

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002982/24
to the Commission
Giuseppe Antoci (The Left)
(17 December 2024)**

Subject: Road safety in Sicily and the failure to complete Highway 117 (Santo Stefano di Camastra to Gela)

Sicily is grappling with infrastructure challenges that are having a knock-on effect on road safety and economic development, especially in the region's hinterland. Though its completion is crucial to achieving TEN-T goals and EU road safety objectives ⁽²⁾, work on North-South Highway 117 — a transport link that will play a vital role in connecting Sicily's inland regions — is still ongoing ⁽¹⁾.

Recent data indicate that road fatalities and accidents in Sicily's inland areas are at alarming levels, exacerbated by the poor state of the roads ⁽³⁾. ISTAT's statistics show that road deaths in Sicily have not decreased, but have actually risen in areas where there are fewer suitable transport links ⁽⁴⁾. Located at a considerable distance from providers of essential services such as education, health and mobility, Sicily's inland municipalities account for 36.6% of the region's road accidents, and have also seen fatalities rise by 15.9% since 2022.

In the light of the above:

1. What investments have been earmarked under EU funding instruments ⁽⁵⁾ for Sicily's road network — including for works on secondary roads?
2. Has the Commission considered setting up an EU agency responsible for road safety ⁽⁶⁾ with a view to launching new initiatives and improving coordination with the authorities responsible for achieving EU objectives?
3. Will the Commission look into the delays encountered in the construction of Highway 117 (Santo Stefano di Camastra to Gela)?

Submitted: 17.12.2024

**Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(3 March 2025)**

1. Under the Regional Programme Sicily 2021-2027 ⁽¹⁾, EUR 90 million are indicatively allocated for upgrading or extraordinary maintenance of secondary and local roads benefitting inner areas, to increase their safety standards and their functionality.

Under the Regional Programme Sicily European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2014-2020, around EUR 201 million were allocated to strengthen secondary and local connections of inner areas and those in agricultural and agro-industrial production districts with the main roads and railways of the trans-European transport network.

2. In its Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy ⁽²⁾, the Commission committed to '*explore options to further support safe, smart and sustainable road transport operations under an existing agency or another body*'. In line with this commitment, the Commission launched a feasibility study, which identifies shortcomings in the current policy implementation and governance set-up and explores options to enable swifter deployment of innovation and new technologies for competitive, safe, smart and sustainable road transport and keep EU technical regulation fit for purpose. While the feasibility study on the possible support to this development has been completed, the Commission's assessment of the needs has not been finalised yet. Further steps on this issue will be decided by the Commission following the outcome of this assessment.

3. The construction of Highway 117 (Santo Stefano di Camastra to Gela) is not financed under the ERDF. According to the available information, support is provided by national funding; therefore, the matter falls under the responsibility of Italian authorities only.

² European Commission communication of 2018 proposing a 50% reduction in road fatalities and serious injuries between 2020 and 2030.

¹ LOT C, i.e. works on the stretch between Nicosia and the A-19 Mulinello intersection, which is approximately 30 kilometres long.

³ https://www.ansa.it/amp/sicilia/notizie/2024/11/15/istat-in-sicilia-aumentano-le-vittime-di-incidenti-stradali_2e2810da-dae4-4e00-a707-c2e7d9251ce1.html.

⁴ https://www.istat.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/FOCUS_SICILIA-2023.pdf.

⁵ The 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 Programming periods

⁶ Article 57 of https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0211_EN.html

⁽¹⁾ Supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/erdf_en

⁽²⁾ https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/mobility-strategy_en