

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002379/26
to the Commission
Elena Kountoura (The Left)
(9 June 2026)**

Subject: Criminal drug-trafficking networks' alleged infiltration of Canadian airport baggage handling services and protecting EU travellers

Recent journalistic investigations ⁽¹⁾ have revealed that organised criminal networks have allegedly been exploiting baggage handling procedures at Canadian airports, with tags from unsuspecting passengers' suitcases switched to bags containing drugs ⁽²⁾. As a result, at least 17 travellers have allegedly been apprehended or unfairly detained in third countries. EU Member States, such as Germany and France, have been among the destinations ⁽³⁾. Meanwhile, the Canadian authorities have announced a review of security procedures and have recently strengthened their cooperation with the Belgian, French and Dutch authorities in the fight against international drug trafficking ⁽⁴⁾.

These accusations raise questions about the integrity of baggage handling procedures and the consequences for the rights and legal security of EU citizens travelling internationally. With this in mind, can the Commission say:

1. Has it requested information from the Canadian authorities on these alleged practices and their possible implications for EU citizens travelling to or from the EU?
2. Given that the EU recognises the equivalence of Canada's aviation security measures ⁽⁵⁾, does it intend to assess whether these cases highlight security gaps in baggage handling and in addressing internal threats at airports?
3. Does it intend to look into, in cooperation with the Member States and the relevant European agencies, additional measures to protect passengers who may be unfairly involved in criminal proceedings as a result of such practices?

Submitted: 9.6.2026

**Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(18 August 2026)**

The Commission has been in contact with Transport Canada ⁽¹⁾, as part of the continuous bilateral cooperation and dialogue on aviation security matters, which include baggage handling operations at airports and the integrity thereof.

The Commission carries out periodic reassessments of the existing EU recognition of equivalence of Canada's aviation security measures.

In that context, the implementation and effectiveness of any measure is assessed and analysed, and potential gaps are identified and considered before the equivalence can be re-confirmed. The Commission cannot comment on the details of an aviation security assessment.

Within the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threat (EMPACT), two Operational Plans are dedicated to the fight against drugs trafficking, one on cannabis, cocaine and heroin, and the other on synthetic drugs.

Both include actions dedicated to the use of airplanes to transport illicit drugs and address new trends and modus operandi from criminal networks.

The protection of Union citizens abroad, including where they may be affected by criminal proceedings in third countries, primarily falls within the responsibility of the Member States, in particular through consular protection under Article 23 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Directive (EU) 2015/637 ⁽²⁾, which the Commission is ready to support within its competences.

¹ <https://people.com/17-innocent-travelers-were-arrested-for-drug-smuggling-after-bag-tag-switching-scheme-report-11979610>.

² <https://www.ourcommons.ca/written-questions/45-1/q-1243>.

³ <https://openjaw.com/newsroom/airline/2026/05/21/ctv-probe-exposes-airport-bag-tag-switching-scheme-used-to-smuggle-drugs>.

⁴ <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/article/exclusive-luggage-tag-switching-scheme-involves-flights-from-canada-to-countries-where-drug-smuggling-can-carry-death-penalty/>.

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2008/300/oj/enl?eliuri=eli%3Areg%3A2008%3A300%3Aoj&locale=en>.

⁽¹⁾ Canadian federal institution responsible for transportation policies and programs.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015L0637>.