

**Question for written answer E-004389/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Belgium and the Netherlands: gateways for smuggling cocaine into the EU

A report by the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) revealed that Belgium and the Netherlands have become the main hubs for cocaine trafficking in Europe. A number of mafia groups use the ports in Rotterdam, Hamburg and Antwerp as transit zones to transport the drug to other EU countries.

Under the SAFE Framework of Standards, the EU set up an Import Control System (ICS) to secure the flow of goods entering the customs territory of the Union. However, certain goods, notably those carried on vessels of duly certified regular shipping services, are not covered by the ICS.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission confirm whether the ICS 2 (due to be fully implemented by March 2023) will review this exemption from checks, which creates an opportunity for bringing cocaine to the EU?
2. Does it intend to introduce new control measures before the ICS 2 enters into force?
3. Does it intend to work with the Colombian authorities – given that Colombia is the main exporter of cocaine to Europe – to put a stop to the trafficking of this drug?