(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-002790/25
to the Commission
Borja Giménez Larraz (PPE)
(9 July 2025)

Subject: Service degradation on the Spanish rail network

The Spanish rail network is deteriorating alarmingly, as evidenced by repeated technical failures. On 30 June 2025, a serious failure of the catenary between Yeles and La Sagra (Toledo) halted all high-speed rail traffic between Madrid and Andalusia. At least 27 trains remained at a standstill for over 12 hours, with hundreds of passengers on board without food or water — or another way of reaching their destination. On 5 May 2025, a similar failure occurred on the same Madrid-Seville line, affecting more than 10 000 people.

These failures seriously infringe on the passenger rights established in Regulation (EU) 2021/782 and could call into question whether the rail infrastructure, which the EU co-funds, is being properly managed.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission consider that these events could constitute an infringement of rail passengers' rights and obligations, and does it intend to call for specific corrective action, including technical or contractual responsibilities?

2. What instruments does the Commission intend to activate to ensure that passengers are properly compensated and protected against such repeated failures?

Submitted: 9.7.2025

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

Regulation (EU) 2021/782 on rail passengers' rights and obligations ([1]) contains several safeguards for passengers in the European Union in the event of travel disruption.

For example, where long delays occur such as in the examples mentioned by the Honourable Member, passengers have to be offered meals and refreshments in reasonable relation to the waiting time, if they are available on the train or in the station, or can reasonably be supplied, taking into account criteria such as the distance from the supplier, the time required for delivery and the cost.

If the train is blocked on the track, passengers should be transported from the train to the railway station, to an alternative departure point or to the final destination of the service, where and when physically possible.

Where the railway service is interrupted and cannot be continued or cannot be continued within a reasonable period, railway undertakings shall provide passengers as soon as possible with alternative transport services and make the necessary arrangements ([2]).

At the same time, the Commission would like to point out to the Honourable Member that in the first instance it is for the Member States and in particular their National Enforcement Bodies (NEBs) to closely monitor compliance with Regulation (EU) 2021/782 and take the measures necessary to ensure that the rights of passengers are upheld.

As for the Commission, it monitors more generally whether NEBs and Member States correctly implement and apply the EU rules on passenger rights, and can decide to initiate a formal infringement against a Member State where this is not the case.

([1]) ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/782/oj.
([2]) Ibid., Art. 20.