

**Question for written answer E-001423/2019  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)**

Subject: Spain steps up without due cause national checks on coaches coming from Catalonia (Schengen area)

On 16 March 2019, 520 coaches<sup>1</sup> travelled from Barcelona to Madrid carrying people attending the 'La autodeterminación no es delito' [Self-determination is not a crime] demonstration held at six in the evening that day in Madrid. Organisers say 120 000 people took part in this calm and public-spirited demonstration which took place without any incidents.

Passengers reported that the coaches were subjected to a number of checks by the Guardia Civil during the trip<sup>2</sup>, for instance at Bujaraloz and the motorway tolls at Pina de Ebro.

Documents had to be shown, suitcases were searched and drivers required to show the contract for their vehicle's hire.

In the European Union, people have the right to move around freely, and the terrorism threat level in Spain was no higher than normal on 16 March.

- 1) Does the Commission believe all these checks, which were not random ones, are justified within the Schengen area?
- 2) Does the Commission know whether there was a threat to public safety or law and order in Spain that day that would justify stepping up checks on coaches from Catalonia in this way?
- 3) Could the Commission say in what situations Member States may or should step up checks on the EU's highways?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ccma.cat/324/18-000-o-120-000-les-xifres-que-no-quadren-de-la-manifestacio-de-madrid/noticia/2910447>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.elnacional.cat/es/politica/manifestacion-madrid-denuncian-guardia-civil-para-autocares\\_364987\\_102.html](https://www.elnacional.cat/es/politica/manifestacion-madrid-denuncian-guardia-civil-para-autocares_364987_102.html)