

**Question for written answer P-007638/2016
to the Commission
Rule 130
Franz Obermayr (ENF)**

Subject: The 'grandparent scam'

The police have dubbed it the 'grandparent scam' – a criminal act in which con artists pose as the relative or close friend of a victim – those targeted are usually elderly or vulnerable – and under the pretext of being in deep trouble extort cash and valuables from their victim. The perpetrators mostly work in groups, whose members switch roles in the course of their criminal activities, sometimes acting as the caller, at other times as the lookout or the logistician, thus making it harder for the police and judiciary to pin them down. In 2015, grandparent scammers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland netted no less than EUR 10 million from this con. It is to be feared that the number of such criminal offences at the expense of the elderly will rise steeply in the future because of the demographic development in Europe and the rapid increase in the number of elderly people. The investigative authorities can often only find evidence of the origin and identity of the conman by examining the telecommunications data.

1. What information does the Commission have on the national origin and the organisation of these criminal bands and on how widespread this problem is in the EU?
2. What activities or initiatives at international level is the Commission planning in order to deal with this form of transnational fraud in the EU and to protect potential victims?
3. Do Europe's open internal borders facilitate criminal con tricks of this kind?