(English version)

Question for written answer E-002623/26
to the Commission
Raquel García Hermida-Van Der Walle (Renew)
(25 June 2026)

Subject: EU-funded lie detector for use at the border

Research by Dutch investigative journalists has revealed that the Dutch research institute TNO and technology company Vicarvision have developed a lie detector that could assist border guards in determining whether an individual is telling the truth. The AI-driven tool, funded under Horizon Europe, looks for non-verbal cues in individuals being questioned, such as whether the person being checked blinks, makes hand movements, leans forwards or backwards and how they laugh. Dutch and Greek border guards are reported to have experimented with this lie detector between 2018 and 2021. TNO itself acknowledged that the lie detector was not reliable and therefore insisted that the framing of the project should be positive ([1]). There had previously been significant criticism of a similar project, iBorderCtrl.

1. Why did the Commission fund projects involving lie detectors for border checks, despite large-scale research showing that detecting lies is virtually impossible?

2. Can it provide an overview of EU-funded projects developing lie detectors for use in border checks, both past and present?

3. Will it withdraw funding from ongoing projects? If not, does it dispute the widely shared consensus that lie detectors are unreliable?

Submitted: 25.6.2026

Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(6 August 2026)

Investing in European civil security research helps European authorities to have effective, trustworthy and compliant EU technologies to protect the EU and its citizens.

Funding research does not imply their deployment. In this specific case, EU funded research allowed a better understanding of the limitations and reliability of the technologies in question and to draw policy conclusions.

While the Commission has not funded and is not funding projects specifically developing 'lie detectors' for use in border checks, EU funds are used to support research for Member States authorities to effectively and efficiently implement the obligations set out in, among others, the Schengen Borders Code ([1]).

All funded research projects undergo ethics screening and review by independent experts, are bound by obligations on compliance with the applicable law and are monitored until the completion of their research.

Whilst AI systems intended to be used as polygraphs, or similar tools intended to be used by or on behalf of law enforcement authorities, are not prohibited under the Artificial Intelligence Act ([2]), they are classified as high risk requiring them to comply with stringent safeguards to mitigate any risks to fundamental rights, health and safety.

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1 Investico in samenwerking met De Groene Amsterdammer, Trouw en Argos (https://www.platform-investico.nl/onderzoeken/wie-is-migrant-wie-is-crimineel-eu-onderzoekt-ai-toepassingen-voor-grenstechnologie en https://www.trouw.nl/verdieping/leugendetectie-verboden-niet-voor-criminelen-en-migranten~b65443f0/).

([1]) Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders.

([2]) Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence.