

**Question for written answer E-009698/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Illegal trade and human rights violations on the Ceuta border

Every day, some 7 000 women are victims of abuse, indignity, violence and the violation of their human rights when entering or leaving Ceuta. The contraband that these women (known as 'mules') generate amounts to EUR 405 million a year, according to a study by the University of Granada.

Ceuta's unique situation in being excluded from the Customs Code, the lack of cooperation between governments and the leniency of the Moroccan authorities have exacerbated this situation in recent months.

Bearing in mind the special bilateral relationship with Morocco as a member of the European Neighbourhood Policy and party to the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement:

1. Will the Commission communicate to the Moroccan authorities at the next bilateral meetings the need to cooperate and adopt measures to put an end to the situation described?
2. Does it plan to propose to the Spanish and Moroccan governments the solution of opening the Tarajal II border crossing and creating a protocol for action between the different police forces that upholds human rights, along with other measures to protect women acting as 'mules', such as limiting the weight of each load?
3. What role will the Commission have and what measures will it adopt to end human rights violations at the Tarajal border?