

**Question for written answer P-002510/2015  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Richard Sulík (ECR)**

Subject: Europol's access to VAT Information Exchange System (VIES)

One of Europol's operational activities is dealing with VAT fraud. In some instances, Europol can make a request to a Member State to initiate or conduct an investigation, or to establish a joint investigative group. The most important tool available to investigators is information.

Is there a reason why Europol does not or cannot have full access to all of the information held by VIES?

Is such access technically feasible?

Some hold the view that, in the fight against VAT fraud, it is important for Europol to have direct access to VIES data instead of having to obtain data through an intermediary after requesting them from national authorities. Without direct access, it is impossible to monitor suspect transactions, detect irregularities or shed light on the practices used by criminals. What is the Commission's response to these statements?