

**Question for written answer E-004771/2020  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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**Subject:** Increased involvement of international criminal networks in waste reprocessing

In 2018, more than 360 million tonnes of plastic waste were produced globally, eight million of which ended up in the sea. Progress has been made, though: increasingly tough European legislation meant that 32.5% of the 29 million tonnes of plastic waste produced in Europe that year was recycled.<sup>1</sup> Yet, in spite of this, Interpol noted in a recent report that the criminal world had infiltrated the waste sector.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to waste shipments, Interpol also expressed concern in its report about the increase in waste fire and landfills in Europe and Asia, as well as a significant rise in the number of counterfeit documents and fraudulent waste registrations.

Although China decided to stop importing plastic waste destined for its recycling industry in 2018<sup>3</sup>, there has been a shift towards other countries in Southeast Asia and, as a result, the exact amount of plastic waste that is recycled is unknown.

1. Is the Commission aware of these practices?
2. Does it intend to take steps to deal with this organised fraud, which has reached dramatic proportions internationally?

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<sup>1</sup> According to PlasticsEurope.

<sup>2</sup> Strategic Analysis Report: Emerging criminal trends in the global plastic waste market since January 2018, August 2020.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2018/11/china-ban-plastic-trash-imports-shifts-waste-crisis-southeast-asia-malaysia/>