

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002222/24
to the Commission
Borja Giménez Larraz (PPE)
(22 October 2024)**

Subject: Railway chaos in Madrid and the need to improve rail safety

On 19 October, an employee of Adif (a Spanish state-owned railway infrastructure manager) had to make the decision to derail a train in the Chamartín-Atocha tunnel (in Madrid) to prevent major human and material damage after it had uncoupled from the main train and was going downhill out of control. This incident led to unprecedented chaos, long delays and cancellations throughout the rail network, while communication with passengers was inadequate.

In recent years, problems have been piling up in the rail sector: a lack of investment in the network, never-ending construction works, outdated trains and overloaded junctions. At the same time, the Spanish Government has called this 'the greatest moment for railways in our country', which underscores the need to take action at European level.

In light of the above:

1. Has the Commission requested information from the Spanish Government on the series of safety incidents on the rail network?
2. What mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that national governments take stronger measures on rail safety to prevent a tragedy?
3. Is the Commission planning to take action against Member States that do not comply with EU recommendations?

Submitted: 22.10.2024

**Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(20 December 2024)**

The Commission has not been in contact with the Spanish Government on the recent incidents on its railway network. According to the Rail Safety Directive ⁽¹⁾ Member States have the responsibility for maintaining and continuously improving railway safety. The Commission is not notified of all the occurrences happening on the railway networks in the EU.

The Commission considers that the current legal framework established by the Rail Safety Directive is robust and allows to ensure the safety of the railway system in the EU.

This does not exclude the possibility of further fine-tuning secondary legislation to take into account experience and in particular to improve the exchange of safety-related data between Member States.

At present the Commission is focusing on monitoring the practical implementation of the directive and associated legislation by Member States and other stakeholders, taking into consideration the results of the monitoring activities performed by the EU Agency for Railways under Articles 33 and 35 of Regulation (EU) 2016/796 ⁽²⁾.

Under the Treaties, the Commission can take action against Member States by opening infringement procedures in case it identifies breaches of legally binding provisions of EU law.

⁽¹⁾ Directive (EU) 2016/798, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32016L0798>

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32016R0796>