

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001686/25
to the Commission
Kostas Papadakis (NI), Lefteris Nikolaou-Alavanos (NI)
(28 April 2025)**

Subject: The dangers of rail transport of military freight

The EU's goal of faster and higher-capacity rail freight transport with the 2024 amendment of Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 combined with a tragic lack of safety systems constitute an explosive mixture.

The transport of 'undeclared' cargo and flammable/dangerous materials for which 'no one is responsible' and which are not controlled is now an everyday occurrence, according to successive press reports.

This unacceptable situation is becoming increasingly dangerous on the EU railways, with a 23% increase in major rail accidents across the EU recorded between 2021 and 2023, with 1,567 people losing their lives in 2023 alone on the EU rail network (with modern safety systems covering only 14% of the total rail network).

In view of this:

1. What is the Commission's position on the fact that, on the basis of the war plans of the EU and its adversaries, rail infrastructure is being used to transport dangerous NATO materials, putting the lives of passengers, workers and residents at constant risk, all the more so when safety standards are proven not to be met?
2. What is the Commission's position on the fact that the increased burden on the railway with increasingly dangerous loads and without the necessary modern safety systems and controls, on the basis of EU guidelines for fast and increased-capacity transport of goods that satisfy the criterion of greater profit for business groups, multiplies the risks for ordinary people?

Submitted: 28.4.2025

**Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(8 August 2025)**

Directive 2008/68/EC ⁽¹⁾ on the inland transport of dangerous goods carries over into the EU *acquis* the safety standards derived from the international legislation applicable to rail (RID), road (ADR) and inland waterways (ADN).

These rules and standards have existed for a long time; they are refined and revised every other year in order to ensure that the latest technical and scientific developments are taken into account.

Compliance with these standards is thus designed to ensure the safe transport of dangerous goods, whether by rail or by other transport modes.

However, to be effective, these rules must be properly enforced; checks and verifications need to be performed both regularly and preventatively.

As regards the carriage of military freight, this is generally subject to the same rules as commercial freight in relation to the transport of dangerous goods.

The Commission would also emphasise that a shift from the use of rail for the transport of dangerous goods to road would not improve safety for EU citizens: not only is road the least safe of all transport modes but this would also prejudice EU climate objectives.

At the same time, it should be noted that an increase in rail traffic does not prevent the fulfilment of all relevant safety standards, especially in light of ongoing work to roll out modern signalling systems and to reinforce safety responsibilities amongst different rail stakeholders.

Overall, rail safety has in fact been improved over the last years: according to the European Railway Agency the number of fatalities and accidents in the rail sector has decreased significantly since 2010 and the number of fatalities in the EU in 2023 was 841.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/68/oj/eng>.