

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5385/06  
by Henrik Lax (ALDE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Queues of trucks at the EU's Eastern border

In recent months, queues of trucks at the Eastern border of Finland have been very long, sometimes as long as 50 km. Truck-drivers have been compelled to park along motorways while waiting to cross the border and to have their vehicles inspected by the Russian customs service. The queues of vehicles may be seen, for example, on the website [http://www.kymensanomat.fi/halytsajo\\_vt7\\_20061102.asf](http://www.kymensanomat.fi/halytsajo_vt7_20061102.asf), which shows an emergency vehicle pulling away through streets filled with trucks in wintry conditions in an ordinary residential area. This was not filmed anywhere near the border but 40 km from it, a point which should be stressed.

The long queues of trucks present a hazard to traffic, as they lead to dangerous overtaking and make conditions dangerous for pedestrians. They also cause environmental problems, both because the trucks have to start and stop frequently and stand with their engines idling and because the vehicles are not usually equipped with toilets. Nor are there any public waste-bins along country roads.

For several years, the Finnish authorities have been negotiating with their Russian counterparts. In certain cases, the negotiations have produced results, but now the difficulties have accumulated and are having an impact on a large area relatively far away from Vaalimaa on the border.

What measures will the Commission take to speed up customs procedures between the EU and Russia, so that the queues on Finnish country roads can be eliminated?