

**Question for written answer E-006690/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: French tobacco sellers on France's borders subjected to unfair competition

On 1 November 2020, taxes on cigarettes in France rose by 40 cents per packet. That was the third time this tax had risen in 2020. In 2018, taxes on tobacco brought in EUR 15 billion in revenue for the government. That is twice the amount collected in 2000. The price of a packet of cigarettes is now close to the EUR 10 threshold¹.

Nicotine addiction causes around 700 000 avoidable deaths every year in the European Union. This is why the trade in tobacco is tightly regulated by the Member States and it can only be sold in authorised outlets. In France, these are the 'bureaux de tabac', which are paid a certain sum in return for this service.

The countries bordering France, such as Luxembourg, tax cigarettes at a much lower rate². This is unfair competition, as French customers are attracted to their sales outlets.

1. What is the taxation rate applied in the Member States bordering France?
2. How many retailers declare that they engage in cross-border sales?
3. Since the 1999 report on tobacco taxation, what action has the Commission taken to put an end to this unfair competition (in line with Article 3(1)(b) and Articles 44, 107, 116 and 117 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) and to support a legitimate public health effort?

¹ <http://www.economiematin.fr/news-augmentation-prix-tabac-cigarette-2020-consommation-taxes>

² [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2001/305060/IPOL-ECON_NT\(2001\)305060_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2001/305060/IPOL-ECON_NT(2001)305060_EN.pdf).