

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0164/10
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to the Commission

Subject: Eurostar breakdowns December 2009

During the night between 18 and 19 December, several Eurostar trains broke down in the Channel Tunnel. Passengers were left on board for up to eight hours and given no information about the situation. Passengers were evacuated from the broken down trains, through an emergency tunnel, to shuttles normally used for vehicles, in which they were taken to Folkestone station, where they were put on a Eurostar train to London. No members of staff were present on these emergency trains. No food, water or blankets were provided during the transfer of passengers. No help was offered even though many people, including children and elderly persons were in genuine need of assistance. Fire services were on hand during transfer operations, but were only there to deal with security issues.

Why were further trains allowed to enter the Channel Tunnel after the initial break downs, thus bringing the total number of Eurostar breakdowns to five? How can the disastrous management of the breakdowns, which could have had extremely serious consequences, be explained? How can a repeat of this situation be avoided?