(English version)

Question for written answer E-002111/25
to the Commission
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(27 May 2025)

Subject: Increase in number of attacks with explosives in the Netherlands — Need for European action

Nowhere in Europe are there as many attacks with powerful fireworks and explosives as in the Netherlands. In 2024, there were as many as 1543. In addition, we see this trend spreading further in Europe to Germany, Belgium, France and Sweden. At issue, in particular, are flash bangers (as sold under the brand name Cobra) — fireworks belonging to category F4, intended for professional use only. Flash bangers indeed fall under this category but are rarely, if ever, used professionally and mainly end up in the hands of criminals.

Legal production and storage take place largely outside the Netherlands. Flash bangers from abroad then enter the black market through criminal networks and are then resold cheaply and easily, for example on online platforms.

To counter the worrying developments, European action is necessary. Both trade in and production of powerful fireworks such as flash bangers need to be more strictly regulated and controlled.

In view of the above:

1. Is the Commission prepared to introduce a ban on the production of powerful, loud-bang fireworks such as flash bangers, as they are not being used for professional purposes?

2. In the meantime, what action will the Commission take to prevent this type of explosive from entering the black market?

Submitted: 27.5.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné on behalf of the European Commission
(31 July 2025)

The Commission shares the concern about the misuse of powerful fireworks, notably of professional fireworks of category F4. These fireworks should not be accessible to the general public and criminals.

On the basis of the results of the Commission's evaluation of Directive 2013/29/EU ([1]), which will be published in the near future, the Commission will consider any follow-up measures, including a revision of the directive, to address the identified problems.

Diversion of F4 fireworks from the legal market often happens at the points of sale, because some distributors do not adequately verify if their customers have the required specialist knowledge to acquire such articles ([2]). Hence, Member States should more strictly enforce the obligation to check specialist knowledge.

The Commission has also consulted the Commission Expert Group on pyrotechnic articles on the idea of harmonising market surveillance action in this regard under Article 11(4) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 ([3]) and is currently assessing the feedback received.

Moreover, the Commission is carrying out a study on the criminal misuse of pyrotechnic articles which aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the security issues related to pyrotechnic articles.

([1]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32013L0029.
([2]) See Study on illegal sales of pyrotechnic articles destined for professional users (category F4) to the general public, 2019, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a577ac1a-714b-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1.
([3]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02019R1020-20240523.