**Question for written answer E-000268/2018**

**to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea (ALDE)**

Subject: Plight of 'mule women' on the Ceuta border

# On 15 January 2018, two Moroccan ‘mule women’ were killed in a stampede at the Bab Sebta border crossing near Ceuta. A further six women have died in similar circumstances in the same area in the past year, and since 2009 there have been 10 such fatalities.

# Although the situation is a matter of growing concern, as I informed the Commission in my question E-009698/2016, all the Moroccan Government has done to honour its commitment to tackle the problem is to build a specific path for the mule women that has only served to cause more loss of life.

# Mule women are made to carry goods across the border by criminal gangs who reap the rewards, aided by Morocco’s refusal to recognise Ceuta as Spanish territory and the lack of a commercial customs post, circumstances that also prevent both governments from agreeing on joint measures.

# Bearing in mind the special bilateral relationship with Morocco as a preferred partner in the European neighbourhood policy and party to the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement:

# Will the Commission put pressure on the Moroccan authorities to take action and engage in dialogue with the Spanish authorities?

# Has the situation at the Tarajal II border crossing been raised in the bilateral dialogues with the Moroccan authorities to date?

# What progress has the Commission made with the Spanish authorities in addressing these human rights violations on the border of a Member State?