the Commission integrate this existing and working T&T technology with the TPD in the EU?
2. Given its apparent effectiveness, why does the Commission not simply suggest that tobacco companies expand their T&T technology into the EU?
3. How does the Commission intend to convince foreign governments such as those of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus to also make the new European T&T specifications mandatory in their jurisdiction?