

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001451/24
to the Commission
Mariusz Kamiński (ECR), Maciej Wąsik (ECR)
(29 July 2024)**

Subject: The financing of terrorist organisations through migrant smuggling under the hybrid regimes in Moscow and Minsk

The looting of cultural goods and the smuggling of drugs and people are important sources of income for terrorist organisations. In recent years, the EU and its Member States have taken measures to put a stop to such practices⁽¹⁾. Unfortunately, the EU has made many mistakes in the area of human smuggling by naively assessing the situation on the border with Belarus, by ignoring the hybrid nature of the operations, which also aim to undermine support for Ukraine, and by disregarding internal security issues related to both the infiltration of migrants by terrorist organisations and the income they derive from these activities. Thanks to the efforts of the Polish services, in cooperation with partners from eight countries and Eurojust, the Ahmed Al group, which transferred EUR 30 million in cryptocurrencies to terrorists from Hezbollah and Palestinian Jihad⁽²⁾, was dismantled.

Moscow's links with Islamic terrorist organisations have been known for decades. The Russian Federation openly cooperates with Hezbollah, for example. The money that goes to terrorists as part of hybrid operations against EU states, organised by Russian and Belarusian special services, serves to further destabilise the Middle East and also threatens the security of Europeans. One can hardly avoid the conclusion that some of the people illegally smuggled from the Middle East to Europe by terrorist groups are also members of those organisations.

1. Is the Commission prepared to acknowledge that it made mistakes and ignored security issues in responding to Moscow-inspired and Moscow-directed hybrid operations, in conjunction with Minsk and terrorist organisations, involving migrants at the EU border with Belarus?
2. What conclusions will the Commission draw from this situation?

Submitted: 29.7.2024

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(11 December 2024)**

In response to the increasing role of State actors in facilitating irregular migration and using migrants to create pressure at the EU's external borders, the EU has acted jointly to respond to these threats.

This unified approach aims to effectively protect the EU against the instrumentalisation of migration for political purposes as outlined in the renewed EU action plan against migrant smuggling (2021-2025)⁽¹⁾.

Since the beginning of the crisis at the EU's external borders with Belarus, the Commission took firm action. It reached out to partner countries to limit the arrivals to Belarus, proposed a regulation to take measures against transport operators that facilitate or engage with migrant smuggling or human trafficking, and provided a toolbox addressing the use of commercial means of transport to facilitate irregular migration to the EU⁽²⁾.

Furthermore, dismantling migrant smuggling networks and undermining their business models is a key priority for the Commission working together with EU agencies as outlined in the Call to Action of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling⁽³⁾.

In addition, the Commission has proposed to strengthen the EU legal framework⁽⁴⁾ and the role of Europol⁽⁵⁾ to ensure the EU has the necessary tools to respond to this evolving crime.

As regard situations of instrumentalisation of migrants, the Crisis and *force majeure* Regulation, adopted on 14 May 2024⁽⁶⁾, provides for a crisis framework at EU level.

¹ For example, by implementing the EU Action Plan against trafficking in cultural goods, or by taking a series of measures — including sanctions — to stop the smuggling of Captagon from the Middle East.

² <https://www.rp.pl/przestepczosc/art40846691-grupa-przestepcza-rozbita-pieniadze-z-migracji-plynely-do-grup-terrorystycznych>

⁽¹⁾ COM(2021)591 final.

⁽²⁾ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/toolbox-addressing-use-commercial-means-transport-facilitate-irregular-migration-eu_en

⁽³⁾ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/60f6cc08-c7ee-46db-bee5-689562d34436_en?filename=Call-to-action-global-alliance-to-counter-migrant-smuggling_en_1.pdf

⁽⁴⁾ Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down minimum rules to prevent and counter the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and stay in the Union, and replacing Council Directive 2002/90/EC and Council Framework Decision 2002/946 JHA; COM(2023) 755 final (28.11.2023).

⁽⁵⁾ Proposal for a regulation on enhancing police cooperation in relation to the prevention, detection and investigation of migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, and on enhancing Europol's support to preventing and combating such crimes and amending Regulation (EU) 2016/794; COM(2023) 754 final (28.11.2023).

⁽⁶⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1359 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 addressing situations of crisis and *force majeure* in the field of migration and asylum and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1147.

As the other instruments under the Pact on Migration and Asylum, the Crisis regulation will become applicable on 1 July 2026. It provides for temporary derogations from the standard asylum procedures that Member States could be authorised to take, in full respect of fundamental rights.
