

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001667/24
to the Commission
Rosa Serrano Sierra (S&D)
(10 September 2024)**

Subject: Closure of the Somport and Bielsa border crossings

Heavy rainfall in the Huesca and French Pyrenees has caused extensive damage to transport infrastructure. Some roads — such as the Somport and Bielsa border crossings — have had to be closed and will need to be repaired before they can be reopened.

The Spanish authorities have expressed solidarity with their French counterparts and have stated that the priority should be to reopen the routes as soon as possible. France has announced, however, that the Somport crossing will be closed for 6 months, which would disrupt socioeconomic development and the mobility of cross-border workers and tourists.

The Commission recognises that the Member States are free to impose proportionate and justified restrictions on free movement.

Bearing in mind that the priority should be to carry out the works as soon as possible to ensure that the border crossing is safe again, I would ask the following questions:

1. Has an assessment of the damage been carried out to justify the closure time announced by France?
2. How could the Commission help ensure that the works on the French side do not exceed the time strictly necessary to allow cross-border journeys to resume?
3. If that justified period of time is exceeded, will the Commission demand that France reopens the crossing immediately?

Submitted: 10.9.2024

**Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(22 October 2024)**

The Commission is aware of the closure of road RN134 in France, leading to Spain through the Somport tunnel. The Commission is concerned about the severe consequences that this disruption will have for the economy of the regions on both sides of the border, not only for road hauliers, but also local companies and their employees.

It is the Commission's understanding that traffic along road RN134 became *de facto* impossible following the damage caused by extreme rainfall in the area.

The Commission has contacted the French authorities, who have reported that the Inter-Department Directorate for The Atlantic Roads (DIRA) has now carried out a technical assessment on the ground, based on which it presented a proposal to repair the damage.

According to this proposal, the DIRA estimates that the works would be concluded during 2025, although the traffic could already be restored in January 2025.

The Commission does not oversee the road works carried out by Member States. Nevertheless, the Commission trusts that the responsible bodies will work diligently to reestablish the traffic as soon as possible.

The Commission also understands, based on the explanations received, that the French authorities opened a dialogue with their Spanish counterparts, including two meetings on 10 and 24 September 2024.

The Commission is committed to monitor and ensure the safe flow of passengers and goods along this section of the comprehensive trans-European transport network.
