

**Question for written answer E-004333/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Track and trace system for tobacco products

From 1 July 2020 onwards, EU tobacco companies will effectively be unable to export to Russia. This barrier to trade is the consequence of the incompatibility of the EU and Russian track and trace systems. Double codes will be required on packaging manufactured in the EU, leading to confusion in distribution channels and unnecessarily high costs.

1. Given the above, what specific measures will the Commission take to ensure that EU companies can continue exporting to third countries?
2. Will it consider allowing EU manufacturers that export tobacco products to destination countries where a traceability system is established to only print the code of that country on their packaging, or in the absence of destination market systems, to use the EU code if explicitly allowed by the country in question i.e. without infringing the country's laws and regulations? Does the Commission's Legal Service agree that such a solution would enable companies to comply with both the WHO Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (AIT Protocol) and the 2014 Tobacco Product Directive, while also respecting the principles of international trade?
3. If the Commission believes that the WHO AIT Protocol does not allow such a solution, why has it failed to raise this potential barrier to trade with the Member States and Parliament in a timely manner?