

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001720/24
to the Commission
Elena Kountoura (The Left)
(16 September 2024)**

Subject: Need for European initiatives to improve the safety of Greek railways

On September 13 2024, a collision was narrowly avoided when two suburban trains were found travelling towards each other on a single track in Attica, following orders received from their respective stations. The collision was averted at the last minute, thanks to the professionalism of the train drivers who realised they had been given wrong instructions ⁽¹⁾.

In response to my previous questions concerning the Tempi accident ⁽²⁾, the Commission stressed that it was examining the European Union Agency for Railways' (ERA) ad-hoc report on Greek railway safety and interoperability and that it would take appropriate action if breaches of EU law were identified.

Taking into account:

- that, at the location of the incident, neither the remote control system, the European Train Control System nor light signals are operational ⁽³⁾;
- that critical elements from the ERA's findings were leaked to the Greek press, according to which Greece was responsible for numerous and major breaches of European legislation on the safety (Directive 2016/798) and interoperability (Directive 2016/797) of Greek railways;

can the Commission answer the following:

1. When does it intend to publish the ERA ad-hoc report and the conclusions of the investigation it has been conducting over the past one and a half years?
2. What steps has the ERA taken, in cooperation with the Commission, to ensure the safety of Greek railways?
3. What are the national measures to be taken by Greece to remedy its breaches of EU law?

Submitted: 16.9.2024

**Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(20 November 2024)**

As the Commission noted in its reply to Written Question P-743/2024, there is no practice to publish the EU Agency for Railways' (ERA) reports based on Article 35 of Regulation (EU) 2016/796 ⁽¹⁾.

The Commission would like to underline that responsibility for maintaining and continuously improving railway safety is laid upon Member States, as specified in Article 4(1) of Directive 2016/798 ⁽²⁾. The Commission and ERA can only support Member State in delivering this obligation.

To that end, the Greek authorities at the request of the Commission have prepared and are now implementing an Action Plan containing a number of organisational, legislative and technical measures to address the findings of the ERA report.

The Commission monitors progress in the implementation of this plan. A dedicated project 'Technical support for the implementation and application of Union legislation on railway safety and interoperability in Greece' funded by the Commission has also been launched to support the Greek railway stakeholders in implementing the plan.

The ERA's experts also assist in the independent investigation of the causes of the accident near Tempi performed by the Organisation for the Investigation of Air and Rail Accidents and Transport Safety (EODASAAM), the national railway accident and incident investigation body in Greece.

¹ The collision was averted as the driver of train 1210 noticed that the two trains had been given incorrect instructions when the driver of train 1307 announced its passage through Agioi Anargyroi station.

² Priority question for written answer P-000743/2024 and question for written answer E-002730/2023.

³ It should be noted that, according to the European Public Prosecutor's Office, the fatal collision in Tempi could have been prevented if contract 717 had been implemented and control and safety systems, light signalling, remote control and the ETCS automatic train braking system had been in place, as required under European legislation. These systems are still not operational across most of the Greek railway network.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016R0796>

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016L0798>