

**Question for written answer E-011191/2010  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Franz Obermayr (NI)**

Subject: Cigarette smuggling

Cigarette smuggling is an enormous business in the European Union. According to estimates, the counterfeiting and smuggling of tobacco products lead to tax deficits for the EU and Member States of up to EUR 10 billion annually. The illegal tobacco trade is often a source of cash for much more dangerous activities such as terrorism and organised crime. For all these reasons, the Commission and the Member States have declared combating the counterfeiting and smuggling of cigarettes to be a priority.

For years now, the EU and Member States have been concluding contracts with tobacco companies in order to act against cigarette smuggling. The EU receives millions from tobacco companies. In the coming years, the Commission will receive more than USD 300 million from Imperial Tobacco alone. However, these agreements have not borne fruit, since smuggling is thriving and on the increase.

1. What specific measures are funded by the tobacco industry's payments?
2. Does the Commission have plans to improve protection of the EU's external borders in order, inter alia, to curb cigarette smuggling?
3. If so, what are they?
4. To what extent have smuggling patterns changed since the EU's eastward enlargement in 2004?